



03 DECEMBER 2021

Stay awake, be on your guard.

HYMN: 366 (*Sweet Sacrament Divine*) - 'Joyful Celebration' or any other.

INTRODUCTION: Advent means "Coming" Our whole life is a long expectation; one long movement from event to event. We are continually waiting to become, to encounter, to complete and to fill the inner vacuum that only God can fill in our lives. The waiting and expectation turn into joy and throbbing hope, if we are waiting for someone whom we deeply love and who loves us even more so. Advent calls us to be fully present and alert for signs of Jesus' inbreaking into our lives; in all its situations and events and to hold on to the hope that is promised to us in the Holy Scriptures. Unfortunately, there are plenty of distractions all around us; temptations to give in to the false gods of our day and time, the busyness of our hectic lifestyles, the pushes and pulls of day-to-day concerns that steal away the needed inner space due of advent waiting.

Every Eucharistic celebration and especially during this season of advent, can be both a fulfilment of our expectation and a source of our further hope. This sacramental meeting with Jesus then blossoms into a never ceasing coming of the Lord into our daily lives and actions. As God's faithful children, we enter Advent with eyes wide open in anticipation of seeing, and welcoming Jesus, who is love incarnate, into our lives. This advent, we pray for the openness and receptivity of our Blessed Mother Mary, the obedience and uprightness of St Joseph, the simplicity and joy of the shepherds and finally, the determination and vigilance of the Magi, as we await to receive our Saviour into the cradle of our hearts.

LEADER: Dear friends as we prepare ourselves to listen to God's word, let us invoke the Holy Spirit to dispose our hearts and minds and to make us docile and receptive to all that God wants to convey to us here and now.

Hymn: 363- (*Spirit of the living God fall afresh on me!*) 'Joyful Celebration' or any other

Prayer to the Holy Spirit.

Come Holy Spirit,
Replace the tension within us with a holy relaxation.
Replace the turbulence within us with a sacred calm.
Replace the anxiety within us with a quiet confidence.

Replace the fear within us with a strong faith.
Replace the bitterness within us with the sweetness of grace.
Replace the darkness within us with gentle light.
Replace the coldness within us with loving warmth.
Replace the night within us with your Light.
Make us hearers and doers of God's word. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING: Mk 13:32-37

REFLECTION: It is easy to become lazy in our life of faith. Our hearts can become drowsy from carousing and drunkenness and the anxieties of daily life, thus the gospel passage we heard warns all of us of two things:

First, we are warned against carousing and drunkenness. We should obviously avoid drugs, alcohol or any substance abuse, but it also applies to numerous other ways that we are made "drowsy" through a lack of temperance. Abuse of alcohol is one of the deceptive ways of escaping from the burdens of life, but there are many ways we can do this. Any time we give in to an excess of one sort or another, we begin to let our hearts become drowsy on a spiritual level. Whenever we seek momentary escapes from life without turning to God, we allow ourselves to become spiritually drowsy.

Secondly, this passage identifies "the anxieties of daily life" as a source of becoming drowsy. So often we do face anxiety in life. We can feel overwhelmed and overly burdened by one thing or another. When we feel burdened by life, we tend to look for a way out. And far too often, the "way out" is something that makes us spiritually drowsy. Jesus speaks this Gospel as a way of challenging us to remain awake and vigilant in our life of faith. This happens when we keep the truth in our minds and hearts and our eyes on the will of God. The moment we turn our eyes to the burdens of life and fail to see God in the midst of all things, we become spiritually drowsy and begin, in a sense, to fall asleep.

As we have begun our advent journey, let us reflect upon the fact that God is calling us to stay wide awake. He wants our full attention. Let us all fix our eyes on Him and let Him keep us continually prepared for His imminent return.

(Brief moments of silent self-reflections and examination of life in the light of the gospel and the reflection.... Pause)

HYMN: 365 (*Stay awake, the master is coming*) - 'Joyful Celebration' or any other.

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS:

Response: Come Lord Jesus, come and be born in our hearts!

(Recite or sing verse one, of hymn: 92 from Joyful Celebration)

1. Lord Jesus, as you chose the lowly, the outcasts, and the poor to receive the greatest news the world had ever known, so may we worship you in meekness of heart. **R/-**
2. To be alert, one must be fully present to the moment, something that can be tough to do in our demanding world of multi-tasking and myriad priorities, may we learn to live one moment at a time. **R/-**

3. If the pandemic has forced us to be more distant from God and our neighbour, may Jesus in the crib, show us the way of tenderness and love; to find support in each other again and reclaim our humanity. **R/-**
4. We are all people in the making. May this advent season teach us to embrace our own imperfections so that God can work in and through us and also to be more patient and accommodative to the faults and shortcomings of others who strive daily just like us. **R/-**
5. In a world of constant worry and unrest, may the Jesus the God of love, stir up that good tidings of joy and peace again this Christmas and make it real in our hearts. **R/-**
6. We pray for God's protection against all variants of Covid or any other deadly diseases and pestilence, that we may celebrate the birth of our Saviour in the company of all our loved ones and friends. **R/-**

AN ADVENT LITANY:

Lord Jesus, you are the light of the world.

Come, Lord Jesus.

You are light in our darkness.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Son of God, save us from our sins.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Son of Mary, deepen our love.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Bring hope into the lives of all people.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Give your peace to all nations.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Be the joy of all who love you.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Bring unity among all who believe in you.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Bless us as we gather here in your name.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Lord Jesus, stay with us always.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Let us pray:

May Christ give us his peace and joy,
and let us share them with others.

All peace and glory is his for ever. Amen.

CONCLUSION PRAYER: God of love, your son, Jesus, is your greatest gift to humanity. He is a sign of your love and care. Help us walk in that love during the weeks of Advent, as we wait and prepare for his coming anew into our hearts. Help us to remain wide awake in our life of faith so that Jesus our Saviour and hope will find us prepared, when He finally comes to us in your appointed time. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN: 179 (*Humbly we adore thee, Christ redeemer King*) - 'Joyful celebration' or any other.