Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 29th November 2026

The First Sunday in Advent — Mark 13:33-37

Relax

Make the Sign of the Cross † and remain still for a minute of settling silence. Then read the Gospel — preferably aloud and slowly — paying attention to any words that stand out to you.

Read

This Sunday's Gospel : THE WATCHER AT THE DOOR

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 am saying to you I say to all: Stay awake!'

Did any words or phrases stand out to you in the Gospel? If so, take a few moments to meditate on them.

Reflect

Now read the Gospel again and consider what the Lord might be saying to you, or asking of you, through it. Then continue by reading Fr Henry Wansbrough's reflection...

This brief parable of the master returning unexpectedly is typical of Jesus' vivid way of speaking. The message is typical, too, because Jesus was constantly stressing that there is no time to lose. When he came in his earthly ministry he again and again challenged his hearers to make up their minds NOW, to change their ways NOW. He challenges us to do the same. We can hear the rattle of the returning Master's key in the lock. There is no time to hide the contraband, to pull our uniforms straight before greeting the Master at his entry. Even if we do not think that the world's end is imminent, even if death is not threatening, every moment counts, every decision is for or against Jesus. Saints are rumoured to have said that, if they received the news that they were to die that night, they would carry on doing what they were doing anyway. Saints can do this, because they are ready for the coming of the Lord. But what about us? If we need to put things a bit more in order to prepare for the Lord's coming, is there any valid reason to delay? The four weeks of Advent are a good time to clean things up for the Lord's coming. **What would you like to change about your life in preparation for the coming of the Lord?**

Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB

Rest

Now call to mind the Lord's love for you, remembering that through this scripture the Lord is truly present. Then silently and prayerfully listen for God's voice and rest in God's love.

Respond & Request

Thank God for any insight you may have received, and respond by asking the Holy Spirit to bless you with a spiritual gift or help you to grow in a particular fruit of the Spirit.

You might pray for wisdom, courage, faithfulness, self-control, patience, generosity, joy, kindness, love, peace, faith, chastity - or another grace - to help you live out your faith this week.

Remember

This Wednesday's word for our families is **PRAYER**

(To see the Family Version, please visit: wednesdayword.org)

As you pray for your loved ones, please remember to pray for the Church and for the families connected to our schools.

St Joseph, Patron Saint of Families and Protector of the Church, pray for us. Mary, Star of Evangelisation, pray for us. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Wednesday Word Plus +

If you'd like to spend more prayerful time with God through the First and Second Readings, follow the same process for praying with the Gospel (overleaf). Gently place the First or Second Reading and Fr Henry's reflection into that same prayerful rhythm for more fruitful meditation with God's Word.



First Reading: *A Thrill of Hope*

Isaiah 63:16-17; 64:1. 3-8

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.

Each Advent Sunday begins with a reading from Isaiah, for Isaiah is the great prophet of the Messiah. This reading is taken from the latest part of the Book of Isaiah. After the return to Jerusalem from exile in Babylon, the Jews were passionately awaiting the coming of the Messiah. They were conscious that they had sinned and deserved their punishment, but still longed for the liberation from foreign interference which the Messiah would bring. After the coming of Christ we too are waiting - waiting for the fulfilment of the sovereignty or kingship of God. Jesus brought the pledge of this kingship by his miracles of healing, his welcome to sinners, his teaching about the Kingdom, and above all by his Resurrection from the dead. We no longer have any reason to fear death, but we are conscious of our own failings, of our co-operation with evil and long for the strength and fidelity which wholehearted membership of God's Kingdom would bring us.

How do I need to change to become a fully committed member of God's Kingdom and to welcome the Messiah into my life?

Second Reading: *Waiting for the Lord Jesus*

1 Corinthians 1:3-9

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.

This reading from the opening of Paul's first Letter to the Corinthians is full of the excitement of the Spirit. The young community of Christians at Corinth flourished in the activity of the Holy Spirit, not just by extraordinary things like speaking in tongues, but by healing and teaching and guidance. Even being a good member of a family (husband, wife, parent, child) is an activity guided by the Spirit. All this is preparing for the final coming of Christ, for all Christian activity, no matter how humdrum, is given life and vitality by the Spirit of Christ. In Paul's day there was a freshness and enthusiasm which is sometimes lacking in our Church today. Let us ask at Christmas for a new infusion of the Spirit which will help us to burst the bonds which keep us back from full service to the Lord.

How do you see the Spirit at work in your own life?

> **"All Christian activity, no matter how humdrum, is given life and vitality by the Spirit of Christ."**

The Wednesday Word ™© Copyright 2026. A registered Charity in England and Wales No.1125628 and a Limited Company No. 06608112 **wednesdayword.org**