



*Light and
Love in the
darkness*

CELEBRATING AT HOME LECTIO DIVINA 1ST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Stay awake!
(Mark 13:33-37)

This resource is presented by the Carmelites of Australia & Timor-Leste at a time when we cannot gather together as we usually do to celebrate the Eucharist. We are conscious that Christ is present not only in the Blessed Sacrament but also in the words of the Gospel and in our own hearts. Even when we are on our own we remain part of the Body of Christ.

In the room you decide to use for Lectio Divina you could have a lighted candle and the Bible. These symbols help keep us mindful of the sacredness of our time of prayer.

Lectio Divina has four main stages. The first stage is *lectio* (reading) where we read the Word of God, slowly and reflectively so that it sinks into us.

The second stage is *meditatio* (reflection) where we think about the text we have chosen and ruminate upon it so that we take from it what God wants to give us.

The third stage is *oratio* (response) where we leave our thinking aside and simply let our hearts speak to God. This response is inspired by our reflection on the Word of God.

The final stage of Lectio Divina is *contemplatio* (rest) where we let go not only of our own ideas, plans and meditations but also of our holy words and thoughts. We simply rest in the Word of God. We listen at the deepest level of our being to God who speaks within us. As we listen, we are gradually transformed from within. This transformation will have a profound effect on the way we actually live our daily lives.

As you use this prayer know that the Carmelites will be remembering in our prayer you and all the members of our family at this time.

CELEBRATING AT HOME

LECTIO DIVINA 1ST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Prayer

Father in heaven, our hearts desire the warmth of your love and our minds are searching for the light of your Word. Increase our longing for Christ our Savior and give us the strength to grow in love, that the dawn of his coming may find us rejoicing in His presence and welcoming the light of his truth. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Gospel Reading – Mark 13:33-37

Jesus said to his disciples; 'Be on 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!'

Reflect

Spend a few moments in quiet reflection

Commentary

“Watch!” This is the key word in the short passage that the Church presents for the liturgy of the first Sunday of Advent. To watch, to stay awake, to wait for the return of the master of the house, not to sleep: this is what Jesus asks of a Christian. These four verses of the Gospel of Saint Mark are part of the eschatological discourse in chapter thirteen. This chapter speaks of the destruction of the Temple and of the city of Jerusalem. Jesus takes up a point from the observation made by a disciple: “Master, look at the size of those stones!” (Mk 13: 1). Jesus then clarifies the idea: “You see these great buildings? Not a single stone will be left on another; everything will be pulled down” (Mk 13: 2). The Temple, the tangible sign of the presence of God in the midst of His chosen people, Jerusalem, “built

as a city, in one united whole” where “the tribes go up, the tribes of Yahweh, a sign for Israel to give thanks to the name of Yahweh” (Ps 122: 4), all this, the sure sign of the promise made to David, sign of the covenant, all this will be destroyed: it is only a sign of something else to come. The disciples become curious and ask the Lord who is sitting on the Mount of Olives in front of the Temple: “Tell us, when is this going to happen, and what sign will there be that it is all about to take place?” (Mk 13: 4). After the Jewish apocalyptic style inspired by Daniel, Jesus limits His reply to proclaiming the warning signs (false christs and prophets who will deceive by proclaiming the coming of the imminent times, persecutions, signs in the powers of Heaven. cf.: Mk 13: 5-32), “But as for that day or hour, nobody knows it, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son; no one but the Father” (Mk 13: 32).

This leads us to understand the importance of watchful and attentive waiting for the signs of the times that help us to welcome the “master of the house” (Mk 13: 35). When he comes, all things will disappear, both “the authority of the servants” (Mk 13: 34) as well as the signs that help us remember his benevolence (temple, Jerusalem, house). When the master comes, the “servants” and “the doorkeeper” (Mk 13: 34) no longer care about the signs, but take pleasure in the master himself: “Look! The bridegroom! Go out and meet him” (Mt 25: 6, Mk 2: 19-20).

Jesus often asked His disciples to watch. In the garden of Olives, on the Thursday night just before the passion, the Lord says to Peter, James and John: “Wait here, and stay awake” (Mk 14: 34; Mt 26: 38). Watching helps us not to fall into temptation (Mt 26: 41) but to stay awake. In the garden of Olives, the disciples fall asleep because the flesh is weak, even though the spirit is willing (Mk 14: 38). Anyone who sleeps goes to ruin, like Samson who allowed himself to be put to sleep, thus losing his strength which was a gift from God (Jud 16: 19).

We must stay awake always, not fall asleep, and watch and pray that we may not be deceived and thus go to our perdition (Mk 13: 22, Jn 1: 6). “Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you” (Eph 5: 14).

Points for meditation

- What does watching mean to you?
- The Lord foretells the destruction of the Temple and of the city of Jerusalem, the pride of the chosen people and symbols of the presence of God. Why does Jesus foretell their destruction?
- The Temple and the holy city were concrete forms of the covenant between God and his people. But these have gone through destruction. What are our concrete forms of the covenant? Do you think they will experience the same fate?
- Jesus calls us to transcend all forms and to attach ourselves to him. What things, forms and signs do you think the Lord is asking you to transcend in order to attach yourself more closely to him?
- Are you asleep? In what sense?
- Do you live always in expectation of the coming of the Lord? Is Advent a time for you to remember the element of waiting in the life of a Christian?

Closing Prayer

We give you thanks, O God our Father, for your son Jesus who came to raise us up and set us on the right way. When you awaken in our hearts a thirst for prayer and loving service, you prepare us for the dawn of that new day when our glory will be made manifest with all the saints in the presence of the Son of Man. Amen.

The Season of Advent

The word “advent” means appearing, arrival, to come. Advent is the Church’s time of preparation for celebrating God’s gift of his Son. Our liturgy will gather the great Advent themes of hope, expectation and preparation. During Advent we recall Christ’s coming at Bethlehem and we look forward to his second coming at the end of time. Advent is a season of joyful expectation.

The predominant colour during Advent is purple. Unlike Lent, Advent is not a penitential season. The purple colour represents hope, expectation and healing. It is one of the royal colours. We are preparing to welcome the King, the “sun of justice” who “will shine out with healing in its rays”. (Mal 4:2)

The custom of the Advent Wreath began in Germany in the 16th century. It symbolises the many years that the people of Israel waited in darkness for the coming of the expected Saviour. The light of the wreath grows steadily during our Advent prayer.

Advent has two parts. The first two Sundays focus on preparing for Jesus’ return at the end of time. The second two Sundays focus on preparing to celebrate the anniversary of Jesus’ birth.

The Gospels of the Sundays in Advent have four great movements: 1. Stay Awake! 2. Prepare! 3. Rejoice! and 4. Receive!

**Advent is a journey from
Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus!
to
Emmanuel! God-is-with-us!**