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

FIRST READING Isaiah 63:16-17; 64:1.3-8

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

You, Lord, yourself are our Father,
Our Redeemer is your ancient name.
Why, Lord, leave us to stray from your ways
and harden our hearts against fearing you?
Return, for the sake of your servants,
the tribes of your inheritance.
Oh, that you would tear the heavens open and come down
– at your Presence the mountains would melt.
No ear has heard,
no eye has seen
any god but you act like this
for those who trust him.
You guide those who act with integrity
and keep your ways in mind.
You were angry when we were sinners;
we had long been rebels against you.
We were all like men unclean,
all that integrity of ours like filthy clothing.
We have all withered like leaves
and our sins blew us away like the wind.
No one invoked your name
or roused himself to catch hold of you.
For you hid your face from us
and gave us up to the power of our sins.
And yet, Lord, you are our Father;
we the clay, you the potter,
we are all the work of your hand.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM Psalm 79

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

1. O shepherd of Israel, hear us,
shine forth from your cherubim throne.
O Lord, rouse up your might,
O Lord, come to our help. **(R.)**

2. 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. **(R.)**

3. 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. **(R.)**

SECOND READING 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians.

May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ send you grace and peace.

I never stop thanking God for all the graces you have received through Jesus Christ. I thank him that you have been enriched in so many ways, especially in your teachers and preachers; the witness to Christ has indeed been strong among you so that you will not be without any of the gifts of the Spirit while you are waiting for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed; and he will keep you steady and without blame until the last day, the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, because God by calling you has joined you to his Son, Jesus Christ; and God is faithful.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!
Let us see, O Lord, your mercy
and give us your saving help.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL Mark 13:33-37

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

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!"

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
(all bow during the next three lines)
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

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.
Amen.

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.
Amen.

If the Word truly became flesh, then God had not only a mother, but also a grandmother, cousins, great-aunts, and weird uncles. If the Word truly dwelt among us, then he was part of a family that, like most, was fairly dysfunctional, a mix of the good and bad, the saintly and the sinful, the glorious and the not so glorious. And this is such good news for us.

Bishop Robert Barron

redemptorist publications

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29 NOVEMBER 2020 FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Sunday Message

THE WORD

The imminent coming of the kingdom of God forms the basis of the preaching of John the Baptist and of Jesus. Our new cycle of Sunday readings opens with a similar message, delivered to the disciples at the end of Jesus' public ministry.

The extract for today comprises the concluding verses of Jesus' long discourse to his disciples concerning the second coming and the events which will accompany it, beginning with the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. The final words are a warning: "Stay awake!" ■

SAY

Awake from your slumber!
Arise from your sleep!
(Daniel L. Schutte)

LEARN

The Roman night was divided into four watches: evening, midnight, cockcrow and dawn.

"Advent" means approach, arrival, coming.

The Gospel according to Mark begins with Jesus as an adult: there is no "infancy narrative" telling of events such as the annunciation to Mary or Joseph, or of the circumstances surrounding his birth.

DO

Set your alarm a little earlier than usual for the season of Advent: when it rings, think of Jesus' words "Stay awake!" and thank the Lord for a new day.

REFLECT

No one likes the sensation of being watched. We usually feel uncomfortable or uneasy if someone is looking over our shoulder and keeping an eye on us. Some people feel this way about God: the Lord is observing us, noting what we do right, or, more often, what we do wrong, and such individuals live with a guilt complex, that they are never in God's good books. Our Gospel reading today sets out a summary of the Christian ethical life: the master has left his servants with their different tasks, assigned according to their ability; the doorkeeper has been instructed to "stay awake", as the time for the master's return has not been announced, and so could happen at any time; if the servants are going about their duties, they have nothing to worry about, so the master's arrival is not something to fear.

We are beginning the season of Advent, when we think about the coming of Jesus in our human flesh and nature. It can be difficult to preserve this attitude of looking forward to Christmas when for so many people the feast has, to all intents and purposes, already arrived. Christmas carols and songs are to be heard everywhere, and carol services sometimes anticipate the day itself. But, as Christians, we are invited to prepare to celebrate this festival with prayer and penance: this means living these four weeks in the spirit of faith, and examining our lives in this light. We are being asked to think about how we would feel if the Master did arrive, how we are living up to our calling as disciples of Jesus. Are we awake and fulfilling our daily responsibilities calmly and thoroughly, or are we like the disciples in Gethsemane who fall asleep, just when Jesus needs their support and presence? We are not being asked to work ourselves up into a frenzy of panic and guilt, but to look at ourselves honestly and remedy those compromises we may have fallen into, not out of ill will, but simply because of forgetfulness or tiredness or the like.

When we are expecting a guest, we see that everything is ready, not just out of courtesy for our guest, but also out of a sense of respect for ourselves. Advent is that time to prepare to celebrate the first coming of Jesus, but also a reminder that we should keep in mind that he will come again, and we do not know the day or the hour. ■