



*Light and
Love in the
darkness*

CELEBRATING AT HOME FIRST SUNDAY IN 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 our hearts. Even when we are on our own we remain part of the Body of Christ.

In the room you decide to use for this prayer you could have a lighted candle, a crucifix and the Bible. During Advent it is particularly appropriate to have an Advent Wreath in the place where you pray. These symbols help keep us mindful of the sacredness of our time of prayer and can help us feel connected with our local worshipping communities.

This text is arranged with parts for a leader and for all to pray, but the leader's parts can be shared among those present.

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

CELEBRATING AT HOME FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT

Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen

The Lord is here, present among us.

**We are gathered with the whole Church in
this moment of prayer.**

Preparing to hear the Word

We begin this holy season of Advent
prayerfully preparing to discover again
the great gift Christ is to us.

**We are filled with hopeful longing,
with a sense of urgency.**

We plead with our God:

“Tear open the heavens and come down to us!”

**We are the clay, you are the potter, Lord.
Continue to fashion us
in your image and likeness.**

Blessing the Advent Wreath

We ask God’s blessing on us and on this wreath,
symbol of hope, love and promise.

**Eternal God, bless this circle of green,
of hopeful longing,
without beginning or end,
embracing times past and yet to come,
reminding us that your love for us has no end.**

We ask this in the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Lighting of the first candle

You, Lord, are our Father,
‘Our Redeemer’ is your ancient name.
You have torn the heavens open and
come down to us in Christ, your Son.

**May the light of Christ
shine forth in us
that all the world may be led
to the fullness of truth and peace.**

As the candle is lit, all say:

Maranatha, Come Lord Jesus!

Opening Prayer

Eternal Father,
The day of our salvation draws ever near.
The light of your Word grows steadily around us
to pierce the darkness of our minds
and to warm our hearts with your love.

**By light and word refashion us,
increase our longing for Christ our Saviour
and give birth to your son in our lives
that he may continue to give life to the world,
and we may rejoice in his presence
for he is Lord for ever and ever.
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!’

Reflection

Our Advent journey begins today. “The Advent readings form a rich tapestry of images centered on the truth that God has come among us. In Advent we do not pretend that we are waiting for Jesus to be born in a stable. That happened once in history and it will not happen again. We remember

that birth as we remember our own birthdays. The God who came among us is still among us. Advent's invitation is to become aware of the all-pervading presence of the risen Jesus as Emmanuel – God among us." (*Break Open the Word. The Liturgical Commission, Brisbane.*)

This week's Gospel calls us to 'Stay awake', to be vigilant and attentive so that we do not miss the moment when God breaks into human history once again. The God who came among us is still among us. In Advent we train our eyes to see the reign of God more clearly so that we may be totally caught up in God's action in the world.

We live in the 'in between' time – between the first and final comings of Jesus. This excerpt from the Gospel urges us to stay awake, alert, watchful and ready not only for the 'day of the Lord's coming' at the end of time, but also for when the presence of God breaks in our lives and our world.

Lord's Prayer

Jesus himself taught us how to pray, so with confidence we say:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done on earth
as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass
against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

Closing Prayer

Lord, God,
we thank you for this time together in prayer.
In your loving kindness remember your people.
You sent your son into the world
to bring healing and light.
May we now be your light and love
especially in this moment of need.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Blessing

May the Lord bless us,
keep us from all evil
and lead us to life everlasting.
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 NRSV, 3:20 Jerusalem)

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!**