



THE LORD'S DAY AT HOME

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT (B)
Sunday 29th November 2020

If you are housebound or self-isolating at this time, please use these prayers to unite yourself with the worship of the Universal Church, and your own Parish this Sunday. If alone, read or say these prayers quietly to yourself. If with another, or in a family, someone should read the "leader" parts, and others respond. It might be suitable to find a special, quiet place at home for your Sunday prayers.

THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

Entrance Antiphon

A: To you, I lift up my soul, O my God. In you, I have trusted; let me not be put to shame. Nor let my enemies exult over me; and let none who hope in you be put to shame.

Sign of the Cross

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

A: Amen.

Introduction

L: Happy New Year! Well, happy new liturgical year! Today we begin a new cycle of the Church's year, in which we will once more follow the story of our salvation in Jesus Christ – this year focussing on Saint Mark's Gospel. We begin with the time before Jesus came – that time of promises waiting to be fulfilled, before he took flesh in the womb of Mary and was born in Bethlehem, In a sense we come full circle: as we think of the waiting and longing then, we also think of our waiting and longing now – not for Christ's birth (that has already happened!) but for his coming again at the end of time. Jesus wants us to be ready, to be awake, to be filled with hope and love and a desire to see him. Let us pray that our longing may be deepened, and begin our prayers this first Sunday of Advent by asking for the help of his forgiveness:

Penitential Act

L: Lord Jesus, you came to gather the nations into the peace of God's kingdom. Lord, have mercy.

A: Lord, have mercy.

L: You come in word and in sacrament to strengthen us and make us holy. Christ, have mercy.

A: Christ, have mercy.

L: You will come again in glory with salvation for your people. Lord, have mercy.

A: Lord, have mercy.

L: May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

A: Amen.

Opening Prayer

L: Let us pray.

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. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

A: Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

Gospel Reading

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, cock-crow, dawn; if he comes unexpectedly, he must not find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake!'

The Gospel of the Lord.

A: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!



Reflection

There can be something of a disconnect with the Word of God this Sunday: all around us people are putting up Christmas decorations, preparing as best they can for a festive season in the midst of a pandemic,

and looking for moments of "comfort and joy"! And then we get a Gospel about the end of the world and the Second Coming of Jesus – and a stern warning to "Stay awake"! Is the Church so out of step with the real world? Not at all: we often hear people talking about the "real meaning of Christmas". While for many that simply means Nativity Plays and religious Christmas cards, we believe that the real meaning of Christmas is much more profound: Jesus is real, he has walked among us, and he will come again. This is the "real meaning" we must hold on to: the overpowering power of Christ's love is not something to fear, but something to long for. And it is something that no virus, no pandemic, no tragedy or disaster, not even death itself can take from us. This is what we must be awake to, filled with longing, love and expectation. In a year when we may be without many of the elements that we think make for a joyful Christmas, let us focus more and more on those things that are always with us – the love of God revealed in Jesus. Let us long for him more and more!

For our Younger Friends

Most Advent Calendars only start on the 1st December – so you have a couple of days to go before you can open the first door! But in Church we start our countdown today. Perhaps you could make your own Advent Calendar, but rather than a chocolate for every day, how about a promise – a promise to do something at home or school, for a friend or member of your family, or even doing something kind through a charity for someone in need? We countdown to things we are looking forward to – not just Christmas, but birthdays, holidays, special moments in our lives. You don't countdown to a visit to the dentist or an exam! Certainly not in a joyful way! But today we are not just counting down to Christmas: Jesus was born in the past, a long time ago. What

we are looking forward to now is Jesus coming back! Think about what this means for our world, what it means for people who are sad or lonely, what it means for you!

If gathering as a family, perhaps now continue to discuss what this Gospel passage means to you. If alone, think about what key message you take from the Scriptures today.

Profession of Faith

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

Intercessions

L: The Lord calls us to be watchful and alert. We do not know when he will return, and so it is in love and trust that we turn to him in prayer for the needs of our world.

For the Church, that we may be awake to receive the Lord when he comes. Lord, in your mercy:

A: Hear our prayer.

For peace in our world, that leaders of nations seek together the way of peace. Lord, in your mercy:

A: Hear our prayer.

For our community of faith, that we may be a people of charity and justice. Lord, in your mercy:

A: Hear our prayer.

Please add your own prayers for the needs of the Church, the world and your local community. You may wish to add particular prayers for family members, friends or neighbours in need at this time.

Blessing of the Advent Wreath

If you have an Advent wreath at home, use this prayer of blessing together as you light the first candle:

Lord our God, we praise you for your Son, Jesus Christ: he is Emmanuel, the hope of the peoples,

he is the wisdom that teaches and guides us, he is the Saviour of every nation. Lord God, let your blessing come upon us as we light the candles of this wreath. May the wreath and its light be a sign of Christ's promise to bring us salvation. May he come quickly and not delay. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

A: Amen.

THE COMMUNION RITE

The Lord's Prayer

L: At the Saviour's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say:

A: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

L: Accept, we pray, O Lord, these offerings we make, gathered from among your gifts to us, and may what you grant us to celebrate devoutly here below gain for us the prize of eternal redemption. Through Christ our Lord.

A: Amen.

Before Spiritual Communion

L: Loving Father, your Son assumed at his first coming the lowliness of human flesh, and so fulfilled the design you formed long ago, and opened for us the way to eternal salvation, that, when he comes again in glory and majesty and all is at last made manifest, we who watch for that day may inherit the great promise in which now we dare to hope. At the Last Supper he showed the fullness of your love, as he gave his Body and Blood for his people. Even though we are not in Church, and not able to receive communion today, we open our minds and hearts now to your generous love and the gift of Jesus your Son, welcoming him spiritually into our lives.

Spiritual Communion

A: My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the Holy Sacrament of the altar. I love you above all things and I passionately desire to receive you into my soul. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come spiritually into my soul

so that I may unite myself wholly to you now and forever. Amen.

Pause for a moment of silent prayer and reflection.

Thanksgiving Psalm

L: God of hosts, bring us back; let your face shine on us and we shall be saved.

L: God of hosts, bring us back; let your face shine on us and we shall be saved.

L: O shepherd of Israel, hear us, shine forth from your cherubim throne.

O Lord, rouse up your might, O Lord, come to our help.

A: God of hosts, bring us back; let your face shine on us and we shall be saved.

L: God of hosts, turn again, we implore, look down from heaven and see. Visit this vine and protect it, the vine your right hand has planted.

A: God of hosts, bring us back; let your face shine on us and we shall be saved.

L: May your hand be on the man you have chosen, the man you have given your strength.

And we shall never forsake you again; give us life that we may call upon your name.

A: God of hosts, bring us back; let your face shine on us and we shall be saved.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

Final Prayer and Blessing

L: Let us pray.

May these mysteries, O Lord, in which we have participated, profit us, we pray, for even now, as we walk among passing things, you teach us by them to love the things of heaven and hold fast to what endures. Through Christ our Lord.

A: Amen.

L: May the Lord ✠ bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

A: Amen.

L: Let us bless the Lord!

A: Thanks be to God!