

ARISE!

AWAKE!

FLING OFF THE NIGHT!

ADVENT PRAYERS AND REFLECTIONS FOR CHILDREN

2017

PREPARE YE THE WAY!

1st Sunday of Advent (Dec 3) Mark 13:24-37

Already the fall leaves have gone and it is getting colder outside! Most children have barely recovered from summer and the beginning of the new school year! Time to get ready for winter and all the fun you can have. But you need to **prepare**, or you will miss out on some activities and some of the fun!

Reflection

Today, St Mark tells us that Jesus is coming to take us to heaven, but that we do not know when this will happen. He wants us to stay awake and be ready for whenever this occurs! His advice is to prepare. He wants us not only to prepare ourselves spiritually for the end of time, but to get ready to celebrate Jesus' birthday on Christmas. He also encourages us to welcome Jesus in the sacrament of the Eucharist. We can do this in this season of ADVENT.



Prayer

Lord, only you can look into my heart and know that there is a desire to make this Advent one that welcomes you more deeply into my own heart. Give me the strength and courage to stay awake and prepare for Jesus' coming. Can't wait!

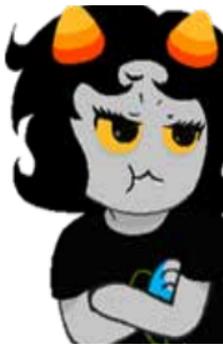
ARE YOU DESERVING?

Monday in the 1st Week of Advent (Dec 4) Matt 8: 5-11

Have you ever wanted something very badly, but your parents said you didn't deserve it? Did you deserve it? Sometimes, we get the feeling that we should receive things just because of who we are - a family member, a student, a team member - not because we have earned it. Should we get whatever we want just because of who we are?

Reflection

St Matthew describes the parable of the centurion who believes that he is unworthy to have Jesus come to his house. "Lord, I am not worthy that you should come under my roof". We need to use this season of Advent to become "worthy"; to really deserve the gifts, both spiritual and material, that we hope for at Christmas.



Prayer

Lord, light in me a desire to prepare for your coming and to stand in the darkness, waiting, eager and filled with joy. Help me to be deserving of your many gifts.

HAPPY ARE THOSE WHO BELIEVE BUT HAVE NOT SEEN

Tuesday of the 1st Week of Advent (Dec 5) Luke 10:21-24

I'll believe it when I see it! Have you ever heard someone say that? Have you ever said that? These days, with social media such a big part of our lives, people have become dependent on instant proof! Do you trust and believe your parents and teachers when they tell you things you should know, or when you are taught? Much of what you learn has to be accepted as knowledge from experienced people you trust.

Reflection

Today, St Luke's gospel quotes Jesus saying, "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see...Many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, but did not see it". In St John's gospel, Jesus says: "Blessed are those who have not seen, and yet have believed." In this time of Advent, our Faith allows us to accept the coming of Jesus now, in the Eucharist and at the end of time.



Prayer

My God, allow me to feel the joy growing in my heart as I await your coming. I know that Jesus will bring me new life and new ways of living. Help me to hear the words that will change the world.

STAY AWAKE AND ALERT!

Wednesday of the 1st Week of Advent (Dec 6) [Luke 21:34-38](#)

John was excited! His father was returning from two weeks overseas on a business trip, and John couldn't wait to welcome him home. Unfortunately, he wouldn't get home until about 2 am! His mother said that he could stay up until he arrived, but he just couldn't stay awake long enough. By the time his father showed up, John was fast asleep. He wouldn't see him until the morning.

Reflection

In today's gospel, we are told by Jesus to be "always on the watch" and to be ready for both what is to come and for the unexpected. That is one of the principal messages of Advent: wait and stay alert. Don't sleep on the job!



Prayer

Lord of all, as I begin these early days of Advent, help me to stay awake and be aware of what I need to know in order to prepare for your coming.

YOU HAVE BEEN CHOSEN ...

Thursday of the 1st Week of Advent (Dec 7) 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10

Teams are being picked in the school yard for an upcoming hockey game. How many children are worried about being selected? Will he/she be picked first? Last? For a good team? To be chosen to participate can be one of the most satisfying experiences that one can enjoy. There is anxiety before selection. There is responsibility afterward.

