

REPENT

At mass, during an Advent reading of the gospel, the following words are said by St John the Baptist: **“Repent, for the kingdom of God is close at hand”**. They are taken from the Bible (Matthew 3:1).

Similar ones are used in (Matthew 4:17) and (Mark 1:15), but this time, Our Lord Jesus Christ speaks them; but what do they mean?

Is the clue in the first word REPENT, because in simple terms, this means being sincerely sorry for sinning against God and desiring to refrain from sin?

Being human, we are all susceptible to wrong desires and Satan's temptations, causing us to sin regularly, and we know that our spiritual souls will end up in hell if we die with mortal sins on our souls.

Does the above statement intend to make us aware of the danger our soul is in? If so, what does CLOSE AT HAND mean?

Could it somehow have to do with time? When we think of our lifespan, say 100 years, we look at this and think it's a very long time, but when we compare it with the universe's lifespan (billions of years), it's just a spec in time. When we compare the universe's lifespan with eternity, it's not even a spec in time, making our human lifespan very small. So when the phrase **'is close at hand'** is used, does this refer to how long humans live? If it does:

Then, what happens to our immortal souls must always be carefully considered.

It could also mean that there are times when we have no idea when we will die. It could be by some sort of accident, poisoning, or illness something that is deadly but which we were not aware of. Most people know of someone who has died unexpectedly.

WERE THEY PREPARED FOR GOD'S JUDGEMENT?

John the Baptist and Our Lord Jesus Christ knew what they were saying. **“Repent”** means always being aware of one's sinfulness and asking God for forgiveness. This is where the beauty and convenience of the Sacrament of Forgiveness can be of assistance. What a superb gift from Jesus Christ.

“Is close at hand” means that we should always be aware that our human lives are so short that we should continually make sure that our immortal spiritual souls are free from mortal sins and ready for God's judgement, but with our lives being inundated continually with social media, people tend to find it difficult to think about repenting.

We know that **“Repent, for the kingdom of God is close at hand”** is vitally important because both St John the Baptist and Our Lord Jesus Christ said so. Don't let your human desires and Satan stop you from repenting. Use the superb strategies provided by Jesus and the Catholic Church to help you, such as:

Praying.

The Mass.

The Sacraments, especially:

Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Sacrament of Eucharist.

There are many other strategies; just remember they are all there to help us repent. Most of us don't know when we will die and the statement by St. John the Baptist is a very important one, reminding us to make sure that our immortal soul is forever in a state that is acceptable to God.