

Reflection by Greg Sunter



Stay awake! With these words, Jesus cautions his disciples to be constantly vigilant and to be alert to the return of the Lord. It is a very fitting way to begin the season of Advent. Advent has traditionally been observed as a time of preparation and waiting. It culminates in the Christmas season and so the waiting and preparation is related to the celebration of the coming of Christ into the world.

Perhaps the time of preparation this Advent is also a call to stay awake and stay alert in faith. One of the great challenges to faith today is the complacency that has taken hold of many in our society. When life is comfortable, the perceived need for faith appears to diminish. Many young people in our society cannot see the value of religious belief or religious practice. In a world of instant communication and instant 'satisfaction', the reflective and slow work of faith can seem too much effort for some people. The gospel call to stay awake in preparation for the coming of the Lord is a call to continue the work of bringing about the Kingdom of God.

Over the last three weeks, the gospel passages from Matthew 25 were reminders about continuing to prepare for the coming of the Kingdom. This week, with the beginning of Advent, it is the gospel of Mark that also reminds us that we cannot take the Kingdom for granted and must remain vigilant in working to realise the Kingdom. This vigilance needs to be applied to nurturing our own faith life as well as making a difference in the lives of those around us and the needy in society. Rather than 'Stay awake!' maybe some of us need to be told, 'Wake up!' It is never too late to pay closer attention to faith and perhaps this Advent is an ideal time to do that.

PARISH HAPPENINGS

LOOKING AHEAD

Monday 4 December

- 7.00pm Italian Prayer Group – Church
- 7.30pm Parish Pastoral Council – Library

Tuesday 5 December

- 9.30am Playgroup – Hospitality Area
- 9.30am Scripture Group – Library
- 7.00pm Social Justice Group – Library

Thursday 7 December

- 9.30am Playgroup – Hospitality Area
- 7.00pm Italian Choir – Church

Saturday 9 December

- 3pm Community of Risen Lord – Church/Hosp.

Let us remember in prayer all those who are sick: David Beard, John Bendel and those whose anniversaries occur around this time: Gerald and Teresa Simento, Palmerion La Monaca, Pantaleone Silipo, Francesca Musico, and the recently deceased

Peter's Pence Collection

Today, the Peter's Pence collection will be taken up as you leave Mass. This annual collection allows the Holy Father to respond to the neediest throughout the world and to offer timely, effective emergency assistance to our suffering brothers and sisters.

Planned Giving

To those who give via envelopes to the Planned Giving Program, your 2018 envelopes are ready for collection today from the front door of the church.

November Month of Remembrance



As the Month of Remembrance drew to a close, we held a special Mass at 8am on Saturday 25 November to remember and pray for all those names in the Book of Remembrance which has been in the Sanctuary. We are now returning to the normal Mass Intention envelopes which are available at the front door of the church.

Anointing of the Sick

Anointing of the Sick will be part of the 9am Mass on Friday 8 December.

Piety Stall

The Piety Stall is currently selling the following items in the lead up to Christmas and New Year.

- SVdP Christmas Cards - \$3 for a pack of 5
- 2018 Columban Art Calendars - \$10

You can visit the stall before or after Sunday Mass.

A d v e n t

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Fun, games, craft and drama activities
Week 1: Mon Dec 11 & Wed Dec 13.
Week 2: Mon Dec 18 & Wed Dec 20.
9am – 12noon

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Ages: 8-12 years

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Cost: \$5 per child and \$10 for two or more siblings

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Lunch: gluten free sausage sizzle.

BYO hats, and morning tea.

Sunscreen for reapplication will be

provided. Registration: 8.30 am.

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Contact Shelly in the Office for

enquiries and forms.

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Opportunities to volunteer:

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First Aid Officer – Blue Card required

Registration Officer – Blue Card

required

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Sausage Sizzle - Sausages will be

supplied. If you prefer to cook them at

home and drop off on the day, no blue

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card is required.

St Vinnies – Christmas Appeal

This Christmas as in the past we have already been packing and delivering many food/toy hampers to our families in need within the local area. This would not have been possible without the wonderful generosity of the San Sisto College, St Martin's Primary School and the local Lions club which donated cakes/puddings. We are still in need of Christmas food and general food items to help the many in our community who continue to struggle during this happy Season. If you are able to provide non-perishable food items please leave in the baskets at the church entrance. If you would like to make a financial donation the envelopes are available on the pews and front of the Church. The financial donations may be placed on the collection plate or at the Piety shop and receipts will be provided. A newsletter explaining how all the funds spent to date by St Vinnies at Our Lady of Graces Parish for the year and the help provided is available at the back of the Church. If you would like any further information please contact Barbara Dougherty 0438 982 140. As always thank you so much. God Bless.



