Week 1: Hope

Opening prayer

God of all,
fill us with joy and expectation in this Advent season,
and move us to share our hope with others,
by being a good neighbour,
that we might be found ready, when you come in glory. Amen.
(Light the first candle in your Advent wreath)

Scripture (Mark 13:33-37)

At that time, Jesus said to his disciples: “Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to stay awake. Therefore stay awake – for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the cock crows, or in the morning – lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake.”

Reflection

As Advent starts once more, we enter this season of longing for the coming of our Lord. We look forward to celebrating Christ’s birth at Christmas, but we also wait in hope and anticipation for when he comes again.

As Jesus says in the Gospel, we do not know when this will be, but we must stay awake. Like servants, waiting for our master, our work does not stop. We are called to serve God and one another, reconsider our priorities and live out our faith in our actions. It is time to work for peace, be good neighbours to one another and to build a better world. We do not lose hope in the face of the challenges the world faces, but we stand ready at the door for the hour of our Master’s return.

In this way, we prepare our hearts to meet the Lord, who came to dwell among us and who will return to renew the face of the earth. We raise our voices in an Advent prayer of longing for this moment, saying “Come, Lord Jesus, come.”

For discussion

- How can we ‘stay awake’ to the realities of life and the challenges we face, as well as to the signs of hope in our world today?
- We are called to be found ready when Christ comes again, what does this mean for how we live our lives?
- How will you try to be a good neighbour to others this Advent?

Closing prayer

We stay awake, watch and wait,
for we do not know the hour
or the day of your arrival.
Come, Lord, Bringer of Hope.

Create in us a desire
for a world transformed
to reflect your glory.
Come, Lord, Bringer of Hope.

Lead us in your ways
as together we make a change
and build a better world.
Come, Lord, Bringer of Hope.

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