

SUNDAY REFLECTIONS – 1st Sunday Advent Year B 3rd December

Mark 13:33-37

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!"

Reflection on the Gospel

Four weeks before Christmas we hear a sober Gospel. We are preparing for a festive season but Jesus warns us to 'Stay awake and wait! Can this be the same event? While the commercial world is operating at the height of distraction and goes into manic mode, here is Jesus telling us to wait contemplatively and watch and not be seduced into inattention!

The agonising wait for an outcome that is beyond our control is an experience we all know. The parent who has sat for long hours beside the bed of a child, on life support after a car accident will know what it was like. Most of us have had the experience of being trapped and having to wait in a situation beyond our control at one time or another. We may have literally wandered in the bush, taken a wrong turn, lost our sense of direction, or we may have experienced a more figurative kind of disorientation in a difficult personal crisis.

We look for someone to make the decisions for us; do I go this path or that; do I stay still or do I move on; do I retrace my steps or just wait; if only someone would save me; make those life decisions for me when I lose perspective.

It's that waiting time that is crucial! A little girl who has lost her mother's hand in the supermarket cries in panic simply because she didn't know if she

would be rescued or whether she was doomed to wander the streets unknown for the rest of her life. She simply had to wait.

If we knew what we were waiting for, it would make the waiting easier. But it's the waiting without knowing what's ahead that is so difficult. For someone who is waiting to die, the waiting can often be filled with the greatest uncertainty and sometimes fear.

WAITING has become so foreign to our mentality. The problem has to be solved immediately - just add boiling water!! The instant solution!! The ability to sit beside the problem and WAIT eludes us. At worst, we see time **WAITING** as time WASTED! We have to fix the problem. It is unproductive to WAIT!

We have - the WORLD has - wounds that take time to heal. Many wounds will only heal if we give them time; this is especially true of wounds of the spirit. The healing of our past, of our world, of our lives, is in the **WAITING**. If we approach our brokenness, the world's brokenness indirectly and kindly, it will heal. **WAITING** in creative expectation brings us healing and renewal.



It is this sense of **WAITING** in joyful hope that Advent brings forth in us. Not waiting for Christmas; not waiting for the end of the year; not waiting to be saved; not waiting for Jesus' birthday. Just **WAITING**; for in the **WAITING**, there is LIFE.

To Ponder

- Remember the times you simply had to 'wait' for an outcome that was beyond your control!
- What will occupy your attention during the next four weeks?

A Prayer For All Creation

Creator God, as we prepare for the coming of Your Son, we give thanks for the gift of creation.

We give thanks for its beauty and the joy the beauty brings us.

We give thanks for light that shines in the darkness, for the stars and the sun, for the air we breathe and the plants and animals that you have created, for earth and water and for the daily sustenance we draw from them.

Inspire us to see You, Creator, through all that you have created – all that you look upon as very good.

Help us to care for creation as You instructed us. Help us to be stewards of its abundant life.

We give thanks for the animals and for the grand diversity of life you have created. We give thanks for the roles animals play in our lives, especially as our companions.

We thank You for the wellbeing they bring us and for the glory they bring to your creation.

As creation faces the wave of extinctions wrought by humankind, we ask You to strengthen us with prudence.

In these days of preparation for Your Son, help us seek ways of living that allow all Your creatures to flourish.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Prayers of the Faithful

1. Enrich your Church with a compassion that comes from deep listening to its members, where those who seek will find their way, where sinners find understanding and compassion, and the poor a place of refuge.
2. Enrich world leaders with your wisdom so that they may be convinced of the effectiveness of seeking peace through nonviolence and bring peace and justice to all nations.
3. Enrich those countries that oppress their own peoples or others with a sense of the sacredness of the person.

4. Enrich with your spirit of courage all whose personal rights are threatened or infringed.
5. Enrich our communities with a love that is expressed in justice and a fair go for all; that we may respect and appreciate one another; be united in all our diversity; and attentive to each other's needs.
6. Enrich with your strength all those who live with any form of physical or mental illness; we pray especially for all women, men and children who live with mental illness and their carers.



From the Carmelite Tradition:

Our Elijan inspiration, which our prophetic charism is founded on, calls us to walk with the 'little ones' along the paths the prophet travelled in his time; along the path of justice, opposing false ideologies and moving towards a concrete experience of the true living God; along the path of solidarity, defending the victims of injustice and taking their part; along the path of mysticism, struggling to restore to the poor faith in themselves by renewing their awareness that God is on their side.

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