

## **Readings & Reflections for the First Sunday of Advent, December 3rd, 2023 - Year B**

**First Reading (*Isaiah 63:16b-17.19b; 64,2b-7*):** You, Lord, are our father, our redeemer you are named forever. Why do you let us wander, o Lord, from your ways, and harden our hearts so that we fear you not? Return for the sake of your servants, the tribes of your heritage. Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down, with the mountains quaking before you, while you wrought awesome deeds we could not hope for, such as they had not heard of from of old. No ear has ever heard, no eye ever seen, any God but you doing such deeds for those who wait for him.

Would that you might meet us doing right, that we were mindful of you in our ways! Behold, you are angry, and we are sinful; all of us have become like unclean people, all our good deeds are like polluted rags; we have all withered like leaves, and our guilt carries us away like the wind. There is none who calls upon your name, who rouses himself to cling to you; for you have hidden your face from us and have delivered us up to our guilt. Yet, o Lord, you are our father; we are the clay and you the potter: we are all the work of your hands.

### **Second Reading (*1 Corinthians 1:3-9*) :**

*Brothers* and sisters, Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I give thanks to my God always on your account for the grace of God bestowed on you in Christ Jesus, that in him you were enriched in every way, with all discourse and all knowledge, as the testimony to Christ was confirmed among you, so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will keep you firm to the end, irreproachable on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, and by him you were called to fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Versicle before the Gospel (*Ps 84:8*):** Alleluia. Show us Lord, your love; and grant us your salvation. Alleluia.

**Gospel text (*Mark 13:33-37*):** Jesus said to his disciples: "Be watchful! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come. It is like a man traveling abroad. He leaves home and places his servants in charge, each with his own work, and orders the gatekeeper to be on the watch. Watch, therefore; you do not know when the lord of the house is coming, whether in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning. May he not come suddenly and find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to all: 'Watch!'"

### Reflections on Today's Gospel

***"Be watchful! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come"(Mark 13:33)***

Fr. Antoni Carol i Hostench(*Sant Cugat del Vallès, Barcelona, Spain*)

Today, in this first Sunday of Advent, the Church begins a new liturgical year. We are, therefore, entering some very especial days of foretaste, renewal and readying.

Jesus warns us that "You do not know when the time will come" (Mark 13:33). Yes, in our life there will be a decisive moment. But, when will it be? We do not know. The Lord did not even want to reveal us when the time would come for the end of the world.

So, all this takes us towards an attitude of exasperation and conscientiousness. "May he not come suddenly and find you sleeping" (Mark 13:36). Time in this life is time of deliverance, of maturing our capacity to love; it is not a time of diversion. It is a time of "betrothal", of preparation for our "wedding" time in afterlife, in communion with God and all the saints.

Yet, life is but a constant starting and restarting. The fact remains that we have to go through some definitive moments. Perhaps, every day, every hour and every minute may become a crucial moment. Many or a few, but in short, be it days, hours and minutes, it is here, on a concrete time, when the Lord is waiting for us.

"In our life, in the life of Christians, our first conversion, that unique moment which each of us remembers, when we clearly understood everything the Lord was asking of us, is certainly very significant. But the later conversions are even more important, and they are increasingly demanding" (St. Jose Maria).

In this liturgical time we are to get ready for the great "Advent" - the coming of Our Master. "Christmas", or "Nativity," it would be great if each day of our existence could be a "nativity" to a life of love! Making of our life a permanent "Nativity" might be the best way to stay awake during Advent and after for the glory of God and his Son, Jesus.

By Fr. Antoni Carol i Hostench(*Sant Cugat del Vallès, Barcelona, Spain*)