

Homily for the 1st Sunday of Advent

In his new book, **The Time Keeper**, Mitch Albom presents us with two characters: a very wealthy businessman struggling with a fatal disease and a teenage girl who has been the victim of cruel cyber bullying. Both have made the decision to end their lives. They believe that ending their life would be the only way to take control of their life with no consequences on others.

But into this situation comes a mysterious person named the “time keeper.” The “time keeper” is able to stop time an instant before these two characters take their lives. The “time keeper” enables the old man and the seventeen-year-old girl to step out of the scene and look ahead to see not only the hurt they will cause others but the opportunities for doing good in their lives that each would miss by their trying to short-circuit time. When they return to the moment, they make different decisions.

Both the elderly billionaire and the desperate teenager realize that control over time is more a curse than a blessing. They come to realize that in the course of God’s time they can change and transform their lives.

This First Sunday of Advent confronts us with the limits of time and the preciousness of our lives. The prophet Jeremiah wants us to know that time belongs to God...and God alone. Jeremiah is clear...“the days are coming”... days that God alone will determine. And Jesus warns us to watch with great care and to use time well because we are preparing for God’s coming into our lives.

In both the appreciation of how sacred the gift of time truly is and how important it is for us to be patient with life, God is teaching us that we are called to live with profound trust and hope that God is coming into our lives in the span of time God gives us.

So the challenge of Advent is how do we spend our lives while waiting for the “days that are coming.” I think the answer is given us in the second reading. Paul is so clear that we should “increase and abound in love for one another and for all.” This is how we should live our lives and spend our time. That this Season of Advent is given to us not so that we will run each other over in our compulsive need to get everything done before Christmas, but rather that we take this time to learn to love God, ourselves and all the people that God puts in our lives just a little better. Few will remember what you gave them on December 25th in the year 2012. But everyone will remember how much love and care and concern you brought into their lives.