

# Advent

## REFLECTIONS



### Week 1: Watch, Awake, Be Ready

**Gospel:** Matthew 24:37-44

**Memory verse:** Therefore, you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. Mt 24:44

#### Praying with Scripture:

- Before you start to read the Gospel, invite the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to what God wants to say to you today.
- Slowly read Matthew 24:37-44. What word or phrase stand out to you?
- Pray: Holy Spirit, help me to be ready to hear from you today.

#### Reflection:

Advent begins with anticipation of the coming of Christ, not just at Christmas but at the end of time. We live in an age when we know the Messiah has come and yet we are still waiting. Waiting for suffering to end, struggles to cease, hearts to heal and peace to reign. We are waiting for Heaven, and it is closer than we realise. Advent reminds that eternal life starts today.

#### Reflection Prompts:

- What does being "ready" look like in my daily life?
- In what ways have I become complacent or spiritually drowsy?
- How might I keep watch in hope rather than in fear?

#### Daily Actions:

Sunday: How can "watchfulness" shape my week ahead?

Monday: Pause for 5-10 minutes of silence early morning and simply be in God's presence.

Tuesday: Identify one activity that distracts you and set a time limit to reclaim quietness.

Wednesday: Write down one thing you are waiting for and bring it to God.

Thursday: Reach out to someone who might feel left behind send a word of encouragement

Friday: Fast or abstain from something as a reminder of our waiting (e.g. skip a luxury).

Saturday: Visit (in person or virtually) a church and linger in prayer without agenda.



## Week 2: Make Straight the Path

**Gospel:** Matthew 3:1-12

**Memory Verse:** Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Mt 3:2

### Pray with Scripture

- Before you start to read the Gospel, invite the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to what God wants to say to you today.
- Read Matthew 3:1-12 and imagine standing beside John the Baptist in the wilderness. What stirs in you?
- Pray: Holy Spirit, show me the path you desire to straighten within me.

### Reflection:

This week's Gospel invites conversion. Getting ready not just externally, but interiorly, so that Christ may find a prepared heart. We can think of conversion as a one-off event, a dramatic moment that changes the course of our lives forever. For most of us conversion is a slow and steady process, like a river shaping the landscape, over many years. Either way, the essential element is a knowledge of our need for God and an openness to his will for our lives.

### Reflection Prompts:

- Where in my heart are there crooked paths that need to be made straight?
- Is there something I need to bring to the Lord in the Sacrament of Reconciliation?
- How can I actively prepare, not just for Christmas, but for Christ's presence in my life?

### Daily Actions:

Sunday: In what way is God calling you to deeper change?

Monday: What habit or attitude you wish to relinquish?

Tuesday: Do a small act of service as a way of preparing the way in your environment.

Wednesday: Clear a physical space (desk, room, drawer) to symbolise interior clearance.

Thursday: Pray for someone you know is struggling with their faith at the moment.

Friday: Fast from a comfort (e.g., dessert, easy entertainment) and reflect on the emptiness that God alone can fill.

Saturday: Read a brief penitential Psalm (e.g. Psalm 51) and pray it slowly in your own words.



## Week 3: Rejoice, The Lord is Near

**Gospel:** Matthew 11:2-11

**Memory Verse:** The poor have good news preached to them. Mt 11:5

### Pray with Scripture:

- Before you start to read the Gospel, invite the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to what God wants to say to you today.
- Read Matthew 11:2-11 slowly, what stands out to you?
- Pray: Lord Jesus, thank you that the kingdom is at hand — help me to live in that reality.

### Reflection:

Joy enters the waiting and preparation — because the coming of Christ is both imminent and transforming. The coming of Jesus is good news! It is sometimes easier to feel the excitement during the advent season with the flurry of Christmas activities going on. Christian Joy goes beyond our feelings. It is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, grown from a life spent with the Lord, nourished by sacraments and lives of prayer.

### Reflection Prompts:

- What brings me true joy in this season?
- How do I respond to the nearness of Christ, not just at Christmas but each and everyday?
- What "kingdom work" is the Lord asking me to do?

### Daily Actions:

Sunday: Reflect: How is joy shaping my Advent journey?

Monday: List three blessings you often ignore; thank God for each one.

Tuesday: Share one of those blessings with someone else (encouragement, note, small gift).

Wednesday: Choose a hymn or worship song of joy, and listen/or sing slowly, reflecting on its words.

Thursday: Read about the Holy Spirit (e.g., Acts 2:1-4) and pray for fresh "fire" in your life.

Friday: Fast or abstain and tie that sacrifice to hope and joy in Christ's coming.

Saturday: Perform a random act of kindness simply to reflect kingdom life.



## **Week 4: *Emmanuel — God With Us***

**Gospel:** Matthew 1:18-24

**Memory Verse:** Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel (which means, God with us). Mt 1:23

### **Pray with Scripture:**

- Before you start to read the Gospel, invite the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to what God wants to say to you today.
- Read Matthew 1:18-24 slowly, imagining Joseph's heart, Mary's faith, the birth of Jesus.
- Prayer: Emmanuel, God with us, dwell in me, walk with me, transform me.

### **Reflection:**

The culmination of Advent, the mystery of incarnation, the "God-with-us" who enters our world and our lives. Jesus came to reveal the Father's love for us. Knowing that we are unconditionally loved by God can be a hard lesson for us to learn. This Advent is an opportunity for us to be schooled in love, a love that does not depend on who we are, what we have done or have achieved. God became man so that we can encounter his love and be transformed by it.

### **Reflection Prompts:**

- What does "God with us" mean in my everyday life?
- Where do I already sense Emmanuel, and where do I struggle to feel His presence?
- How can I open myself more deeply to the mystery of God's love this week?

### **Daily Actions:**

Sunday: Celebrate and reflect: How has this season of Advent transformed me? How am I more open to God-with-us?

Monday: Write a short "thank you" to God for the gift of Christ's presence (in your own words).

Tuesday: Light a candle and sit in silence for 5-10 minutes, focusing on being with God.

Wednesday (Christmas Eve): Prepare spiritually (quiet prayer, confession, reflection) to welcome Christ.

