

# Living the Word

MEDITATING ON THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

Year B - 1st Sunday in Advent

A resource for personal, family  
and community prayer.



“...stay awake.”


## *Gospel: Mark 13:33-37*

<sup>33</sup>Jesus said to his disciples: “Be on your guard, stay awake, because you never know when the time will come. <sup>34</sup>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.

<sup>35</sup>So stay awake, because you do not know when the master of the house is coming: evening, midnight, cockcrow, dawn; <sup>36</sup>if he comes unexpectedly, he must not find you asleep.

<sup>37</sup>And what I say to you, I say to all: Stay awake!”

You are invited to read the  
Gospel passage attentively,  
respectfully and reverently  
as a gift of God.



“...you never know when  
the time will come.”

## Reading

The Christian community had been subjected to oppression and persecution. The followers of Jesus were desperately waiting for God to come to intervene on their behalf and to save them. Mark seeks to reassure them that, in spite of the upheaval and turmoil, “the master of the house” (God) is on his way, and it is only a matter of time before he manifests his saving presence. The onus, therefore, is on the community to “stay awake” in preparation and in anticipation of his coming. Jesus offers a beautiful parable encouraging all his disciples to actively wait with trust and hope.

## Recognising

**You are invited to meditate on the passage, or any part of it, by letting it speak to your life experience until you feel to say “I recognise this passage.”**

### **v34. “had gone from home”**

From life experience, can you enter into a painful and lonely time when the Master “had gone from home” eg— a time of sickness, affliction, loss or failure - where you felt the absence of God? A time when it was quite a struggle to keep faith and hope alive, as the waiting seemed to go on and on - “evening, midnight, cockcrow, dawn”- and still no sign of him.

Or

Can you enter into this passage by remembering someone who has “gone away from home” – become estranged from you, or has not responded to your outreach? In spite of this, you have continued to keep the door open, “staying awake” as it were, trusting that, in their own time and in their own way, they will make their way home again.

### **v34. “and he has told the doorkeeper to stay awake.”**

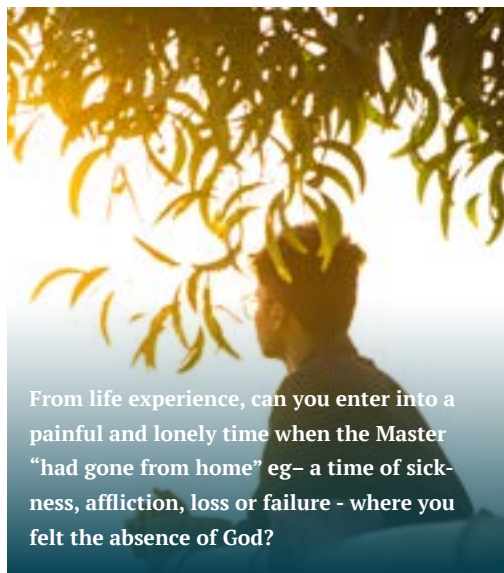
Can you enter into the experience of the “doorkeeper” in the passage by remembering people who have encouraged you to “stay awake” -to keep your heart up and your hopes alive - at a very difficult and painful moment in your life?

Or

Can you remember a period of “dryness” in your prayer life when it seemed empty and sterile? Nevertheless, you remained faithful to prayer times, trusting that, in God’s own time and God’s own way, the feelings of joy and peace and being beloved of God would return.

### **v33. “you never know when the time will come”**

Can you remember being surprised by something that happened unexpectedly or by a longed-for event that eventually happened? You realised God’s time is not our time.



From life experience, can you enter into a painful and lonely time when the Master “had gone from home” eg- a time of sickness, affliction, loss or failure - where you felt the absence of God?

## *Responding*

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Having recognised God’s presence in life, you are invited to **respond** in your own words, in prayer (thanksgiving, repentance and petition).

I give thanks for the “doorkeepers” who always help to keep my heart up and my hopes alive, even when it seems to take a long time coming-“evening, midnight, cockcrow and dawn”. Thank you for their friendship, leadership and inspiration.

I ask forgiveness for those times in my life - times of loss, grief, sickness, loneliness and turmoil – when it seemed you “had gone from home”. I thought you had abandoned me and my heart was overwhelmed by feelings of fear and anxiety, loneliness and despair.

Give us the grace, Heavenly Father, to “be on our guard and to stay awake” especially at those times when there is so much chaos in our lives. Help us to be alert and attentive to the little signs of your presence – reminders that you “the Master” are on your way. May we remain faithful to our responsibilities and commitments - “each with his own task” - so that we might be ready to welcome you more fully into our lives and our world.

## *Resting*

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You are invited to enter deep prayer by simply **resting** your heart in God’s presence (Contemplative moment). The quiet repetition of a word or phrase from the passage might help you on this journey into greater silence and stillness, e.g. “**Stay awake**”.

## *Reflecting*

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From your journey with this passage, you are now invited to **reflect**, and put into your own words, any new insights or understanding that you have received (Wisdom moment).

From your journey with this passage, what new insight or understanding has been given to you into the meaning of trust or hope?

**A hopeful heart never grows despondent.**



# Children

## *Reading*

Jesus shares a story with his friends about the importance of waiting patiently in hope and trust. Jesus wants his friends to be awake and prepared for what is important.

## *Recognising*

Can you remember a time when you had to wait for someone, maybe a parent to get home, a grandparent to visit, or a friend to come to your house, and it was worth the wait?

Can you remember a 'Jesus person' who helped you to be ready and prepared for an important event in your life, maybe your parent, grandparent or teacher?

## *Responding*

Father, I thank You for the gift of patience which has helped me to 'stay awake' as I waited for people and events in my life and eventually enjoyed what I had waited for.

Father, I am sorry for the times when I was impatient and grew tired of waiting for what is important. I am sorry for taking the efforts of others for granted as they helped me to be prepared.

Father, I ask that You still my heart with a deep patience so that I may be ready and prepared to see Your presence in every person that I meet and in every experience that I find myself in.

## *Resting*

Rest in the patient embrace of the Father by repeating "STAY AWAKE" for as long as it is possible. May your heart be prepared for Christmas as you are drawn deeper into the light of the Father's presence.

## *Reflecting*

Be awake to the truth that the best moments of life are always worth waiting for.