



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS *ANGELUS* Saint Peter's Square

Sunday, 27 November 2016 [\[Multimedia\]](#)

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

Today in the Church a new liturgical year begins, which is a new journey of faith for the People of God. And as always, we begin with Advent. The passage of the Gospel (cf. (Mt 24:37-44) introduces us to one of the most evocative themes of Advent: *the visit of the Lord to humanity*. The first visit — we all know — occurred with the Incarnation, Jesus' birth in the cave of Bethlehem; the second takes place in the present: the Lord visits us constantly, each day, walking alongside us and being a consoling presence; in the end, there will be the third, the last visit, which we proclaim each time that we recite the *Creed*: "He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead". Today, the Lord speaks to us about this final visit, which will take place at the end of time, and he tells us where we will arrive on our journey.

The Word of God emphasizes the contrast between the normal unfolding of events, the everyday *routine*, and the unexpected coming of the Lord. Jesus says: "For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they did not know until the flood came and swept them all away" (vv. 38-39): so says Jesus. It always strikes a cord when we think about the hours which precede a great disaster: everyone is calm, and they go about their usual business without realizing that their lives are about to be turned upside down. Of course, the Gospel does not want to scare us, but to open our horizons to *another*, greater dimension, one which, on the one hand puts into perspective everyday things, while at the same time making them precious, crucial. The relationship with the God-who-comes-to-visit-us gives every gesture, every thing a different light, a substance, a symbolic value.

From this perspective there also comes an invitation to *sobriety*, to not be controlled by the things of this world, by material reality, but rather to govern them. If, by contrast, we allow ourselves to be influenced and overpowered by these things, we cannot perceive that there is something very important: our final encounter with the Lord: this is important. That encounter. And everyday

matters must have this horizon, and must be directed to that horizon. This encounter with the Lord who comes for us. In that moment, as the Gospel says, “Then two men will be in the field; one is taken and one is left” (v. 40). It is an invitation to be vigilant, because in not knowing when he will come, we need to be ever ready to leave.

In this season of Advent, we are called to expand the horizons of our hearts, to be amazed by the life which presents itself each day with newness. In order to do this, we must learn to not depend on our own certainties, on our own established strategies, because the Lord comes at a time that we do not imagine. He comes to bring us into a more beautiful and grand dimension.

May Our Lady, the Virgin of Advent, help us not to consider ourselves proprietors of our life, not to resist when the Lord comes to change it, but to be ready to let ourselves be visited by him, the awaited and welcome guest, even if it disturbs our plans.

After the Angelus:

Dear brothers and sisters, I wish to assure my prayers for the peoples of Central America, especially Costa Rica and Nicaragua, which have been struck by a hurricane and, the latter, also by a powerful earthquake. And I also pray for those in northern Italy who are suffering from floods.

I greet all of you pilgrims who have come from Italy and various countries: families, parish groups, associations. I especially greet the faithful coming from Lebanon, Egypt, Slovakia, and the choir of Limburg, Germany. I affectionately greet the Ecuadorian community present here; the families of the *Tra Noi* (“Among Us”) Movement; groups from Altamura, Rieti, San Casciano in Val di Pesa; UNITALSI [National Italian Union of Transportation of the Sick to Lourdes and International Shrines] of Capaccio, and the students of Bacheria.

I wish all of you a happy Sunday, and a good Advent journey to encounter the Lord. May it be a time of hope: to encounter the Lord who comes to encounter us; true hope, founded on God’s fidelity, and on our responsibility. And please, do not forget to pray for me. Have a good lunch.
Arrivederci!