

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT – YEAR A

(Isaiah 2. 1-5; Romans 13:11-14; Matthew 24: 37-44)

Excerpts of Pope Francis – Angelus - 27 Nov 2022

Pastoral Letter from the CCCB on cancellation of debts - 2025

Father Charles Fillion

30 November 2025

Brothers and sisters, we hear it many times: “Your Lord is coming” (cf. *Mt* 24:42). This is the foundation of our hope. We might ask: How will the Lord come? And how will we recognize him and welcome him? Let us bear this in mind: God is hidden in our life, he is always there. He does not come in extraordinary events. He manifests himself in our daily work, in the face of someone in need. It is right there that we find the Lord, who calls to us, speaks to us and inspires our actions. *How can we recognize and welcome the Lord?* We must be awake, alert, vigilant.

Jesus warns us: there is the danger we may not notice his coming and may be unprepared for his visit. Sometimes we are so busy that we don’t pay attention to this. Jesus says that, when he will come, “two men will be in the field; one is taken and one is left” (v. 40). In what sense? What is the difference? Simply that one was **vigilant**, he was waiting, capable of discerning God’s presence in daily life, whereas the other was distracted, lived day to day, and did not notice anything.

Brothers and sisters, in this Season of Advent, ask ourselves: am I aware of what I am living, am I alert, am I awake? Do I try to recognize God’s presence in daily situations, or am I distracted and a little overwhelmed by things? If we are unaware of his coming today, we will also be unprepared when he arrives at the end of time. Therefore, let us remain vigilant! Waiting for the Lord to come, because he is there.

Brothers and sisters, twenty-five years ago, hundreds of thousands of Canadians responded to the spirit of the Jubilee Year by signing a global petition calling for the cancellation of the debts of the poorest countries. With the support of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and many ecumenical partners, Jubilee 2000 is remembered as one of the most successful faith-based campaigns in Canadian history. Working with partners around the world, and encouraged by Pope Saint John Paul II’s call for debt justice, these efforts helped cancel over \$100 billion in debt for more than 30 countries. Debt cancellation was a major achievement, but the structures that create debt crises were not changed.

Today, many countries again find themselves in a debt crisis, having to choose between paying back creditors or investing in their own people. And so on this Jubilee Year 2025, Pope Francis called on affluent countries to release the debts of countries suffering under their weight. 25 years after the remarkable success of Jubilee 2000, Catholics in Canada once again have an opportunity to raise our voices for debt relief and justice. Economic debt can create feelings of hopelessness. As interest grows year after year, whole generations feel their future does not belong to them but instead to creditors.

In this Jubilee Year, we wish for all Catholics in Canada to find their voice for justice, becoming true pilgrims of hope, making possible what feels impossible. Development and Peace – Caritas Canada is hosting the global petition “Turn Debt into Hope,” calling for the cancellation of debts, the reform of the international financial system, and the creation of a framework on debt within the United Nations.

To learn more, read the Action Sheet found on the table at the entrance of the church. You will also find the petition at the entrance of the church. Help us reach our goal of 60,000 signatures on the global petition for cancelling the unjust debts in the Global South and reforming the global financial system to prevent debt crises from recurring. Each signature amplifies the message of debt justice to creditors and political leaders.

We pray that during this Jubilee year, Catholics in Canada will raise their voices for the forgiveness of debts and for a more just economic system so that we might become, in the words of Pope Leo XIV , “a Church that always seeks peace, that always seeks charity, that always seeks to be close above all to those who are suffering. May God, who is rich in mercy, *forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors*” (Matthew 6:12).

Please sign the petition today and have your friends and family do it, too! Development and Peace — Caritas Canada has already collected over 37,000 signatures. However, we still need your help to reach our goal of 60,000 signatures. So, please keep getting the petition signed. We will now have a short video giving you in a nutshell the reason why you should sign. Thank you for your support and encouragement.

Video at: <https://devp.org/en/campaign/turn-debt-into-hope/resources-fall-2025/>