Homily, November 28, 2010
First Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 2:1-5; Psalm 122:1-9; Romans 13:11-14; Matthew 24:37-44

“Come, let us climb the Lord’s mountain, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may instruct us in his ways, and we may walk in his paths.”

“Come,” they said, “were going to the game, it'll be fun.”

“Come with me to the dance,” she said as she took his hand and pulled him out of his chair.

“Come over on Saturday,” they said, “we'll make dinner and you bring some wine.”

‘Come’ is such a compelling word. It begins so many adventures, both great and small. It also speaks of companionship or an invitation to friendship. All of life’s best adventures are shared with others, after all.

“This passage from Isaiah is so compelling to me. Mostly because of the invitation “Come…” but also because of the setting – I like to hike in the mountains.

Hiking is fun because it’s a personal challenge: how high, how far, venturing into new places. But it’s a challenge I really wouldn’t want to do alone.

Your companions help you through the hard stretches on the trail. Even if it’s just with an encouraging word, or reminding you that there are more adventures to come around the next bend or just over the pass. You share in the wonders and beauty along the trail.

And when danger is a real possibility – when there are reports of bears in the area, or a treacherous stretch with a snow covered slope, or you lose the trail for a moment in the woods – it’s just nice to know you are not alone.
“Come, let us climb the Lord’s mountain, to the house of the God of Jacob,
Our life of faith is journey that moves through time: it takes us from baptism to Christian burial. As Isaiah tells us, and Jesus reminds us, there is a goal – a destination – to our journey.

At the very end is heaven, and life in the community of the blessed. That is God’s providential plan for His people. The decision that each of us has to make is simple: do I want to belong to the community of the blessed?

You have received the invitation: “Come.”
Will you go?

You have to make your own journey. No one can make it for you. It is after all, your life. But you don’t have to make it alone.

“How does God instruct us in His ways? How does he show us His paths?
The ordinary way He does it is through his people, the Church.

Now there are many ways the Church helps us on our way to salvation, but sometimes I think we forget all good that comes from simply having companions in faith.

There have been days when I struggled with the faith and someone spoke words of encouragement and shared the story of his struggle. It helped me and I got through it.

I have been sick and someone surprised me by visiting me in the hospital. His simple work of mercy, visit the sick, helped me get well.

I have been at mass and felt such warmth and joy from the stranger sitting next to me that it renewed my own spirit of worship.

I have listened in wonder as a wise teacher patiently revealed what I had always overlooked in a passage of scripture.
So many good teachers, so many good guides and companions ...

When I hear someone say “I am spiritual but not religious”, I can’t help but wonder. They may want to travel alone, but I don’t think it’s wise.

Advent. It refers both to Christ’s incarnation, his first coming, and to his second coming at the end of time.

Advent. It is also a season of invitation: “Come ...”

Accept the invitation to travel deeper into the faith this Advent with your companions, with the people in this parish, who are also on the same journey.

If you are new to this parish, or if you just need encouragement, please join us.

Continue to come to mass
Come to the reconciliation service.
Come and take part in our ministries, our retreats, our parish life.
Come ... worship with us, pray with us, learn with us, work with us.

Just be with us ... as a companion in faith.
Together we will set out to meet Christ on the way, and, God willing, to hear that last and greatest invitation:

“Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”