

"Brothers and Sisters, you know the time: it is the hour now for you to wake from sleep!"  
Romans 13:1 From today's second reading, and this week, Pope Francis has delivered the same message to us in his just published encyclical: "THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL!"

The First Sunday of Advent is all about new beginnings. The darkness shall pass. A new light is coming! And that is the message of Pope Francis:

"More than by fear of going astray, my hope is that we will be moved by the fear of remaining shut up within structures which give a false sense of security, within rules which make us harsh judges, within habits which make us feel safe while people at our door are starving and Jesus does not tire of saying to us, "give them something to eat!"

Added to that, he advised priests to "get out of your sacristies, get your shoes muddy, and get involved in the lives of your people...and do not be defeatist sourpusses,"

because of instant communication worldwide, more than at any period in human history, we are made aware of BAD NEWS from a typhoon in the Phillipines to tragedies in our hometowns. Now more than ever we long for good news. And Advent tells us not just to long for good news but to EXPECT GOOD NEWS. And that is the message of Pope Francis. Despite the lingering shroud of darkness, the Christ light shines. And it shall not be extinguished!

And so the proclamation of Isaiah in the first reading can be our's as well:

"Come, let us walk in the light of The Lord!" IS 2:5

BREAKFAST QUESTION: Have I been a "sourpuss lately?"

PERSONAL REFLECTION: How can I change the clamor and distractions of Advent into a

period of moving from the dark of being a sourpuss into the light of expecting good news...and fully experiencing the full "joy of the Gospel?"