

Alleluia, alleluia!

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

Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Mt 24:37-44

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Stay awake, you must be ready.

Jesus said to his disciples: 'As it was in Noah's day, so will it be when the Son of Man comes. For in those days before the Flood people were eating, drinking, taking wives, taking husbands, right up to the day Noah went into the ark, and they suspected nothing till the Flood came and swept all away. It will be like this when the Son of Man comes. Then of two men in the fields one is taken, one left; of two women at the millstone grinding, one is taken, one left.

'So stay awake, because you do not know the day when your master is coming. You may be quite sure of this that if the householder had known at what time of night the burglar would come, he would have stayed awake and would not have allowed anyone to break through the wall of his house. Therefore, you too must stand ready because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.'

■ The Gospel of the Lord.

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Reflections on the Gospel

READINESS FOR THE LORD

Advent is the time when the Church longs for the coming of the Lord. We believe, of course, that the Messiah has already come in the person of Jesus, born at Bethlehem. But the state of our world makes us acutely conscious of just how 'unfinished' the business of salvation is. So, with the early believers who keenly awaited Jesus' second coming, we can still identify with the expressions of hope for salvation expressed by the people of the Old Testament. In today's First Reading the prophet Isaiah gives us a vision of peace based on nations setting aside their desire to wage war.

Paul urges the Christians in Rome to live like people expecting an important visitor. Though it is still 'dark'—in the sense that salvation is not complete—they rise early, to have all ready for him when he comes.

Jesus develops this theme of readiness in the Gospel, employing a favourite image: the prudent householder. Jesus does not want to suggest that God deliberately waits to catch us out. The image makes the simple point that, since one never knows when a burglar will strike, prudent householders do not allow themselves to be distracted by all kinds of activities. They keep a sharp ear and a keen eye for anything unusual. Christian life similarly involves keeping a sharp ear and a keen eye for the coming of the Lord—and not just for his coming at the end of time but for all the various ways and guises in which he comes into our lives every day.

Brendan Byrne, SJ



FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT / A

01 DECEMBER 2019

FIRST READING

Isa 2:1-5

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

The Lord will gather all nations in eternal peace in the kingdom of God.

The vision of Isaiah son of Amoz, concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

In the days to come
the mountain of the Temple of the Lord
shall tower above the mountains
and be lifted higher than the hills.

All the nations will stream to it,
peoples without number will come to it; and
they will say:

'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
to the Temple of the God of Jacob
that he may teach us his ways
so that we may walk in his paths;
since the Law will go out from Zion,
and the oracle of the Lord from Jerusalem.'

He will wield authority over the nations
and adjudicate between many peoples;
these will hammer their swords into ploughshares,
their spears into sickles.

Nation will not lift sword against nation,
there will be no more training for war.

O House of Jacob, come,
let us walk in the light of the Lord.

■ The word of the Lord.

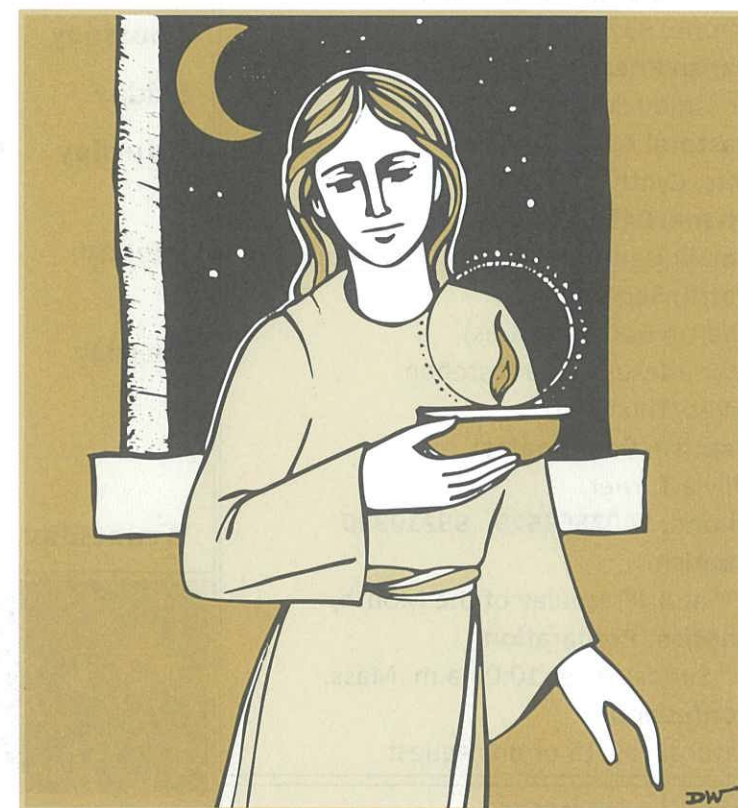
RESP PSALM

Ps 121:1-2, 4-5, 6-9. R. cf. v. 1

R. Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

1. I rejoiced when I heard them say: / Let us go to God's house. / And now our feet are standing / within your gates, O Jerusalem. **R.**

2. It is there that the tribes go up, / the tribes of the Lord. / For Israel's law it is, / there to praise the Lord's name. / There were set the thrones of judgement / of the house of David. **R.**



3. For the peace of Jerusalem pray: / Peace be to your homes! / May peace reign in your walls, / in your palaces, peace! **R.**

4. For love of my brethren and friends / I say: 'Peace upon you!' / For love of the house of the Lord / I will ask for your good. **R.**

SECOND READING

Rom 13:11-14

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

The time has come, our salvation is near.

You know 'the time' has come: you must wake up now: our salvation is even nearer than it was when we were converted. The night is almost over, it will be daylight soon – let us give up all the things we prefer to do under cover of the dark; let us arm ourselves and appear in the light. Let us live decently as people do in the daytime: no drunken orgies, no promiscuity or licentiousness, and no wrangling or jealousy. Let your armour be the Lord Jesus Christ.

■ The word of the Lord.