



1ST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

*Beware, keep alert for you
do not know when the time*

will come

PRAYER

Gracious God, we wait for you. Help us at all times to be alert and ready, for eye has not seen and ear has not heard the wonders of your deeds. Help us to see beyond our limited vision and give us ears to hear the joy of your message as we enter into this time of Advent. We thank you for giving us this time of preparation together. Amen

With Mary we pray

Hail Mary ...

READING

People can take it in turns to read the Gospel, or else if someone is praying on his/her own, then s/he can read the Gospel a number of times. This should be followed by a time of reflective silence.

First Reading: Isaiah 63:16-17, 3-8

Second Reading: 1st Cor. 1:3-9

Read the Text

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to 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!'*

WORDS/PHRASES

Suggest that each person says a word or a phrase which stayed with them from the reading (*with no comment from anyone else*)

REFLECTION

Lord, as we gather to reflect on our Advent journey, help us to be alert to your presence, in ourselves, in those around us, and in our world.

Jesus, as you return to your Father, you entrust the world to us but so often we are immune to what is happening around us because we have been so caught up in ourselves, in our own worlds, that we fail sometimes to be alert, to be aware of what is happening in the lives of others.

Covid-19 has called us to stop, to be alert, to become aware of the people and what is happening in the world around us. What are the things that are now important to us? Has the 'Lockdown' helped us to prioritize a little more?

Where is the Lord in our life now? Are we ready for the intrusions that he may cause in our lives today or are we like the one in the gospel, asleep in a world that needs us to wake up?

And so, as we begin this Advent journey, we need to ask ourselves, are we willing to heal the wounds around us? Are we willing to help those who have lost faith in themselves, in others, in God, especially because of Covid-19?

Jesus is like the man in today's Gospel, who has left for a far-off country. Jesus has been speaking about returning to his father, but before he leaves, he entrusts his home, his world, his people to those who have followed him. Can we be counted among such people, and if so, if he comes back will he find us alert and building the Kingdom, not asleep or lethargic!

Lord, help us to be more alert this Advent to your presence, to your presence in others, in the world, in the sacraments and in ourselves, that we will always be ready for what you ask of us and that we will

always be grateful for your many blessings.

Allow for a period of five to ten minutes' silence

PRAYER

Response: Come Lord Jesus

In hope we have waited for your coming,
O Jesus, so in confidence we pray

Help us to appreciate the wonder of waiting, so that we can be alert to the many ways in which you call on us to respond.

Come Lord Jesus

Help us to see beyond the borders of our vision, that we might cut through the prejudices that keep us in isolation.

Come Lord Jesus

Help us to free ourselves and others from the slavery of oppression that binds us and keeps us from reaching out to another.

Come Lord Jesus

Help all those who are sick in mind, body or spirit. That they will know your healing touch.

Come Lord Jesus

Grant us a readiness to listen to your voice and bear witness to your coming into the world.

Come Lord Jesus.

FINAL THOUGHT

Am I alert to what God is asking of me at this time or am I willing to let this pass?
Am I willing to be his witness in the world this Advent?