

December 3, 2023



# Daily Reflections

## PREPARE FOR THE COMING OF JESUS!

By Sr. Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ

### Excerpts from Today's First Reading and Gospel

*You, Lord, are our father, our redeemer you are named forever.... No ear has ever heard, no eye has 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! O Lord, you are our father; we are the clay and you the potter: we are all the work of your hands.*

**ISAIAH 63:16B; 64:4, 5, 8**

*Jesus said to his disciples: "Be watchful! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come. ... What I say to you, I say to all: 'Watch!'"*

**MARK 13:33, 37**

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### Reflection

Advent is here – what a joyful and hope-filled time of our liturgical year. Just

as the change of seasons marks the advent of winter, spring, summer, and fall, so does Advent remind us of the liturgical seasons of our faith.

I find it helpful to remind myself to embrace this change of seasons to avoid the complacency that can set in because Advent can seem like any other time - there's nothing new. Advent is the beginning of a new liturgical year and if our internal mindset finds this redundant, we're sure to miss the grace and spirit of the season.

Thus as we begin this new year, the word that springs to mind is "presence." What might I do to embrace this new season in a way that helps set the tone for expectation, joy, hope, and love? Advent reminds us of the birth of Jesus, our Savior. Advent reminds us of this gift given to us from God's heart overflowing with love for his Son and all of creation.

Presence means preparing our hearts for the unfolding of Advent over these next four weeks. With eager anticipation, we're reminded of the grace of hope that is foundational to Advent. No matter what is happening in our world -- and so much is happening, with rampant turmoil, war, violence, racism, and disregard for humanity itself -- this cannot overshadow our deep faith in God's love and hope for the present and the future.

A common word used throughout Advent is "coming," and unpacking this word can help us prepare an internal space for God's mystery unfolding within us. Coming is active; it connotes movement, anticipation, excitement, and expectation. Advent is a time to clear an internal space that welcomes this Season into our hearts, minds, and souls. Declutter all that blocks you from entering into this sacred time.

Another aspect of "coming" reminds us of what it feels like to expect another's presence in our life. Think about a time when you greeted a loved one after a long separation. Recall the excitement and anticipation as you waited to catch that first glimpse of your loved one. Do we cultivate this same level of preparation and joy when we contemplate, once again, the gift we've been given in Jesus?

Advent urges us to think about not only ourselves and those we know; it is a time for reflecting on all of God's precious creation. Jesus looked at life and opened a whole new world view to us: to love one another as God loves us. Advent centers us in this time of being one among; not separate from all of creation. This implies a readiness on our part to look with fresh eyes upon our world and assess what dominates our thoughts, actions, and way of being in the world. Are we open to the grace that is part of our Advent journey? Are we open to the transformational work of the Spirit as we move ever closer to the

day we celebrate the birth of Jesus, our Savior?

### **Advent Grace**

O Come Emmanuel, Gift of eternal life for all who profess faith in the Beloved.

O Come Emmanuel, a Light in the darkness within and around us.

O Come Emmanuel, Presence of God among us.

O Come Emmanuel, Hope for a world torn asunder.

O Come Emmanuel, Joy amidst the cacophony of emotions within us.

O Come Emmanuel, Love poured out on a deeply wounded people and planet.

O Come Emmanuel, Gently dwell within us as each day of Advent dawns.

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Church steeple  
Photo by Keith Turner

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### **For Pondering**

- What is your hope for your own Advent journey this year?
- What might need to shift in your life to allow for the grace of Advent to flourish within you?

- Reflect on the internal climate of your being ... are you prepared to engage the "coming" that is always present as the weeks of Advent unfold?

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## For Prayer

*We lift up all people struggling for survival – in body, mind and spirit.*

*May the grace of Advent dawn within them,*

*opening a path to find You in their lives.*

*Let us profess our love and faith in God*

*by being conduits of light, joy, hope, and love as this week unfolds.*

*May we embrace the “coming” of you, our Savior,*

*in the totality of our lives.*

*Amen.*

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