

## ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

**To you, I lift my soul, O my God. In you, I have trusted; let me not be put to shame. Nor let my enemies exult over me; and let none who hope in you be put to shame.**

## COLLECT

**Grant your faithful, we pray, almighty God, the resolve to run forth to meet your Christ with righteous deeds at his coming, so that, gathered at his right hand, they may be worthy to possess the heavenly Kingdom. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever**

## FIRST READING 33:14-16

*A reading from the prophet Jeremiah*

'See, the days are coming - it is the Lord who speaks - when I am going to fulfil the promise I made to the House of Israel and the House of Judah:

'In those days and at that time,

I will make a virtuous Branch grow for David,

who shall practise honesty and integrity in the land.

In those days Judah shall be saved and Israel shall dwell in confidence. And this is the name the city will be called:

The Lord-our-integrity.

*The word of the Lord.*

## RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps 24

**Response: To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.**

1. Lord, make me know your ways.

Lord, teach me your paths.

Make me walk in your truth,

and teach me:

for you are God my saviour. (R.)

2. The Lord is good and upright.

He shows the path to those who stray, he guides the humble in the right path; he teaches his way to the poor. (R.)

3. His ways are faithfulness and love for those who keep his covenant and will.

The Lord's friendship is for those who revere him;

to them he reveals his covenant. (R)

## SECOND READING 3:12-4:2

*A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Thessalonians*

May the Lord be generous in increasing your love and make you love one another and the whole human race as much as we love you. And may he so confirm your

hearts in holiness that you may be blameless in the sight of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus Christ comes with all his saints.

Finally, brothers, we urge you and appeal to you in the Lord Jesus to make more and more progress in the kind of life that you are meant to live: the life that God wants, as you learnt from us, and as you are already living it. You have not forgotten the instructions we gave you on the authority of the Lord Jesus.

*The word of the Lord.*

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**Alleluia, alleluia!**

**Let us see, O Lord, your mercy and give us your saving help.**

**Alleluia!**

## GOSPEL 21:25-28.34-36

*A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke*

Jesus said to his disciples: 'There will be signs in the sun and moon and stars; on earth nations in agony, bewildered by the clamour of the ocean and its waves; men dying of fear as they await what menaces the world, for the powers of heaven will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to take place, stand erect, hold your heads high, because your liberation is near at hand.'

'Watch yourselves, or your hearts will be coarsened with debauchery and drunkenness and the cares of life, and that day will be sprung on you suddenly, like a trap. For it will come down on every living man on the face of the earth. Stay awake, praying at all times for the strength to survive all that is going to happen, and to stand with confidence before the Son of Man.'

*The Gospel of the Lord.*

## PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

**Accept, we pray, O Lord, these offerings we make, gathered from among your gifts to us, and may what you grant us to celebrate devoutly here below, gain for us the prize of eternal redemption. Through Christ our Lord.**

## COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**The Lord will bestow his bounty, and our earth shall yield its increase.**

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May these mysteries, O Lord, in which we have participated, profit us, we pray, for even now, as we walk amid passing things, you teach us by them to love the things of heaven and hold fast to what endures. Through Christ our Lord.

## ADVENT REFLECTION

### *STAY AWAKE*

"So what are you expecting from these few days of retreat?" That question from my Retreat Director hit home with devastating force. In truth, I wasn't expecting anything. It was a period of what might be called 'practical agnosticism'. If questioned, an affirmative answer concerning God's existence would have been forthcoming. But in terms of consequent expectations – forget it!

How very different the Season of Advent. Today's readings are full of expectation: "See, the days are coming when I am going to fulfill the promise I made to the House of Israel" (Jer 33:14); "May he so confirm your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless in the sight of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus Christ comes" (1 Thess 3:13). So, "stay awake, praying at all times" (Lk 21:36).

Ignatius Loyola wisely urges us at the start of our prayer to be clear and explicit concerning that for which we are hoping and, indeed, expecting. This is the antidote for 'practical agnosticism'. It is to live from the conviction that life is meaningful, that God's purposes – for the world and for myself – are being achieved. It is also the essential prelude to discerning and playing my part in their achievement.

*By Bishop Brian Noble*

## PRAYER

Lord, grace me with hope-filled faith. May I make more and more progress in the kind of life that I am meant to live. (1 Thess 4:1)

## Readings – 2<sup>nd</sup> Week Advent Year C

**First Reading:** Baruch 5:1-9

**Second Reading:** Philippians 1:4-6.8-11

**Gospel:** Luke 3:1-6



## **A PASTORAL LETTER**

### ***On Re-awakening Eucharistic Faith***

**To be read at all Masses on the First Sunday of Advent**

***28<sup>th</sup> November 2021***

My dear brothers and sisters,

Today marks the beginning of a new year in the life of the Church. Advent places all the turmoil of history and the upheavals of the present pandemic in one and the same perspective: that of Christ's return *"with power and great glory"*.<sup>i</sup> Our contemporaries might see time as an inevitable path of progress, whereby humanity throws off the moral constraints of Christianity. How often do we hear it suggested that it is inevitable that society will progress to removing all barriers to killing the unborn, or assisting the suicide of the sick, or rejecting the model of the family founded on marriage. Tragically, some see this as human progress. The Gospel offers a radically different itinerary, seeing this time as the moment of witness ushering in the dramatic struggle of the last days, marked by the trial of evil which does not even spare the Church.<sup>ii</sup>

