



Praying the Scripture at Home First Sunday of Advent ~ 29th November

1. **Breathing exercise:** Try to do this at least once a day. Be still. To start take three deep breaths... inhale for a count of four, then exhale for a count of four (*all through your nose, which adds a natural resistance to the breath*). Then, close your eyes and focus on your normal breathing. On the in-breath be aware that it is life-giving, nurturing; a gift from God. On the out-breath be aware that you are feeding the plants and trees around you; you are blessing the world around you. Stay with that for a while: The in-breath as a gift from God; the out-breath as your gift to the world. Repeat the following: "*Come, Lord Jesus, Come*", for as long as you are comfortable and be aware of God who is with you always.

Opening Prayer - God, the living word, we ask that we may be aware of the power of your word speaking in our lives. We ask your spirit to come among us and light the fire of your love in our hearts. As we gather to explore this word for ourselves and each other we do so in an atmosphere of openness and respect for all gathered here and for your presence among us. AMEN

2. Read **Sunday's Gospel**, two or three times (**Mark 13:33-37**). Come back to it a few times during the week.

"Beware, keep alert; 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 slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch.

Therefore, keep awake - for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake."

- *Sit with the text and pick a word or phrase that stands out to you. In the stillness repeat that word or phrase in your mind.*
- *Why is that word or phrase relevant to you at this moment? What feelings does it evoke?*
- *Is there something that puzzles or disturbs you? Why? -What is it calling you to do?*

Consider this

Waiting. We're not very good at that anymore. Maybe we never were. We get frustrated if we have to wait for any length of time. Waiting feels like time wasted and who can afford to waste time these days? But maybe a little waiting is a good thing. Here are five things we can get from waiting that are worth reflecting on.

1. Waiting reminds us that we are not the centre of the universe. *Waiting gives us the opportunity to remember that other people have plans and priorities as well. We are not the focal point of the universe. That doesn't make our plans unimportant, but it does put them in perspective.*

2. Waiting reminds us that God is in control. *At the very least, waiting forces us to realize that we are not in control. And that can be a valuable opportunity to reflect on who is.*

3. Waiting reminds us that life is a gift. *Forced to sit at a stop light for several precious minutes, I have a choice. I can choose to grumble and gripe about the loss of my precious time, or I can remember that those very minutes were a gift God gave me. Sure, this wasn't how I'd planned to use them. But that doesn't change the gift.*

4. Waiting reminds us that the present matters. *Sometimes we can be too future-oriented, always focused on what comes next. But what about now? Next is in God's hands. Now is what we have.*

5. Waiting reminds us that the future is bigger than we think. *We have a finite amount of time, why waste any of it waiting for things to happen? Waiting can remind us that this life is part of something much larger and teach us to value the time, relationships that we have. Waiting can teach us to be involved and not a spectator in life!!*

(Adpt from Mark Cortez)

Closing Prayer - God of our longing and God of all hope, in you we trust.

When we are lost and do not know where to turn, it is your presence and your word which sustain us. Help us to be convinced that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord, your Son who lives and reigns with you in the unity of Holy Spirit, **Amen**

Prayer in these uncertain times

We pray for all those in our country and throughout the world suffering from the Corona Virus. May its victims and their families be strengthened by the support of our community of faith and restored soon to full health. We also pray for our leaders and medical personnel who deal with the virus. May we keep calm and may we join together in solidarity with care and compassion to tackle this emergency. This we ask in confidence through Christ Our Lord. Amen