



CELEBRATING AT HOME
1ST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Stay awake! (Matthew 24:37-44)



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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 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.

**Loving and gracious God,
we praise you for sending your Son, Jesus Christ
to be our Light.**

In the wonder of his incarnation,
through the sorrow of his cross,
and by his glorious resurrection
he has saved us and become the light
in our darkness.

**In our baptism his light was entrusted to us.
Bless this wreath, symbol of your unending love.
As we prepare to celebrate the mystery
of his coming among us may we become
light, peace and hope for one another.
We ask this in the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.**

Lighting of the first candle

Christ, our Light,
from the tree of Jesse you spring into our humanity
and bring your kingdom of peace.

**Come and strengthen us now so that we may bring
your gift of love and healing to all around us.**

May this candle remind us of your love,
enlighten our minds,
and open our hearts to welcome you
who are our Lord, for ever and ever. Amen.

As the candle is lit, all say:

Maranatha, Come Lord Jesus!

Scripture Reading (*Matthew 24:37-44*)

Jesus said to his disciples: 'As it was in Noah's day, so will it be when the Son of Man comes. For in those days before the flood people were eating, drinking, taking wives, taking husbands, right up to the day Noah went into the ark, and they suspected nothing till the flood came and swept all away. It will be like this when the Son of Man comes. Then of two men in the fields one is taken, one left; of two women at the millstone grinding, one is taken, one left.

'So stay awake, because you do not know the day when your master is coming. You may be quite sure of this that if the householder had known at what time of the night the burglar would come, he would not have allowed anyone to break through the wall of his house. Therefore, you too must stand ready because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.'

Reflection - *Stay Awake!*

The great Advent journey begins. The Advent readings are a rich tapestry of images centered on the truth that God has come among us. We do not pretend that we are waiting for Jesus to be born in a stable. That happened once, a long time ago, 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.

In the first reading this Sunday Isaiah captures the sense of God's presence among his people through the images of the high mountain and the Temple – the

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dwelling place of God among his people. The people's response in the reading is to be drawn into God's presence 'that he may teach us his ways' and 'we may walk in his paths', and be utterly transformed into a new way of living (making swords into ploughshares, etc). In the second reading St Paul reminds the Romans that they are already living in 'the time'. They should 'wake up now' and 'live decently as people do in the daytime'.

The early Christians believed that Jesus would return very soon as the Lord of Glory. As time passed, they had to re-think this belief and work out how to live in the meantime, the time in between the first and final comings of Christ. That's our challenge, too.

This week's Gospel calls us to "Stay awake", to be vigilant and attentive to the signs of the times 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 as we wait for the final manifestation of God's glory.

Lord's Prayer

Formed by the teaching and example of Jesus, we pray:

**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.**

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!**



*Light and
Love in the
darkness*

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 Scriptures and 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.



The Carmelites
Australia & Timor-Leste

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