

First Sunday of Advent – Cycle A

November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2010

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We begin with the end in mind. This isn't Covey's thing in his book about all of those people who are trying to get their lives in gear and organized. You know the first principle is that you start with the end in mind. And that is not only his thing, it has always been the Church's thing. That was Christ's thing. That is why every year you begin the Church year which is today, the First Sunday of Advent, all of the readings have to do with the end. So we begin with looking at the end of our own time. That has to be something that if Christ preached it we focus on and we have got to live it. In my own life I remember when I came to Christ at seventeen. I was a true pagan. And when I came to Christ it was because as you have heard before I was sitting in English class reading the play *Our Town*, I realized I was going to die and I had to start thinking about what was most important to me. That is why my book begins with "you are going to die." In this we need to focus on the reality that I really think that we have got to start thinking about the end of our own lives. As we think about those things what do we want people to say about us? What do we want? What do we want our friends to say? What do we want our families to say? What do we want our husbands and wives to say? What do we want our neighbors to say? What do we want the people who work for us or the people we work with, what do we want them to say about us? What will be the legacy we leave on this earth? But, more than anything, what will be the legacy when we stand before the God of the Universe?

You know it amazes me, this past week of course was Thanksgiving and I was home at Thanksgiving. We had a lot of people at the house. My brother brought home a new girlfriend. My brother isn't twelve he is what, about 45, 46 years old, not married yet and probably never will be. But anyway he brings this new girl, my sister's fiancé was there and another friend and more people came. We have a big great room so the dining room next to it; it is one great big room. So after dinner I hear my step-father talking to my brother's girlfriend and he says, "Have you read Larry's book?" Now again it was a woman. "He has a religious book," and on and on. I am sitting over the other side. I kept my mouth shut. Can you imagine? It was unbelievable. I never said a word. But in the midst of it even my own family, not one went to church on Thanksgiving, not one. It wouldn't even enter into their minds to go to church on Thanksgiving. And the same thought here with you people because we were only half full at Thanksgiving but that is all beside the point. Not even one person would think to go back to Almighty God and say thank you for all the things You have done for us. So we live our lives in such a way that God doesn't really matter except when we need something then we pull out our holy good luck charm, who is God and we say, "God help me please. Help me. I need this, I need that. Oh please help me. I'm so good." That's nice.

But if we begin and live our life that way, when it comes to the end of our life it isn't no lucky charm we are looking for, we are looking at the God of love. If you have listened to the presentation we did at the beginning of Mass it talked about the God of our longing. Come Lord Jesus. There has got to be a longing

inside of us. I would encourage you to do this – think about your end for a time. Write what you want your friends to say about you. Write them down. Write what you want your family to say about you. Write it down. Think about it when you kids have to talk about you. I have had a lot of funerals in these past couple of weeks and I often think when it comes to parents, what do your kids, what are they going to say about you? And it is funny what some of the kids say. They say, “Oh, she was something.” Or, “oh it was something.” Or, “I didn’t want to become like her.” Those are the good things. What are they going to say about you? What are they going to say about you when everything is said and done? “Oh I am glad I never became like him.” “Oh my husband he was a miserable human being. I am glad he is up in heaven.” Whatever it happens to be, what do you want? Write those things down. Be specific. Okay what do you want your wife to say about you the say you drop dead? “He was a good man. He loved me and put me first.” What do you want your husband to say about you? “She was a woman who put us all first in her life. She loved God above all things.” What do you want them to say? Write it down. What do you want your neighbors to say? You know the ones that don’t talk to you because they think you are a miserable neighbor. It is really them who are the miserable neighbor but they don’t like you because it is their fault. Whatever it happens to be. What do you want them to say about you when you drop?

But the most important thing is what do you want God to say about you that day? When you stand before the God of the Universe what do you want Him to say? I have thought about this a lot in my life. Often the very, very thing I want to hear God say is “Well done good and faithful servant.” That is what I want. And if that is what I want then I must start living every life with that goal in mind. He can come any time, right? Any time God can come. He says today He will come at a time you least expect Him. Anytime. You have no idea. So if we are living our life in such a way that I want to hear God say at the end of my life, “Well done good and faithful servant,” and I have proven that by the way I live, well then what is happening then, I am living it as if He was to come this afternoon. No big deal. It is okay. And if He looks at me and He looks at you and He says, “Okay,” as I have said a billion times at this church,” I love you very much. I will now give you what you want the most forever.” And if that was to happen would it be no big deal because you would look at Him and say, “Well Lord you know and that would be You. That would be You. My whole life You were the most important thing to me Lord, my whole life. I long to spend time with You. My whole life I tried with all my whole heart to do your will. Jesus if you will give me what I love the most forever, then that will be You.”

Is that our goal in life? Is that what we are trying for, striving for everyday? That Christ would be the one that we long for more than anything? That if He did each of us what we want it would be Him. And we have proven that by spending time with Him every day. We have proven that by doing everything we can to please Him, because in the end that is the only thing that is going to matter - the only thing. But we do that by the way we live today.

So, homework. Write the things that you want God and others to say about you the day you die. What do you got to do to get there? Put some goals together because if you don’t have a goal you will never reach it. if you don’t have the goal of heaven you will never reach it. Put your goals down. All of those things we talked about and start living today so when the time comes and He comes when you least expect Him, whenever that would be, it will be okay because you are living with the end in mind. You got it? Get it? Going to live it? May each of you know His love today and forever, amen.