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**Year A** FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

"TO THE HEIGHTS" YOUTH EDITION ALSO AVAILABLE

## Sunday Mass Readings

### FIRST READING:

Isaiah 2:1-5

### RESPONSORIAL PSALM:

Psalms 121(122):1-2, 4-5, 6-9

### SECOND READING:

Romans 13:11-14

### GOSPEL:

Matthew 24:37-44

"Stay awake because you do not know the day when your Master is coming."



## Hear

Grab your Bible and look up the Gospel reading. Don't have one? No worries, you can find this week's readings online [here](#).

Check out [this video](#) on the readings for children.

## Pray

- In the Gospel today we begin the new Church Year (Cycle A). We begin by preparing to celebrate the incarnation of Jesus at Christmas, and to meet Jesus again at His Second Coming. Jesus cautions us to "stay awake", to "stand ready" because we do not know when that day will come.
- What is the Holy Spirit saying to you through this piece of Scripture? How do these words resonate with you personally?
- If I knew that I would meet Jesus tomorrow, or next week, or on Christmas Day - if that day were to be my last day - how would I prepare? Is my heart ready for that event now? What concrete actions is Jesus calling me to, to have a heart that's ready to meet Him at all times? Is there anyone I need to reconcile with, or to forgive?

## Talk

- In today's readings we hear Jesus tell his disciples to stay awake and stand ready for the Son of Man's coming.
- Discuss the following as a family:
- Have you ever made New Year's Resolutions? What were they? Were you able to keep them? If yes, what helped you? If no, what hindered you?
- Advent is the beginning of the new Church year, and a special time to prepare for Christmas and to remember Christ's promise that He will come again. How can we get our home ready for Jesus this Christmas? What can remind us to focus on Him each day? What New Church Year Resolutions can we make?

## Family Challenge!

Consider using the Jesse Tree as a part of your Advent preparation this year - learning a little about Jesus' ancestors each day or week. Watch [The Big Story video](#) for a summary of Salvation History.

# NEW YEAR PREPARATIONS

Today is the first Sunday of Advent, which is also the first Sunday of a new liturgical year for the Church. The Advent season includes the four Sundays that precede Christmas. It is a time of preparation for the coming of the Lord. In this season, we recall two central elements of our faith: the final coming of the Lord in glory and the incarnation of the Lord in the birth of Jesus. Key themes of the Advent season are watchful waiting, preparation, and justice.

In this new liturgical year, the Gospel of Matthew will be the primary Gospel proclaimed (Lectionary Cycle A). In today's Gospel, we hear Jesus speak about the need for wakefulness, for watchful waiting, for the coming of the Son of Man.

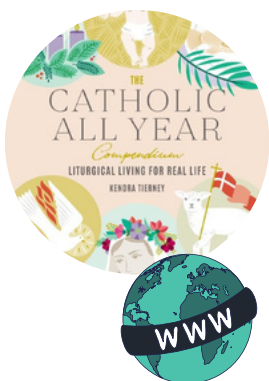
Matthew's Gospel is dated by most scholars after 70 A.D. Most believe that Matthew wrote for a primarily Jewish community, but one that was no longer centered on the Temple in Jerusalem. These were Jewish Christians trying to come to terms with their relationship to Judaism in a new situation: Judaism after the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. There may have been Christians who believed that the events of the world around them gave evidence of the imminent return of the Lord in glory.

The passage from Matthew we read today is rather straightforward. No one knows the precise time of the coming of the Lord in glory, so watchful waiting and vigilance are required. The passage speaks to the uselessness of looking for signs; there will be none. As a thief sneaks in during the night, so will the Lord's coming in glory be.

The question for us as members of the Christian community, then, is how do we prepare for this? Today's passage speaks more about the manner of waiting, rather than the details of the preparation. Jesus compares the vigilance required of Christians to the vigilance of a homeowner who knows the plans of the thief. If one knows that the thief's action is imminent, one remains watchful. As Christians, we know that our Lord is coming even if we cannot know the precise timing. Jesus calls us to be watchful and vigilant, like the homeowner. If we become lax in our Christian living, we may be caught unprepared.

**Loyola Press Sunday Connection**

## CHECK IT OUT: THE CATHOLIC ALL YEAR COMPENDIUM



*If you have been wondering how to bring the rich traditions of the Catholic Church's liturgical year into your family life, this is the book for you. If you have no idea what the liturgical year is, but you are looking for ways to bring your faith home from Sunday Mass—in every season, all year long—this is the book for you too.*

*Book by Kendra Tierney: available at Veritas*



Never give up on God because He never gives up on you.

### ARE YOU READY?

Can you believe it's Advent already? Where did that time go? In just a few weeks Christmas will be over and we'll be into a new year. But let's not get ahead of ourselves: today is the start of the liturgical new year and we have plenty of time to prepare well for Christmas. We hear in today's Gospel about the need to stay awake: obviously we literally can't do that, we need to sleep, but what Jesus is talking about is a deeper sense of wakefulness than that. Are we awake to the presence of God in our lives. Are we awake to the real meaning of Christmas? At Christmas we celebrate "Emmanuel", God-with-us. We have to remember that our God is not a distant God, watching us slip up with a frown on His face. No, He is a loving Father who does everything possible to win our hearts and bring us to Heaven. The whole story of Salvation history (which we retell through the Jesse Tree in Advent) reminds us that God never gives up. This is why the Church gives us the season of Advent: to be prepared to celebrate Jesus' first coming in Bethlehem, and His Second Coming, at the end of the world, or just the end of our lives. Let's not waste the time we have, but use it to serve God and others, and be the best version of ourselves!

