



AMDG
FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT
YEAR A
1ST DECEMBER 2019



**Stay awake! ...
Let us walk in the light of the Lord.**

OPENING PRAYER

Grant your faithful, we pray, almighty God,
the resolve to run forth to meet your Christ
with righteous deeds at his coming,
so that gathered at his right hand,
they may be worthy to possess the heavenly kingdom.

At the start of the Church's year, we enter the wondrous season of Advent with an exhortation to 'stay awake'. We begin a time of preparation and anticipation as we look forward to welcoming the Christ Child into the world at Christmas. Christ calls each of us today to be awake to his presence in every moment, so that we may stand ready to greet him when he comes again in glory.

In the *Gospel*, Jesus encourages his followers to live within this state of preparation and anticipation, so that they may be ready to welcome the Son of Man when he comes.

In the *First Reading*, Isaiah foretells of the Kingdom of God – the kingdom that we are called to proclaim and live out in our own lives. Using the imagery of a great mountain, he describes the presence and authority of God. People from every nation will be drawn to the Lord, and peace will reign across the world.

The *Psalms* is a pilgrim's song that would have been sung on the lips of those entering Jerusalem. This becomes our own pilgrim song as we enter Advent.

In the *Second Reading*, Paul calls us to wake up to our true reality. We are children of light, and he encourages us to let go of everything that draws our attention away from Christ.

Throughout Advent, let us hold each other in prayer. May Christ's peace be upon us all and his light shine within our hearts, so that we too may stand ready to greet him in all whom we meet.

PSALM 121 (122)

I rejoiced when I heard them say: 'Let us go to God's house'.

I rejoiced when I heard them say:
'Let us go to God's house'.
And now our feet are standing
within your gates, O Jerusalem.

Jerusalem is built as a city
strongly compact.
It is there that the tribes go up,
the tribes of the Lord.

For love of my brethren and friends
I say: 'Peace upon you!'
For love of the house of the Lord
I will ask for your good.

I take a moment to become still before God.
When I am ready, I pray each word of the psalm with reverence and love.
I pause ... then read the psalm slowly again.
I allow myself to ponder on words, phrases or images to which I feel drawn.
These may become the centre of my prayer, or I may choose to focus my prayer
on the spirit of the whole psalm.

As the psalm becomes more familiar to me, I may try to read it with an inner
voice full of joy.

How does this psalm affect me now?

How do I feel ...?

and what do I notice in my body as I pray these words?

I share all that is in my heart with God, and humbly ask him to be my guide in my
Advent journey of prayer and preparation.

I end my prayer making a reverent, slow sign of the cross, and say:
'Peace upon me, and upon this world'.

GOSPEL MATHEW 24: 37-44

Jesus said to his disciples: 'As it was in Noah's day, so will it be when the Son of Man comes. For in those days before the Flood people were eating, drinking, taking wives, taking husbands, right up to the day Noah went into the ark, and they suspected nothing till the Flood came and swept all away. It will be like this when the Son of Man comes. Then of two men in the fields one is taken, one left; of two women at the millstone grinding, one is taken, one left. So stay awake, because you do not know the day when your master is coming. You may be quite sure of this, that if the householder had known at what time of the night the burglar would come, he would have stayed awake and would not have allowed anyone to break through the wall of his house. Therefore, you too must stand ready because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.'

Advent is a season of preparation, so I take time and care in how I prepare to pray today.

I may choose to light the first candle on an Advent wreath, making this a focus for my attention. Alternatively, my focus may rest on some other Advent image, colour or music.

Perhaps I take a long, deep breath as I try to slow down to pray.

Jesus encouraged his followers to be alert and awake, to 'stand ready' to greet him. I allow my body to settle into an alert, grounded, wakeful posture.

What do I bring to my prayer today?

When I meet God in prayer, in what state of mind and body will God find me?

When I am ready, I read the Gospel slowly, reflecting on the images Jesus uses to share his message.

What do I notice when I ponder these things?

What do I need to do to be ready to greet Christ, now in this moment of my prayer, and in these coming weeks of Advent?

I share my reflections with God.

When I am ready, I ask God for all that I need to feel prepared to welcome the Christ Child of Christmas into my heart.

I close my prayer, saying '*Glory be to the Father ...*'

Here's a text if you've only got a minute ...

O House of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord.

First Reading

'Peace upon you!'

Psalm

Therefore, you too must stand ready, because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

Gospel

This week's texts if you want to reflect further

Isaiah 2: 1-5; Psalm 121 (122); Romans 13: 11-14; Mathew 24: 37-44



'Stay Awake!'



ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH
IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM

JESUIT
Ministries



Prepared by St Beuno's Outreach in the Diocese of Wrexham

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