Reflection

Did you know that you have been specially chosen by God? St Paul assures you of this. You have been selected to receive his word and to be united with Jesus in his heavenly kingdom. You have been privileged to receive the Word of God and to share it everywhere.



Prayer

God of strength and protection, I turn to you as one of your chosen people. Help me to trust in your faith in me as I await your coming. Help to deliver me from the loneliness I feel in this time of anticipation.

AVE, AVE, AVE MARIA...

Friday of the 1st Week of Advent (Dec 8) 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10

“I want my mother!” This is a cry heard so often in stories, movies and in life. When you are in trouble, often it is your mother to whom you go for comfort, relief and advice. On this Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, it is appropriate to pray to Mary for guidance and support as we wait for the birth of her Son.

Reflection

The prophet Jeremiah wrote: “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I set you apart.” Next to God, your mother has the position of knowing you more intimately than anyone else. Therefore, Mary is in a unique position to help you through your Advent journey.

Prayer

Lord, thank you for the gift of Mary in my life. I rely on her to intercede for me with her son, and to guide me through this season of Advent. Let me turn to Mary as an example of how I should live my own life.



HONOUR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER

Saturday of the 1st Week of Advent (Dec 9) Mark 11:27-33

Have you ever questioned a request to do something because you did not think that the person who asked had the authority to do so? However, we know that there are some people who do have the right to tell you what to do. Your parents and teachers have authority over you in family and school situations, and it is sometimes challenging to accept this.

Reflection

St Mark describes an incident when the authority of Jesus was questioned. It is not always easy to accept another person's authority, but it is your responsibility to recognize when someone has a legitimate right give you advice and instructions. Listen to the advice of those in authority when they suggest how you can observe this season of Advent.



Prayer

Lord, help me to learn the grace of humility as I await your coming. Allow me to accept the authority of those in my life who have the responsibility to direct me in my ways.

MAKE STRAIGHT HIS PATHS

2nd Sunday of Advent (Dec 10) Mark 1:1-8

The season of Advent means that Christmas is near. We always experience this time of year with excitement and anticipation. We do this in the expectation of the gift giving which will occur and of the many traditional rituals that we will follow. However, just as we prepare for the secular things associated with Christmas, we must not lose sight of our spiritual preparation for the coming of Jesus.



Reflection

The gospel readings for this second Sunday of Advent come from Mark, and tell the story of St John the Baptist, who was sent to “Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.” John is our reminder that our spiritual preparation for Christmas is more important than all of the commercial activity that we see all around us.

Prayer

Dear Lord, through the darkness of this secular world, I want my heart to be open to you. Help me to be awake and aware of the radiance you bring to my life. Let me pray for this difficult world and those who are so in need. This is my Advent prayer today.

THE LORD IS MY LIGHT AND MY SALVATION

Monday of the 2nd Week of Advent (Dec 11) Psalm 27

Mary had an oral assignment to deliver in front of her class on Monday. She had worked hard getting ready, and she knew what she was doing. However, on the weekend, she began to get nervous, and wondered how she was going to be able to stand up in front of the class and speak.

Reflection

There are many times in our lives when we are expected to do something, but we lack the confidence to do it well. If your preparation is good, then a moderate amount of nervousness is healthy, and can make you more alert and to do a good job. In Advent, we can also lack the confidence needed to approach Christmas in a sincere way. Psalm 27 tells us: “The Lord is my light and my salvation – whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life – of whom shall I be afraid?” We need to trust Jesus as we prepare for his coming.



Prayer

God of courage, I need your strength. Only you know how frightened I so often am. Offer me the strength of the promise of your Son's coming. Give me the humility to ask for your help.

GOD'S MESSAGE IS FOR EVERYONE

Tuesday of the 2nd Week of Advent (Dec 12) Acts 11:1-18

“Some of my friends do not realise that we are in the season of Advent. They don't know what it is. Some of them don't even realise that Christmas is the birthday of Jesus”. When Mark said this to his parents, it made the whole family stop to think about how they could make Advent a very special time in their lives.