Reflect in prayer, and ask God to guide you on how to live this Advent differently. He knows your heart and your deepest desires. He knows too, the wounds our pasts can cause us and areas where we need to choose healing. Choose one thing this week, a small or a big step - that's up to you!



**True Meaning of Advent- Fr Mike**



**Come to save us (All Sons&Daughters)**

*To the Heights Youth Newsletter available also.*



## Family Prayer

*Dear Jesus, you are the hope in our messy world. This Advent, help us slow down, listen to your voice, and focus on what's really important. We place our hope in you as we prepare our hearts to celebrate your birth on Christmas. Amen.*

[www.dynamiccatholic.com](http://www.dynamiccatholic.com)

## EVENTS

### **Advent Reflections in the Diocese:**

- St. John's Pastoral Centre, 7.30pm, 29 Nov, 'Perceiving life through the window of the soul' - Antoinette Dilworth rsj
- Park Hotel Dungarvan, 7.30pm, 5 Dec, 'Journeying with Advent Hope', Frances Rowland
- Minella Hotel Clonmel, 7.30pm, 12 Dec, 'Waiting through Advent, with Mary' - Gemma Mulligan

**Youth 2000 Christmas Retreat:** 9 - 11 December, Newbridge - save the date!

**Advent Family Day at Holy Family Mission.** Sunday 4th December, 10am - 3pm. Booking is essential: email [info@holymission.ie](mailto:info@holymission.ie)

**REnewal Rosary Making Workshop for RE Teachers.** Practical workshop on how to make twine rosaries with your students, plus other rosary resources, 25 Feb, 11am - 1pm. For more info email [events@waterfordlismore.ie](mailto:events@waterfordlismore.ie) Register before Dec 15th to facilitate ordering of materials.

**Have you subscribed yet to our Diocesan newsletters and events bulletin? Receive them direct to your inbox!**

**Click the Subscribe Button OR go to [www.waterfordlismore.ie/resources](http://www.waterfordlismore.ie/resources)**

- Faith@Home Newsletter ([faithathome@waterfordlismore.ie](mailto:faithathome@waterfordlismore.ie))
- "To the Heights" Youth Newsletter ([youthministry@waterfordlismore.ie](mailto:youthministry@waterfordlismore.ie))
- Check it Out! Diocesan Events Bulletin ([events@waterfordlismore.ie](mailto:events@waterfordlismore.ie))

WEEKLY  
WEEKLY  
FORTNIGHTLY







# Let's dive in!

**FAITH**  
@Home Activities for Children!

www.waterfordlismore.ie



## Let's Learn!

Check out this video from Kids Catholic Media on this Sunday's readings.

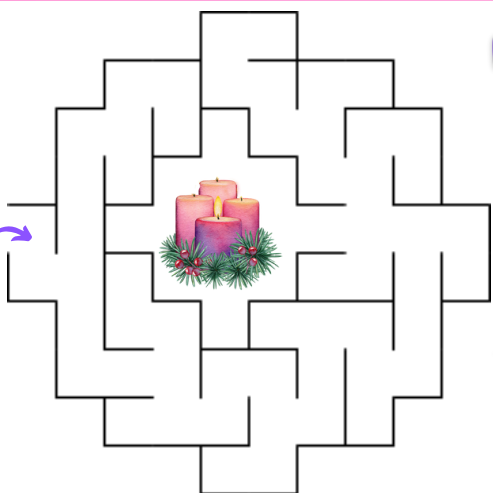
## Puzzle

Can you find these words from the Gospel in the wordsearch?

G	M	Z	R	L	D	A
D	F	A	Q	S	A	W
W	L	L	S	E	R	A
V	V	O	O	T	K	K
N	O	A	H	O	E	E
Y	D	A	E	R	D	R
B	U	R	G	L	A	R

ark  
awake  
burglar  
Flood  
master  
Noah  
ready

Start here!



Find your way through the maze to light the first Advent candle!

## Celebrate the Seasons!

What colour is the priest's chasuble today?  
Colour it in!

Tick the box for the correct liturgical season!

Advent ☐ Christmas ☐ Lent ☐  
Easter ☐ Ordinary Time ☐



## My Saint Friend



Saint Andrew, Apostle  
30 November

## Let's sing!

"The Advent Song"



## Let's PRAY



Lord Jesus, I can't wait to celebrate your birth. Help me prepare my heart for you! **Amen**

## Let's act!



Today we light our first Advent candle - that means Christmas is not very far away! How can you be a light this week? Can you make an extra effort to smile when you feel like being grumpy, or to help others when you'd prefer to play games?



Come let us walk in the light of the Lord!

**Word of God**



Colour in these Jesse Tree Symbols throughout Advent to remind you of Jesus' Family Tree!

