

ST. ANDREWS PATRONAL FESTIVAL SUN. 1/12/19

(ROM. 13:11-14, MATT. 24:36-44)

PREPARED FOR CHRIST'S RETURN

SUMMARY: The passages above emphasises the importance of us being prepared for Christ's second coming. A call to all Christians to live a life worthy of our calling, with the promise of a reward - eternal life.

On this first Sunday of Advent, the start of a new liturgical calendar, we remember St. Andrew the brother of Saint Peter. One of the first apostles to be called by Jesus and one who, in my opinion, lived a life worthy of Christ in emulating him to the point of death. However, it's worth noting that in acknowledging his own weakness, he couldn't accept same verdict as Christ and thus chose to be crucified on an X shaped cross, signifying his unworthiness.

We all want to share eternity with Christ. The promise of paradise is outstanding, but the process needed to get there is time consuming, tedious and challenging. I mean, who doesn't want a nice cuppa' and piece of cake, but without the hassle of having to gather the ingredients, let alone the baking and especially after a tiring, cold, grumpy day!

Preparation for Christ's return unfortunately, is not a seasonal or one-day event. Rather, it's a daily occurrence and every second and minute matters. St. Matthew talks of life in Noah's time. Its normalcy blinded people to heed God's call; but when the hour of reckoning came they were all crying for his mercy.

I'm sure most of us have done or said things in life that we later wished we could remedy. I had a funny episode in my younger days. I walked out of my father's house at the age of 18 and never went back, except for visits. One day, I walked into a supermarket to pick up a few items. I was so broke in those days that I just lived on essentials. As I was standing at the till waiting to be served, a long time buddy came along, said hi and after few pleasantries said, .."don't worry, I paid your bill"... You know what came to my mind? I cursed myself for not having picked more stuff, before thanking my friend!

Life is like that at times. Look at the challenges we currently face; every week we are mourning untimely deaths. The attack at London Bridge last Friday showed me two things. Firstly, even with faith in our system and operations, we are still vulnerable. Secondly, there are those who rose to the occasion with the crudest of weapons (fire extinguisher and narwhal tusk) to ward off the offender. It was a case of a convict pinning down a convict. It challenges us to rise to the occasion with our effort and skills, natural or learnt, and putting them into service for others and glorifying God, for we know not the time he cometh.

We have a looming General election: It's an opportunity for us to exercise our democratic right to make this country the democratic realm it should be. It's a time to exercise self-restraint, even when others hold contrary opinions to us. It happens in

all areas of lives, in our families, estates, neighbourhoods, churches, work places, committees etc. The difference is that we are Christians and have to be an example for we know not the time he cometh.

In my country there is a belief that the rising sun brings hope of good things, whereas the setting sun carries all uneasiness of the day. So morning prayers were offered raising arms to the sun on the east, and evening prayers swinging hands to the setting sun on the west; seeing it set with our day's misery. That is until the people living on the leeward side of the mountain, an area prone to convectional rain and floods, complained that this was a result of this tradition!

The synod in its wisdom brought the analogy of the cross of Christ, and altered evening prayers with a corresponding motion towards the cross, sending all our difficulties, strain, stress and devil's work to the cross and setting our hope on the risen Christ.

Brothers and sisters, since we know not the time and hour when the son of God cometh, let us guard our hearts and minds from jealousy, hypocrisy, hate and the evil one!. What a wonderful season Advent and Christmas is when we can reconcile with Him and share Christ's love in our own unique way, in accordance with our ability and for God's glory.

GOD BLESS US ALL AND MAKE US READY FOR HIS SECOND COMING. AMEN

Revd Tim Ndegwa