

Today's Gospel from Matthew is at the very heart of Advent. Jesus is teaching that his coming cannot be doubted and he insists that it will be completely unexpected. Therefore, we must be constantly living in a state of watchfulness, ready to greet him when he comes again.

Throughout the gospels, Jesus affirms that the kingdom of God is already present in his person, and yet it is still to come. Through his life, death and resurrection, all things have been fulfilled and yet, they are not yet manifest. We are called to 'Stay Awake' in a state of watchfulness. 'This vigilance is not a vague disposition of the soul. It is, rather, an active force, a dynamic prompting that makes one act, always and everywhere, with full reason. It is a question of faithfully doing one's work, of assuming our daily responsibilities with the conviction that we will not be surprised by the unforeseen arrival of the Lord'. (*Days of the Lord Advent*)

Prayer over the Offerings

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.

Communion Antiphon

The Lord will bestow his bounty, and our earth shall yield its increase.

Prayer after Communion

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

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Year A

30th November 2025

Stay Awake, stand ready

Advent is a rich season when we prepare not just for Christmas, when Christ's first coming to us is remembered; but when we also direct our minds and hearts to await Christ's Second Coming at the end of time. It is the Lord's 'Second Coming' that is at the centre of this Sunday's readings, the First Sunday of Advent.

Entrance Antiphon

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.

Collect

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.

ISAIAH 2: 1-5

The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it, and many peoples shall come, and say:

'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.' For out of Sion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the

nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD.

THE WORD OF THE LORD

Isaiah's ministry began in Jerusalem in 740 B.C. Judah was living under the threat of Assyrian invasion and there was pressure on them to enter into a military alliance with their neighbours. Isaiah's mission was to announce the fall of Judah, as the due punishment for the nation's unfaithfulness. However, God would not abandon them. Isaiah foretells a future age in which a remnant of the people will survive to rebuild peace and justice under a future descendant of David. This theme is picked up in today's reading. Isaiah has accused Judah of unfaithfulness and then, whilst at prayer, he has this prophetic vision of the end times. He sees all nations gathering in Jerusalem to worship the Lord - the Lord God will reign over all and war will be no more. This theme is picked up in the following psalm -

PSALM: 122(121):1-2. 4-5. 6-7. 8-9.

Response: *Let us go rejoicing to the house of the LORD.*

I rejoiced when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the LORD.'
And now our feet are standing within your gates, O Jerusalem.

It is there that the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, as it is decreed for Israel, to give thanks to the name of the LORD. There were set the thrones for judgement, the thrones of the house of David.

For the peace of Jerusalem pray, 'May they prosper, those who love you.'
May peace abide in your walls, and security be in your towers.

For the sake of my family and friends, let me say, 'Peace upon you.'
For the sake of the house of the LORD, our God, I will seek good things for you.

ROMANS 13: 11-14

Brothers and sisters: You know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than

when we first believed. The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armour of light. Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarrelling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE WORD OF THE LORD

On this First Sunday of Advent, all our Readings present a similar theme, to 'stay away', to 'stand ready', to recognize the Lord's coming, but also to accept his abiding presence already among us. This is emphasized in Paul's Letter to the Romans, read today. Paul calls on his listeners to live in the consciousness of the coming light, purging ourselves of all dark actions and motives which we are ashamed to allow to be seen in the light of Christ's day. We are to live, therefore, motivated by the prospect of Christ's return.

*Alleluia, alleluia. Show us, O LORD, your mercy,
and grant us your salvation. Alleluia.*

MATTHEW 24: 37-44

Jesus said to his disciples: 'For as were the days of Noah, 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 giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left. Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master 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 hour you do not expect.'

THE GOSPEL OF THE LORD