Reflection

It is true that many people today do not understand the “real meaning of Christmas.” Even if they know, they often don't do anything about it. Should you be discouraged by this? Not at all. Being true to your Advent resolutions can make the commercial aspects of Christmas more enjoyable, because they fit into an overall context and meaning. In the Acts of the Apostles, it was made clear by Peter that Jesus' word was for everyone. Jesus' coming at Christmas is important for everyone, even if they do not outwardly show it.



Prayer

Almighty God, I hear it over and over that you are coming to me. I have been like a lost lamb, but I hear your voice calling me and I feel how deeply you want me to return. I pray that everyone, no matter what they believe and know, can rejoice in your coming.

HIS NAME IS JOHN!

Wednesday of the 2nd Week of Advent (Dec 13) Luke 1:5-17

Sometimes, the season of Advent seems to go on and on forever. The weather is getting colder, days are shorter, school still happens, and Christmas seems ages away. At times like this, many children start to forget about their Advent preparation and all of the good work they have done. Do you sometimes feel like that?

Reflection

You already know about St John the Baptist, and how he came to prepare the way for Jesus. Today, St Luke tells us how John's birth was foretold to his father Zechariah. Because he and Elizabeth were no longer young, the anticipated birth of John encouraged them, and became a time of great anticipation for them. Disappointment changed to Joy! Like Zechariah, you can look at your own life, see what you have accomplished, but more importantly anticipate what is to come! Rejoice in the coming of Jesus, just as Zechariah was able to rejoice in John's coming birth.

Prayer

Lord, I am grateful for the Saviour who awaits us, and eagerly await the time of rejoicing. Let me look forward in hope and turn to you with great trust, knowing you will guide my steps along the unknown path of this day.



IF ANYONE HAS EARS LET HIM LISTEN ...

Thursday of the 2nd Week of Advent (Dec 14) [Matthew 11:11-15](#)

“Just open your ears. Don’t you listen to anything I say?” Have you ever heard anyone say this to you, or something similar? Your mother? Father? Teacher? Maybe even your best friend? It’s easy to be preoccupied and not hear what others are saying to us. Sometimes it is because we are too busy. Sometimes we can be self-ish and choose not to listen. Have you ever been annoyed because something you have said to someone falls on deaf ears?

Reflection

Many times, Jesus appeared frustrated because the disciples did not appear to understand what he said to them. Even after his death and resurrection, he spoke to them as if they did not completely understand what was expected of them. Today, St Matthew says: “Let anyone with ears listen!”

What have you been saying to yourself and others in order to prepare this Advent? Have you been listening? Has anyone else been listening?



Prayer

Lord, like a loving parent, you offer me your comforting hand and tell me not to be afraid. Help me to wait for your coming with patience and to listen to what you ask of me. Help me to listen attentively to your voice.

NOTHING IS GOING MY WAY!

Friday of the 2nd Week of Advent (Dec 15) Psalm 126

Sometimes, it is easy to think that nothing is going your way. Things at home have not been great, and relations with friends at school are troubled. When you think very hard about this, however, it is often possible to see that maybe you have been somewhat to blame for this. Maybe you have been thinking a little too selfishly. This sometime happens in Advent, when the excitement of Christmas becomes a distraction to our real purpose. At times like this, we often think of ourselves rather than about what the coming of Christ really means.

Reflection

Psalm 126 says: *“The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy.”* During Advent, part of your preparation for the coming of Jesus should be reflection on everything

that you already have. All of this has been given to you by God. Rather than feeling depressed about what is going on in your life, you should take joy in who you are and what you have.



Prayer

Lord, let me feel your light in my life and in the world. I am grateful for the Saviour who awaits us and eagerly await the time of rejoicing. Let me rejoice in all of the things you have given me and be prepared to share with all of my friends and family in this Advent season.

DO UNTO OTHERS ...

Saturday of the 2nd Week of Advent (Dec 16) *Matthew 21: 28-32*

“Christmas will be great for me because I have been good. I have certainly been better than those others, and Santa will reward me for that!” We constantly hear about Santa rewarding those who have been “good for goodness sake!” It is easy to become a little self-centred when anticipating all the presents we might receive at Christmas. Part of our preparation in Advent should be the realisation that God is not Santa Claus, and he does not discriminate the way our commercial distractions tell us.



