

# FIRST FRIDAY HOLY HALF HOUR – DECEMBER 2019

## Advent Preparation

**Exposition of the blessed sacrament:**

**Hymn...**

**(2 mins Silence)**

### **Introduction:**

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ! As we begin this new Liturgical Year, let's spend this First Friday reflecting on the season of Advent.

We begin with the hymn :- **O Come, O Come Emmanuel ...**

Advent is a joyful season – a time of *preparation*. It is joyful because of the hope we have in our Lord and His promise to all His disciples. In Jn. 14:3, Jesus tells his disciples that He was going to prepare a place for them. He would return to take them with Him so that they might be with Him forever. We know our home is not here but with Him in heaven. His coming is sure, though no one knows when. This season, in a wonderful way, helps us *prepare* ourselves for His Second Coming. **(Pause)**

We take the hymn:**We are here to praise you ...**

**Reading: Mt.3:1-12**

**(Silent reflection – 5 mins)**

### **Reflection:**

As we reflect on this passage, we will find key points to help us in our preparation:

1. Looking at the lifestyle of John the Baptist, we see his austerity and simplicity. He ate simple food and wore just camel hair and a leather loin cloth around his waist. A friend once said, "I live to eat." Today's advertisements promote so much indulgence in food and clothing; ads to savor exotic dishes at fancy places and inducements to shop for exclusive designer wear outfits. To adapt Jesus' words, he would have said, 'Food and clothing are for the body and not the other way round. So, do I **'eat to live'** or do I **'live to eat'**?  
When I attend church, do I **dress to distract** and catch the eyes of others?  
Am I attaching too much importance to externals or am I developing an internal attitude of detachment from earthly things? **(Pause)**  
Let us ask the Lord for help to give us a right attitude to our possessions, as we sing the chorus of the hymn - **Set my spirit free that I may worship Thee ...**
2. When John was asked if he was the Messiah, his reply was that of one who knew his position in life. "I am a voice crying out in the wilderness; Prepare the way for Him." "He is greater than I. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." "I am not fit to untie his sandals." His humility disturbs our spirits. His passion to save sinners was evident, "Repent and turn from your sins." He directly admonishes the proud Pharisees saying "show fruits fitting to repentance."  
Let us ask ourselves "What is our purpose in life?" God has blessed each of us with unique gifts and has a purpose in His kingdom for each one of us; for me.

Is there some role or task he would like me to fulfill and complete, one that only I can do?

As we pray let us ask the Holy Spirit for help to find that purpose.

In response let us sing the chorus of the hymn - **Make me a servant ...**

3. John the Baptist was committed to his mission, no matter the cost. He was bold in his conviction and protested against injustice, adultery and pride. He did not fear opposition, hardship or suffering. He openly called the Pharisees a 'brood of vipers' and called out Herod for his adultery. He faced ridicule and imprisonment and later even paid the price with his head for being honest and forthright.

Are we ready to stand up for the truth and for our convictions?

Do we find ourselves in situations where we prefer to make compromises/forgo the values we believe in, rather than face opposition, ridicule and maybe even lose our job or relationships?

Kindly join in singing the hymn - **It takes courage to answer a call ...**

### **Intercessions:**

United in mind and heart, let us bring the needs of the whole world before God the Father and His Son Jesus, confident of His love and mercy as we say ... ..

### **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- That our Holy Father, bishops, priests, and religious may continue to lead the Church in being the voice of conscience and the rock of truth, in a constantly changing world; we pray to the Lord ...
- That in honesty and integrity, world leaders may always seek the ways of righteousness, justice and mercy for serving the citizens of their countries; we pray to the Lord ...
- That we, the Body of Christ, may toil tirelessly to sow the seeds of love and hope through our lives of loving service, in a world driven to despair by war, crime, hatred and injustice; we pray to the Lord ...
- That all of us going through struggles in life whatever the reason, be it physical, emotional, financial or spiritual, may find comfort and strength in Christ's love, we pray to the Lord ...

God our Father, grant us what we truly deserve and give us the grace to prepare ourselves so that we may be able to welcome Christ this Christmas. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord, **Amen.**

### **Benediction:**

### **Concluding Hymn: O Sacrament most holy...**

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For the  
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