Parish Working Bee

The next Parish Working Bee is on **Saturday 16 December starting at 8.30am** and finishing around lunch time. The grounds are needing a good clean up as we head into Christmas. If you are interested, please come along and if you have any gardening tools/wheelbarrows etc. please bring them along too. We hope to see you there!

☞Advent-Christmas Timetable☞

Reconciliation:

2nd Rite of Reconciliation
Tuesday 19th December 7pm

Individual Reconciliation:

Every Saturday 8:30am and 5:30pm
Wednesday 20 to Friday 22 December
following the 9am Mass

Mass Times:

Christmas Eve:

5.30pm: Children's Mass
– Dominic Centre
(BYO chairs/picnic blankets)
8pm: Vigil Mass - Church

Christmas Day:

7am, 9am and
10.30am [Italian Mass]

No Evening Mass on Christmas Day

**Tuesday 26 December (Boxing Day)
8am Mass Only**

New Year's Day - 8am Mass Only

**The Parish Office will be closed from
3.30pm Friday 22 December 2017
and will reopen at
8.30am Tuesday 2 January 2018**

Advent Reflection

At this time of year there seems to be an urgency that propels society towards all things Christmas. As we come closer to Christmas Day and the commercial buzz gets louder, it is easy to become so caught up in the trivial that we get distracted from the spiritual significance of Christmas. In contrast, Advent offers us the time and space to reflect on our lives and grow spiritually closer to God. Its themes and purpose are to remind us of God's promises to us and to help guide us through our lives.

The word Advent means 'coming'. This not only refers to the birth of Christ but to his Second Coming. As Catholics we look forward to the Second Coming, but for now we are in a period of waiting. The concept of 'waiting' doesn't fare well in modern society – just look at attitudes to long queues in the shops. People are so used to having everything on demand and knowing event dates, that if they don't believe that the 'payoff' is worth it or they feel ignored, they lose interest and

give up the wait. In response Advent's message is to 'wake up!' It reminds us that we are waiting, but we are not alone.

Advent is a reminder of God's promises to send his son and to always be with us. The promise of Emmanuel (God with us) was fulfilled in Jesus' birth. The promise to always be with us was restated by Jesus and honoured in the Last Supper and Pentecost. Today this promise continues to be fulfilled through the gifts of the Holy Spirit, received during Confirmation, and through the Eucharist. We are not alone, but we can become complacent.

Stay awake! Advent calls us to be vigilant in our faith, to trust in the promises God made to us through Jesus. In a world faced with so many challenges to the environment, society and the Church, we can't afford to be complacent or passive in our attitudes. Advent offers us the opportunity to enhance our relationship with God and others. To pray, be stewards and to live lives that reflect Jesus' teachings.

COMMUNITY HAPPENINGS

Brisbane Catholic Historical Society Meeting

Please note the upcoming topic of interest on Tuesday December 5 - "*The Ignatians—A Toowong Parish initiative*", presented by Mrs Barbara Foster and Sheila Corcoran.

The Brisbane Catholic Historical Society normally meets at 5.30pm in the Hanly Room of the Francis Rush Centre, besides the Cathedral of St Stephen. Annual Membership of the Society is \$35 per person / family. This is the final meeting for the year and is also preceded by a 5.10pm Mass for deceased members at St Stephen's Chapel.

Job Advertisements

- Parish Youth Ministry Worker

Applications are open for a position at the Mother of Mercy Parish, Hendra Northgate Hamilton. A person with good pastoral and liturgical knowledge is required for 15 hours a week to work across a variety of weekdays, weekends and evenings. Applications close on 15 January 2018. For further information go to <https://brisbanecatholic.org.au/careers/>

- Youth & Young Adult Ministry Coordinator

Applications are open for a position at Sunnybank Parish. This 20 hours per week position requires a self-motivated individual who has a personal commitment to the values, teachings and mission of the Catholic Church. Applications close at 11:00pm on Wednesday 6 December 2017. For further information, telephone (07) 3345 3766 or email sunnybank@bne.catholic.net.au.

Become a part of the parish Planned Giving Program to help your Parish grow.

We thank, sincerely, all Parishioners who contribute to Planned Giving. Your ongoing commitment and contribution assists the parish to budget for operating expenses (wages, rates, electricity, phones, maintenance etc) as well as parish pastoral planning (faith education, sacramental preparation, resources etc). To obtain Planned Giving Envelopes or to contribute by direct debit, complete this form and place on the plate, or contact the Parish Office. Planned Giving contributions are not Tax Deductable.

Surname: _____ **Given names** _____

Address _____ **P/code** _____

Phone _____

Email _____