

First Sunday of Advent
St. James Cathedral
December 3, 1995
Most Reverend Thomas J. Murphy
Archbishop of Seattle
Homily

We are people who are very conscious of the present moment. Newspapers, radio, television and especially CNN all make us aware of what is happening throughout the world at this very moment in time. There is a sense of fear and uncertainty as troops prepare to guard a peace in war-torn Bosnia. Another form of fear and uncertainty impact so many people in our own community as a result of the Boeing strike. Ireland grabbed the headlines for a brief moment as the elusive dream of peace edged closer to reality. People will enter hospitals today only blocks from this Cathedral Church. They will wait with anxiety and concern on whether the tests or impending surgery will announce new life or the sentence of a long illness and even death.

Yet, with all these examples, and countless others, we are a people who look forward to tomorrow. Tomorrow will be better. Tomorrow will bring better news. Tomorrow, it will be all different. But we come together this morning to hear God's word who speaks about tomorrow. The Word of God tells us tomorrow has arrived today. Yes, tomorrow has arrived today.

Each of us knows within the inner core of our being the changes that need to be made in our lives. We know that we might need to lose weight, we might need to change our priorities, we might need to spend more time with our families and our children. Even more importantly, we know that our life style might not reflect the life-style of Jesus - but like so much that is part of our lives, we prefer to put it off to tomorrow. However, my friends, tomorrow has arrived today.

We can resonate with the words of Matthew's Gospel who speaks of the flood generation. They were so preoccupied with their ordinary lives that they failed to prepare for the great cataclysm. Jesus cries out to people of His time and people of today: Be vigilant! Be prepared! Be ready! Tomorrow has arrived today.

Today we begin the season of Advent - a time to relive the centuries when people waited for the coming of the Messiah. But these four short weeks are also a time for us not only to wait for the Messiah to come, but to recognize His presence in our world today. It is a time to look at all the promises we have saved for tomorrow, and make them come alive today. It is a time to take the good intentions of the future and make them realities of the present moment. It is a time to recognize that the dreams of tomorrow are as powerful as our desire to give them flesh and blood now. Yes, tomorrow has arrived today.

The Word of God has an urgency to it this morning. It is an urgency that tells us maybe we can't wait until tomorrow. Maybe the tomorrows we hope will happen will never take place. Maybe today is the day when the Lord comes. Yet, we must not live each day in fear or anxiety, but rather in hope and vigilance by realizing that tomorrow has arrived today. And the Gospel tells us, it really has!