

Alleluia, alleluia!

Lord, show us your mercy and love,
and grant us your salvation. Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Mk 13:33-37

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

Stay awake! You never know when the Lord will come.

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!'

■ **The Gospel of the Lord.**

WELCOME AND THANK YOU

Today we welcome Fr Chris Monaghan CP as our reflection writer. Fr Chris is President of Yarra Theological Union, University of Divinity, where he teaches both Old and New Testament. In his reflection, he will consider briefly each of the Scripture readings set down for the Sunday.

We are very grateful and thank Fr Brendan Byrne SJ, of the Jesuit College of Spirituality, University of Divinity, for his insightful reflections on the Gospels over the past three years.

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Breaking Open the Word



THE SAVING WORD

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT / B

29 NOVEMBER 2020

THE CALL TO CONVERSION

As Advent begins, we set out once again to prepare our hearts for the great feast of God's humble presence among us. Expectation and complacency, longing and listlessness, can all be found in our hearts as we prepare for Christmas. Today's readings speak of our need for God's presence and our thankful response of faithfulness.

The reading from Isaiah is a passionate plea for renewal and change. The people have been left to their own devices for too long. If God would only tear open the heavens and come down, the mountains would melt before God's presence. Isaiah hopes that the hearts of the people of Israel should also melt so that God the great potter, could once more mould, shape, and breathe life into their hearts.

Paul's perspective is one of thanksgiving for the gifts that have already been given as the community waits for the Lord's return. Such gifts are given to sustain us as we wait for the moment when Jesus will finally be revealed in glory.

It is one thing to be grateful for blessings and gifts received but the Gospel calls us to take the next step of using these gifts faithfully. The parable of the master who leaves his servants in charge during his absence is as relevant today as in the days of Mark. It is important to note that each of the servants is entrusted with a task to be faithfully completed. As Advent begins each one of us is given the task of preparing our hearts and lives to welcome the Lord.

Christopher Monaghan CP

FIRST READING

Isa 63:16-17; 64:1, 3-8

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

Oh, that you would tear the heavens apart and come down.

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.

■ **The word of the Lord.**

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps 79:2-3, 15-19. R. v. 4

R. Lord, make us turn to you, let us see your face and we shall be saved.

1. O shepherd of Israel, hear us,/ shine forth from your cherubim throne./ O Lord, rouse up your might./ O Lord, come to our help. **R.**

2. God of hosts, turn again, we implore,/ look down from heaven and see./ Visit this vine and protect it,/ the vine your right hand has planted. **R.**



3. May your hand be on the man you have chosen,/ the man you have given your strength./ And we shall never forsake you again:/ give us life that we may call upon your name. **R.**

SECOND READING

1 Cor 1:3-9

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians.

The revelation we looked for, Christ Jesus our Lord.

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.

■ **The word of the Lord.**