

# Sunday 1st (B) of Advent

**Gospel text (Mk 13,33-37): Jesus said to his disciples: «Be alert and watch, for you don't know when the time will come. When a man goes abroad and leaves his home, he puts his servants in charge, giving to each one some responsibility; and he orders the doorkeeper to stay awake. So stay awake, for you don't know when the Lord of the house will come, in the evening or at midnight, when the cock crows or before dawn. If He comes suddenly, do not let him catch you asleep. And what I say to you, I say to all: watch».**

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***«I say to all: watch»***

Mons. José Ángel SAIZ Meneses, Archbishop of Seville

*(Sevilla, Spain)*

Today we begin with the whole Church a new Liturgical Year with the first Sunday of Advent. A time of hope, a time in which the memory of the first coming of the Lord is renewed in our hearts, in humility and concealment, and the longing for the return of Christ in glory and majesty is renewed.

This Sunday of Advent is deeply marked by a call to vigilance. Saint Mark includes in the words of Jesus the command to “watch” up to three times. And the third time he does so with solemnity: "What I say to you, I say to all: Watch!" (Mk 13,37). It is not only an ascetic recommendation, but a call to live as children of the light and of the day.

This call is addressed not only to his disciples, but to all men and women of good will, as an exhortation that reminds us that life does not only have an earthly dimension, but is projected towards an “afterlife”. The human being, created in the image and semblance of God, endowed with freedom and responsibility, capable of loving, will have to give an account of his life, of how he has developed the capacities and talents that he has received from God; if he has kept them selfishly, or if he has made them bear fruit for the glory of God and at the service of his brothers.

The fundamental disposition that we have to live and the virtue that we have to exercise is hope. Advent is, par excellence, the time of hope, and the entire Church is called to live in hope and to become a sign of hope for the world. We are preparing to commemorate Christmas, the beginning of His coming: the Incarnation, the Nativity, his passage through earth. But Jesus has never left us; it remains with us in various ways until the end of time. For this reason, "with Jesus Christ joy is always born and reborn!" (Pope Francis).

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*«Be alert and watch, for you don't know when the time will come»*

Fr. Antoni CAROL i Hostench  
(Sant Cugat del Vallès, Barcelona, Spain)

Today, in this first Sunday of Advent, the Church begins a new liturgic year. We are, therefore, entering some very especial days of foretaste, renewal and readying.

Jesus warns us that «you don't know when the time will come» (Mk 13:33). Yes, in our life there will be a decisive moment. But, when will it be? We do not know. The Lord did not even want to reveal us when the time would come for the end of the world.

So, all this takes us towards an attitude of exasperation and conscientiousness: «If He comes suddenly, do not let him catch you asleep» (Mk 13:36). Time in this life is time of deliverance, of maturing our capacity to love; it is not a time of diversion. It is a time of “betrothal”, of preparation for our “wedding” time in afterlife, in communion with God and all the saints.

Yet, life is but a constant starting and restarting. The fact remains that we have to go through some definitive moments: perhaps, every day, every hour and every minute may become a crucial moment. Many or a few, but—in short— days, hours and minutes: it is here, on a concrete time, when the Lord is waiting for us. «In our life, in the life of Christians, our first conversion—that unique moment which each of us remembers, when we clearly understood everything the Lord was asking of us— is certainly very significant. But the later conversions are even more important, and they are increasingly demanding» (St. Josemaria).

In this liturgical time we are to get ready for the great “advent”: the coming of Our Master. “Christmas”, “Nativitas”: it would be great if each day of our existence could be a “nativity” to a life of love! Perhaps, making of our life a permanent “Nativity” might be the best way to stay awake. Saint Mary, Our Mother, watch

**over us!**