Yet, as the Catechism reminds us, all time is moving towards the hour which we pray is hastened, when we say: *"Marana-tha! Our Lord, come!"*.<sup>iii</sup> Indeed, *"whenever the Church celebrates the Eucharist, she ... turns her gaze 'to him who is to come,' knowing that, 'the Lord comes even now in his Eucharist and that he is here in our midst'"*.<sup>iv</sup> Advent reminds us that our time must be marked by alertness as we heed Our Lord's call to: *"Stay awake, praying at all times to survive all that is going to happen, and to stand with confidence before the Son of Man"*.<sup>v</sup>

The pandemic years have led to such a re-awakening in our parishes as many have recognised anew, the Eucharistic Presence of the Lord Jesus, and the need to participate actively in the Sacrifice of the Mass and the grace and forgiveness which awaits us in Confession. I am especially conscious of those who remain medically vulnerable and are unable to return to Mass this Winter. Let us not forget these most isolated members of our communities and help them remain connected to the life of the Church. Yet, we must also be aware of those who may have 'fallen asleep' and be in danger of losing the perspective of what ultimately matters in time and for all eternity. Let us think of those who may not with us at Mass and seek actively to help and encourage each one to make their return this Christmas and in the new year ahead. This involves not merely a change of priorities on a Sunday but the same re-awakening to the presence of Our Lord. Let our help for them begin with prayer and our own example.

Pope Francis has asked that this be a time marked by listening. Attentive listening is not always easy in our lives or relationships, nor is it easy when we come to the silence of prayer. We all too readily hear only the sound of our own voices; and can struggle to find the silence which allows us to be attentive to the presence of the Lord. Soon we will celebrate, that on the first Christmas night, while the whole world slept, poor shepherds alone heard the voice of Heaven. In one of the best loved Christmas Carols we sing of the silence of that Holy Night declaring: *“How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is given ...”* In silence the Saviour was born for us. It is in an atmosphere of silence in every Mass, that we hear God’s Word and receive the wondrous gift of the Eucharist. As the Saint of Calcutta, Mother Teresa reminded us, it is in silence before the Holy Eucharist that we also learn to be attentive to the spiritual and material needs around us. Let us rediscover this precious silence in all our churches so we can once more hear *“the news of great joy”*;<sup>vi</sup> and recognise *“Emmanuel God-with-us”*<sup>vii</sup> in the Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist. This would surely be the greatest outcome of this time of listening, which Pope Francis describes as leading us all to the supreme prayer of adoration – which is reverent silence in the presence of God.<sup>viii</sup>

May this new year in the Church’s life be marked by such a re-awakening, so we recognise the purpose of our time. Let us be attentive to the reality of the Eucharist which contains the Church’s entire spiritual wealth, Christ Himself;<sup>ix</sup> and aware of our constant need of grace and conversion in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. May we also be ready to help others to awaken in Eucharistic faith and in the words of the Gospel hold *“their heads high because our redemption is near at hand”*.<sup>x</sup>

Let us ask Our Lady, Help of Christians to guide us all as we prepare to share the joy of Christmas,

+ Mark

Bishop of Shrewsbury

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<sup>i</sup> Mk. 13:26

<sup>ii</sup> Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church no. 1403

<sup>iii</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church no. 671

<sup>iv</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church no. 404

<sup>v</sup> Lk. 21: 36

<sup>vi</sup> Lk. 2: 10

<sup>vii</sup> Mt. 1: 23

<sup>viii</sup> Cf. Homily of the Holy Father for Opening the Synodal Pathway, 10th October 2021 & Catechism of the Catholic Church no. 2628

<sup>ix</sup> Cf. *Presbyterorum Ordinis* no. 5

<sup>x</sup> Lk. 21: 28

## **Bidding Prayers and Synod Prayer**

**28<sup>th</sup> November 2021 – 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent, Year C**

### **Priest:**

As we begin our new Church Year and listen to the invitation to ‘stay awake’ on this first Sunday of Advent we bring all our prayers before the Lord.

### **Reader:**

For the Church and Christians everywhere: may they be attentive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit as they journey together.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For all our young people: we pray especially for those who were confirmed on Friday and those who will receive First Holy Communion over these next weeks.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For ourselves: may we take seriously our important roles as good stewards of Creation. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For those who are poor or in need: following the example of Christ may we always help and serve them particularly in this time of Advent with love, generosity and compassion. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For peace in our world and an end to war, division and violence everywhere. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For those in our parish who are sick or housebound: may they come to know the love and the comforting presence of Christ the King and healer. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For the faithful departed especially **Mary Adams** and all who have died recently, those whose anniversaries occur around this time and those named on our November Lists: **“Eternal rest grant unto them...”**

We pray through the intercession of Mary our mother: **“Hail Mary...”**

In silence we bring our own private prayers and intentions before the Lord.

**Priest:** Loving Father,

As we begin this season of Advent  
we offer these and all our prayers to you,  
through your Son Jesus,  
who is Christ Our Lord, Amen.

## **Bidding Prayers and Synod Prayer**

**28<sup>th</sup> November 2021 – 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent, Year C**

### **Synod Prayer**

We stand before You, Holy Spirit,  
as we gather together in Your name.

With You alone to guide us,  
make Yourself at home in our hearts;  
Teach us the way we must go  
and how we are to pursue it.

We are weak and sinful;  
do not let us promote disorder.  
Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path  
nor partiality influence our actions.

Let us find in You our unity  
so that we may journey together to eternal life  
and not stray from the way of truth  
and what is right.

All this we ask of You,  
who are at work in every place and time,  
in the communion of the Father and the Son,  
forever and ever. **Amen**