



AMDG
FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT
YEAR B
3RD DECEMBER 2017



Stay Awake!

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.

We begin Advent with a call to prepare – and to stay awake! We are called to wake up to our true reality: to become alive to God at work in our lives, and to be ready to greet Jesus Christ as he comes to us in each and every moment. We are reminded, too, of our hope of Christ's second triumphant coming.

In the **First Reading**, the prophet tells – despite us being God's children – of how we lost our way. Isaiah yearns for the time when God will come down to his people. He reminds us that we are all the work of God's hand.

The **Psalmist** also longs for God's help and care. Using images of a shepherd and farmer, we are encouraged to recognise how tender God's love is for us – the love that became incarnate, the light which shines upon us and saves us.

The **Second Reading** reminds us of the blessings and graces we have received from God. It is God's spirit that gives us hope as we wait for Christ coming again into our lives.

In the **Gospel**, Jesus teaches us to be ready and alert to God coming into our lives. We have each been given a task, and Jesus wants us to be prepared to receive Him.

Throughout this Advent season, let us remember each other in prayer, and ask for the grace to be able to make time to become silent and still.

In the silence, let us watch and wait for the Lord.

SECOND READING: 1 CORINTHIANS 1: 3–9

May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ send you
grace and peace.

I never stop thanking God for all the graces you have received through Jesus Christ. I thank him that you have been enriched in so many ways, especially in your teachers and preachers; the witness to Christ has indeed been strong among you so that you will not be without any of the gifts of the Spirit while you are waiting for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed; and he will keep you steady and without blame until the last day, the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, because God by calling you has joined you to his Son, Jesus Christ; and God is faithful.

As I prepare to pray, I ask for the grace of peace and stillness in my heart.
It may help my prayer to sit before a candle or some other symbol of Advent.

I slowly allow myself to become silent before God.

I watch and I wait on the Lord ...

With care and reverence, I read St Paul's letter slowly,
noticing which words or phrases move me.

What do I hear?

What do I feel?

Perhaps I am drawn to the spirit of gratitude ...?

Am I able to reflect on the graces that Jesus Christ has given to me?

In what ways has my life been enriched?

I ponder with grateful love on the people who have been witnesses of Christ in my life.

I share with God why they have been so important to me,
and thank God for their presence in my life.

What Gifts of the Spirit have I been given?

What gifts and graces do I desire?

How is God calling me, as I wait for Christ to be revealed?

I watch ... I wait ... and I listen.

I close my prayer with my own words of gratitude and by making a slow sign of the cross.

GOSPEL: MARK 13: 33–37

Jesus said to his disciples: “Be on your guard, stay awake, because you never know when the time will come. It is like a man travelling abroad: he has gone from home, and left his servants in charge, each with his own task; and he has told the doorkeeper to stay awake. So stay awake, because you do not know when the master of the house is coming, evening, midnight, cockcrow, dawn; if he comes unexpectedly, he must not find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake!”

At the beginning of this Advent season, I am called to “stay awake!”
I ask Jesus to help me to be aware of the presence of God in my life.

How do I feel as I come to prayer today?

I place my thoughts and feelings before God and prepare to pray in whatever way suits me best.

I read the Gospel passage slowly.

Jesus taught his followers using parables and images.

I therefore use my imagination to enter fully into the truth of his teaching.

What do I notice?

What is Jesus teaching me?

As a servant of Jesus, what tasks have I uniquely been given to do?

I listen carefully to what Jesus desires of me.

Do I wait on the Master with a spirit of fear ...
or a spirit of joyful anticipation? Why?

I talk to Jesus about how I feel ...

about what graces I think I need for the task ...

and most importantly, I take time to listen with an alert and watchful heart.

As I look forward to the coming days and weeks of Advent,
how will I best ensure that I stay awake to God’s presence in my life?

How will I prepare to greet Jesus with joy?

In what ways can I help others to wake up to the message of God’s saving love?

I close my prayer slowly, noticing how I feel at the end of my prayer time.

I finish by saying *Our Father* ...

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

Lord, you are our Father; we the clay, you the potter,
we are all the work of your hand. *First Reading*

God of hosts, bring us back; let your face shine on us
and we shall be saved. *Responsorial Psalm*

He will keep you steady and without blame until the last day
... because God by calling you has joined you to his Son,
Jesus Christ; and God is faithful. *Second Reading*

Father in heaven, our hearts desire the warmth of your love
and our minds are searching for the light of your Word.
Increase our longing for Christ our Saviour
and give us the strength to grow in love. *From the old opening prayer*

This week's texts if you'd like to reflect further:

Isaiah 63: 16–17; 64: 1, 3–8; Ps. 79 (80); 1 Cor. 1: 3–9; Mark 13: 33–37



How does this
image speak to me
in my prayer?



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