

Watch expectantly today - your Master is coming!

Reading 1: Isaiah 63:16-17, 19; 64:2-7
Reading 2: 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19
Gospel : Mark 13:33-37

Gospel Reading: *Mark 13:33-37*

Take heed, watch; 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 be on the watch. Watch therefore -- for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning -- lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Watch."

Meditation:

What do you do when someone you love very dearly and miss very much has been gone a very long time but promises to return soon? Do you ignore their absence, or do you anticipate their return and send them messages to let them know how much you long to be with them again? Jesus' parable about the long-expected return of the Master to his household brings this point home.

Wealthy landowners often left their estates in the hands of their trustworthy servants and stewards. This gave them freedom to travel, trade, and expand their business ventures. They expected loyalty and hard work from their servants and rewarded them accordingly. Dutiful servants would eagerly anticipate their master's return by keeping the house and estate in good order. Jesus doesn't tell us in his parable whether the servants were ready to receive the unexpected return of their master. Were these servants excited or anxious about their master's return? The watchful servants, no doubt, looked forward to the future because they knew their master would be pleased and would reward them for their vigilance and hard work. Disaster and reprisal, however, awaited those who were unprepared because of carelessness or laziness.

When we expect some very important event to happen, we often wait for it with excited anticipation. The Lord Jesus expects us to watch in great anticipation for the most important event of all - his return in glory at the end of this present age! The Old Testament prophets foretold the coming of the Lord when *he shall judge between the nations and decide for many peoples* (Isaiah 2:5). The Advent season reminds us that we are living in the end times. The end times begin with the first coming of Christ (when *the Word of God became flesh and dwelt among us* - John 1:14) and it culminates in Christ's second coming on the Day of Judgment and vindication for his people.

While the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is for certain, the time of his appearance is not yet disclosed. The Lord's day of visitation and judgment will come swiftly and unexpectedly. Jesus warns his listeners to not be caught off guard when that day arrives. It will surely come in God's good time! The Lord invites us to pray for the coming of his kingdom into our present lives and future as well. Jesus taught his disciples to pray - "may your kingdom come and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). Do you earnestly pray for the coming of God's kingdom - both now and at the end of the world? The kind of watching the Lord has in mind is not a passive "wait and see what happens" approach to life. The Lord urges us to vigilance and to active prayer that his "kingdom may come" and his "will be done on earth as it is in heaven". We are not only to watch *for* Christ, but to watch *with* Christ. The Lord wants us to have our hearts and minds fixed on him and his word.

The season of Advent is a time for rousing our minds and hearts for the Lord's coming. As his servants we watch for his will - continually seeking him. We watch for his word and his power - that he may act now to save and to deliver. And we watch for his visitation – he will surely come again! Servants of the Lord rouse yourselves! Be vigilant, be alert, be "watchmen" for the Lord pointing the way for his coming.

Questions for Community Faith Sharing:

1. How does the Lord want us to be watchful and vigilant for his return? How do you prepare yourself for his return?
2. Do you watch for the Lord's action in your life with expectant faith and with joyful hope? Give an example (How).

"Lord Jesus, awaken my heart and mind to receive your word and to prepare for your coming again. Free me from complacency, from the grip of sin and worldliness, and from attachments to things which pass away. May I always be eager to receive your word and be ready to meet you when you came again."