

Homily Talking Points**For December 3, 2006**

Jer 33:14-16/1 Thes 3:12--4:2/Lk 21:25-28, 34-36 (3) Pss I

- Today's readings on this first Sunday of Advent focus our attention on the future.
- In the first reading, the prophet Jeremiah tells the people that God has not forgotten his promises and encourages them to be steadfast and not lose faith.
- In the second reading, Saint Paul delivers a similar message to the people of Thessolonia. Keep following the way that you have been taught. Keep your focus on the future, when Christ will return in glory.
- And today's Gospel reading from Luke is all about the future—specifically the end time.
- In all of today's readings there is a common thread: if we have been vigilant and steadfast in our faith, we need not fear the future.
- The whole message of Advent is to be ready so as to recognize Christ in the midst of everyday life.
- Next Sunday is the national collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious, which benefits women and men who are profound examples of how steadfast faith enables us to face life's challenges.
- A generous response to next week's collection is one way for us to "do what is right and just."

For December 10, 2006

Bar 5:1-9/Phil 1:4-6, 8-11/Lk 3:1-6 (6) Pss II

- On this second Sunday of Advent, our readings are positive, encouraging us to trust God's providence and faithfulness.
- The first reading from Baruch and the second reading from Saint Paul's letter to the Philippians each remind the people that God is leading and guiding them.
- Even when we lose sight of the path, God is aware of our progress on the journey and is clearing a path for us.
- In the Gospel reading from Luke, we are asked by John the Baptist to return the favor, to clear the way for the Lord, to make straight his paths.
- There's a beautiful synergy in the mutuality of our relationship with God.
- Today's readings are appropriate as we mark the 19th year of the Retirement Fund for Religious appeal.
- Religious communities are a living enactment of the mutual relationship described in today's readings—God attending to them as they prepare the way for God to enter our world.
- Having labored for small stipends, religious are now encountering some "winding roads" and "rough ways" that they cannot navigate alone.
- We must help them by doing our part in the mutual relationship of today's readings.

Complete homilies, in English and Spanish, are available on our web site: www.usccb.org/nrro.