Reflection

The gospel for today relates how Jesus says that the reward of the Kingdom of Heaven does not depend on your position, or who you are. It depends on how you live your life in relation to others and the world. Being aware of this is very important as you make your preparations for Jesus return.

Prayer

Jesus, let me be guided by the light of your word. Give me the humility to be led by you and the wisdom to learn from you. Let me look forward with humility and in hope and turn to you in great trust, knowing you will guide my steps along the unknown path of this day.

A VOICE CRYING OUT IN THE WILDERNESS!

3rd Sunday of Advent (Dec 17) John 1:6-8, 19-28

Have you ever seen examples of other children who have been or are being bullied? Unfortunately, bullying behaviour is too common in our schools, and it is difficult wrong to right. Often, the bullies are people who have a degree of power or popularity, and can easily intimidate others. Are you willing to speak up for victims of bullies? Can you stand up for what you believe? It is not an easy thing to do and can easily make you unpopular.

Reflection

Today, St John speaks to us about John the Baptist, who said that he was “the voice of one crying out in the wilderness.” John foretold the coming of Jesus, the Messiah, and his messages were not always popular. Can you be the voice in the wilderness this Advent, as you prepare for Jesus’ coming? Can you let others know the message of Christ in your daily life and as you prepare for Christmas?

Prayer

Lord, I lift my heart up to you to thank you for the blessings you shower on me each day. I rejoice down to my soul. Help me to prepare my heart to be open and to receive your immense love this Christmas season.



SHOUT WITH JOY!

Monday of the 3rd Week of Advent (Dec 18) [Mark 11:27-33](#)

This is a week of joy. Yesterday was Gaudete Sunday, so you should be full of joy in your efforts to prepare for Jesus' coming. Do you feel strong enough to do this? After having travelled two weeks of Advent so far, you should feel that you are now on the down side and that your efforts should begin to be easier.

Reflection

Today, St Paul tells us to put on the full armour of God, so that you can stand against the devil's schemes. He wants you to "take up the shield of faith. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." His advice is timely, as the great day of Christmas draws closer.



Prayer

Oh God, I ask that I always be aware of the strength of your great power. May it never leave me, especially at this time of preparation for the coming of your Son. So many people before me have also anticipated your arrival. Please give me the wisdom and courage to be your humble servant.

***Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!***

BE NOT AFRAID!

Tuesday of the 3rd Week of Advent (Dec 19) Acts 3:17 - 4:4

Have you ever felt that what you are doing is difficult because it is not popular with everyone else? Have you ever mentioned an idea to your friends and found out that they thought it was ridiculous, or even crazy? How many of your friends are seriously preparing themselves spiritually for Jesus' coming? Do you sometimes feel that you are the only one? Do you ever feel embarrassed because you want to take your Advent preparation seriously?

Reflection

The Reading from the Acts of the Apostles for today tells the story of how Peter and John were thrown into prison because they were teaching the people about Jesus. Do you think they were afraid? Do you think they worried about what might happen to them?

You can be certain that they suffered the same concerns that you feel at times when doing unpopular things that you believe are right, including Advent preparations.



Prayer

Dearest Lord, so many areas of my life seem imprisoned, but you promise me real freedom and peace in my life. Renew my spirit and free my soul. Open my heart which you have bathed in the longing of Advent.

***Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!***

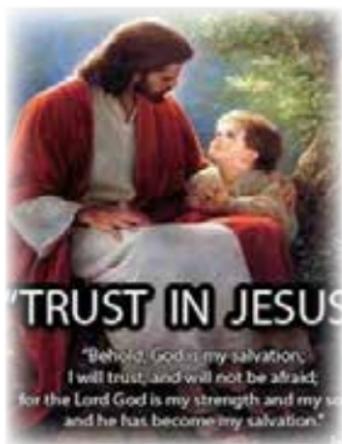
TRUST IN THE LORD!

Wednesday of the 3rd Week of Advent (Dec 20) Psalm 125

Do you trust your friends? Do you share secrets, confident that they will not be spread to other people? Do your parents trust you? Do you feel that they will allow you to do certain things because they trust you? Because they are confident that you are able to act responsibly and with maturity?

