

**HOMILY**  
**December 3, 2006**  
**The First Sunday of Advent**

**Rev. Andrew A. Czajkowski**  
**St. John the Evangelist Parish**  
Davison, Michigan

Two-year-old son Jack leans on his father's knee. His rumpled baseball jersey bears a fresh spaghetti stain from that night's dinner. "Daddy, tell me a bunny story." Dad tears his gaze away from the computer screen. "What was that, son?" asks Dad. "Tell me a bunny story," says Jack, "One with a truck in it." "A bunny story?" asks Dad. "Yeah, with a truck in it." "With a truck in it," repeats Dad. "Okay, climb up here." And placing Jack on his knee, Dad begins spinning a tale about a mischievous bunny who gets into all kinds of trouble while zipping around in his great big truck.

Every great story has to have an obstacle or villain. And so Dad uses the same stock villain in every bunny story—the big old wolf. And just as Dad begins to introduce the wolf to the story, Jack insists, "No wolf, Daddy! No wolf!"

How can you have an adventure story without a wolf? Jack covers his father's mouth, and in the sternest manner a toddler can manage, insists, "No wolf!" No wanting to create strife just before bedtime, Dad sighs and replies, "Okay, Jack, no wolf."

Already, at the age of two, the little boy has an understanding of evil. If he had not already been introduced to evil, he would not have feared the wolf. But since he perceives its destructive nature, he thinks nothing of editing the world to make evil disappear.

That would be nice, wouldn't it? Editing the world to make evil disappear. Some of you saw a recent Adam Sandler motion picture, "Click," in which he used a television remote to alter not only television, but also real life. What a nice gift that would be for the first Sunday of Advent—a world without evil. A world without "No big bad wolf!" Remote or no remote, there is no place on this earth that evil and suffering and heartbreak cannot access. Americans were stunned when Islamic terrorists struck on 9-11. We hadn't stared evil in the face like that before. They called it "the day that changed the world." At least it was a reminder to us that evil is very real.

We're never really prepared, are we? Either on a societal level or a personal one for the coming of the wolf. A diagnosis of cancer or Alzheimer's. An automobile accident or a fire. The failure of a company. A son or daughter addicted to drugs. "No wolf! No wolf!" And suddenly in the room with us is this awful monster from which we cannot escape.

We turn to the Bible for help and reassurance. And we come to these words from Luke 21:25-28

*There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on earth nations will be in dismay, perplexed by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will die of fright in anticipation of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. But when these signs begin to happen, stand erect and raise your heads because your redemption is at hand.*

What a powerful message for troubling times. It makes no difference whether we are talking about the end of time or the end of next week, the message is the same. Stand up, lift up your head, your redemption is drawing near. *This is the ultimate Advent message—our redemption is near.*

No matter how heavy the burden, how stark the situation, how discouraging the dilemma, we can make it. We can endure; we can conquer. How can we say that? Because Jesus Christ has come into the world. Jesus is very real. Our redemption is at hand. I don't know what you are going through right now, but whatever it is, Christ can help you through.

The Bible is quite realistic. In this world, there are trials and tribulations. But be of good cheer. There is one who has overcome the world. As for the wolf, this is what Isaiah, God's spokesperson, promised:

*The wolf shall also dwell with the lamb; and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion together, and the little child shall lead them.*

Granted, there is not a bunny in the promise. Just remember, when trouble comes, when these things begin to take place, stand up, life up your heads, because your redemption is at hand.