

During this unprecedented time in our world's history, we offer you the following material for your praying and reflecting on God's Word.

Today is the first Sunday of Advent, which is also the first Sunday of a new liturgical year for the Church. The Advent season includes the four Sundays that precede Christmas. It is a time of preparation for the coming of the Lord. In this season, we recall two central elements of our faith: the final coming of the Lord in glory and the incarnation of the Lord in the birth of Jesus. Key themes of the Advent season are watchful waiting, preparation, and justice. The passage from Matthew we read today is rather straightforward. No one knows the precise time of the coming of the Lord in glory, so watchful waiting and vigilance are required.

The passage speaks to the uselessness of looking for signs; there will be none. As a thief sneaks in during the night, so will the Lord's coming in glory be. The question for us as members of the Christian community, then, is how do we prepare for this? Today's passage speaks more about the manner of waiting, rather than the details of the preparation. Jesus compares the vigilance required of Christians to the vigilance of a homeowner who knows the plans of the thief. If one knows that the thief's action is imminent, one remains watchful. As Christians, we know that our Lord is coming even if we cannot know the precise timing. Jesus calls us to be watchful and vigilant, like the homeowner. If we become lax in our Christian living, we may be caught unprepared.

Lectio Divina with the Sunday Gospel

Lectio Divina means 'divine reading'. It is a way to pray using the holy scriptures in a step-by-step process. Gather the entire family around and make the sign of the Cross. Light a candle.

Leader: "Holy Spirit, you inspired the authors of Sacred Scripture to write what you wanted us to know for the sake of our salvation. Inspire us now to hear those words not only with our ears, but our hearts, so that we might know your saving Word for us today."

- Have one person **read** the scripture slowly, out loud and have a few moments of silence afterwards. (It may be helpful for everyone to have a copy of the reading).
- **Read** the scripture again out loud and choose a single word or short phrase that touches, speaks or surprises you. Share with everyone.
- **Read** the scripture out loud one more time and discuss what is happening directly in the text.
- **Meditate** on what God is doing now in our lives through this text.
- **Respond** to what God is doing through prayer.
- **Contemplate** on what God is asking of me through this text and how to use these words as a gift for others through my actions.
- After a period of silence, end with the Sign of the Cross.

(see over)

The Holy Gospel for November 27, 2022

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Jesus spoke to his disciples:

"As the days of Noah were,
so will be the coming of the Son of Man.
For as in those days before the flood
they were eating and drinking,
marrying and given in marriage,
until the day Noah entered the ark,
and they knew nothing
until the flood came and swept them all away,
so too will be the coming of the Son of Man.

The two will be in the field,
one will be taken and one will be left.
Two women will be grinding meal together;
one will be taken and one will be left.

Keep awake, therefore,
for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.
But understand this:
if the owner of the house had known
in what part of the night the thief was coming,
he would have stayed awake
and would not have let his house be broken into.
Therefore you also must be ready,
for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour."

The Gospel of the Lord.

(see over)

Family Activities

- ❖ Print out the secret code below:

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Ask whether anyone in the family can figure out what the message is. It is extremely difficult and at times probably impossible to know the message unless you pay attention and have the ability to decipher it. (Hint: This is Morse code). Now with the ability to decipher it and paying great attention, you will be able to figure out the message.

In today's Gospel, Jesus reminds us to pay attention and prepare ourselves for his second coming. We do this through prayer and faithfulness. God requires us to pay full attention in order to hear his own message. We must be prepared and ready to be able to recognize and understand God's message for us.

The secret message is: *Keep awake, be ready*

- ❖ In what ways will you and your family prepare for the coming of the Lord this Advent?
- ❖ As you gather around the Advent wreath, light the first violet candle while reciting the prayer:

**O God, as light comes from this candle,
may the blessing of Jesus Christ come to us
warming our hearts and brightening our way.**

**May Christ our Saviour bring life
into the darkness of this world,
and to us, as we wait for his coming. Amen**



- ❖ The wreath itself, which is made of various evergreens, signifies continuous life. The circle of the wreath, which has no beginning or end, symbolizes the eternity of God, the immortality of the soul, and the everlasting life we find in Christ. The first candle, which is violet, symbolizes hope. It is sometimes called the "Prophecy Candle" in remembrance of the prophets, especially Isaiah, who foretold the birth of Christ. It represents the expectation felt in anticipation of the coming Messiah. The colour violet is a liturgical colour that signifies a time of prayer, penance, and sacrifice.