Reflection

The whole point of our Advent preparation is that we place our complete trust in the coming of our Saviour. We trust that He will come to us in the Eucharist. We trust that He will come to give us our heavenly reward at the end of time. We trust Him so much that we celebrate His birthday each year on Christmas. This trust is expressed in Psalm 125: "Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be shaken but endures forever."



Prayer

Oh, Jesus, You are a rock for my belief and a sign of God's love and trust. Thank you for the message of hope you send me during this Advent season.

***Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!***

THIS IS HOW YOU SHOULD PRAY...

Thursday of the 3rd Week of Advent (Dec 21) Hebrews 1:1-4

How does God speak to you? How do you speak to God? You have been taught that the way to communicate with God is through your prayers: morning prayers, evening prayers, grace before meals, prayers said at Mass, prayers in preparation for Reconciliation. All of your prayers should include a message to Jesus. It is Jesus for whom we are waiting. It is Jesus for whom we are longing.

Reflection

St Paul teaches us that God has spoken to us through Jesus. Because Jesus has been granted the superior position in heaven, we need to remember to speak to him daily. All of our Advent preparation for His coming should be focussed on Jesus, as He is our way to God.



Prayer

Oh Jesus, you hold the key that will unlock my heart this Advent. I know you are ready to answer my prayers, ease my doubts and calm my fears. I know that you are the one to whom I need to speak. Help me to do so, and to listen to your replies.

***Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!***

KEEP CHRIST IN CHRISTMAS

Friday of the 3rd Week of Advent (Dec 22) Hebrews 1:1-14

“What’s the big deal about Christmas? It’s just a day like any other day.” Have you ever heard anyone say this? Your friends? People on TV or on social media? Many people celebrate Christmas just as an excuse for a seasonal holiday. Have you ever wondered about how differently people treat this time of year?

Reflection

God made it clear that Jesus was above every other living being - even more important than any of the angels. St Paul reminds us of this today. Jesus has dominion over all beings in heaven and on earth. Is it any wonder that we make special spiritual preparation for his coming on Christmas?



Prayer

Loving God, it is growing in my heart: an awareness and gratitude for your approaching arrival and of your constant love for me. Thank you for these weeks of prayer. My waiting, my patience, feels sacred. Come, Lord Jesus, come.

***Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!***

COME, O DIVINE MESSIAH!

Saturday of the 3rd Week of Advent (Dec 23) John 7:40-52

“Come, O Divine Messiah ...” We hear these words sung during Mass in the Sundays leading up to Christmas. However, children always ask: “What the heck does Messiah mean?” You know that the word Messiah means “Anointed One”. Anointing puts a sign on you, a sign of recognition and responsibility. The “Anointed One” for Christians is Jesus, the Saviour. You have been preparing for his coming for the past three weeks of Advent.

Reflection

Jesus was a controversial person for the people of his time. Today, St John tells the story of how people identified Jesus as the Messiah who had been foretold in the Scriptures. The entire Old Testament was preparation for the coming of this Messiah. Jesus is the same Messiah for whom you have been preparing during this season of Advent.



Prayer

O Jesus, Messiah, I find myself standing before your strength and splendour watching and waiting and filled with total joy. You have lifted my mind in hope. Thank you for this Advent journey. The anticipation has filled my life and made me long for a closer relationship with you.

***Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!***

HERE I AM, LORD. I COME TO DO YOUR WILL!

4th Sunday of Advent (Dec 24) Luke 1:26-38

Christmas Eve! What a unique day! There is probably no experience equal to the feelings that children can experience on the day before Christmas. The challenge is to maintain focus on the real meaning of the day. Am I ready to greet Jesus on His birthday? Have I prepared myself as best I could for this great event?

Reflection

On this day, we are reminded by St Luke of the astonishing events of the Annunciation of Mary. The entire event of Jesus coming into the world as our Saviour was made possible by Mary's acceptance of her role. Her words are example to all of us: "*Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.*" Acting according to the Word of God is the best way that we can all prepare for the arrival of Jesus.



Prayer

O dearest Lord, renew my spirit and open my heart which you have bathed in the longing of Advent. I want to be like Mary, your mother. Her wonderful courage and strength inspire me to do the same. She simply said Yes and the impossible was done. Grant me the grace to see your light as did Mary when she accepted her role as the Mother of God.

***Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!***



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