

ocean and its waves; men dying of fear as they await what menaces the world, for the powers of heaven will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to take place, stand erect, hold your heads high, because your liberation is near at hand.'

'Watch yourselves, or your hearts will be coarsened with debauchery and drunkenness and the cares of life, and that day will be sprung on you suddenly, like a trap. For it will come down on every living man on the face of the earth. Stay awake, praying at all times for the strength to survive all that is going to happen, and to stand with confidence before the Son of Man.'

■ The Gospel of the Lord.

WELCOME AND THANK YOU

Today we welcome Fr Michael Trainor as our reflection writer. Fr Michael is senior lecturer in biblical studies with the Australian Catholic University and parish priest of Lockleys in the Archdiocese of Adelaide. His area of specialisation is the study of the New Testament and its relevance for our contemporary world, ecology and pastoral life.

We are very grateful and thank Dr Rosemary Canavan for her insightful reflections on the readings during the past liturgical year.

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Breaking Open the Word



THE SAVING WORD

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT / C

1 DECEMBER 2024

STAY AWAKE!

On this First Sunday of Advent we come into a new liturgical year with the Gospel of Luke, penned for urban Greco-Roman followers of Jesus, possibly living in Rome in the late first century of the Christian Era, around 85CE.

Today's Gospel proclamation comes from a particular literary style, called 'apocalypticism'. It is a style not to be taken literally. It is more like theological poetry intending its listener to recognise images that come from the writings and prophets of the First ('Old') Testament. Its fundamental insight is a reminder that, despite all the calamity and upheaval present in the world, God is present and liberating. Rather than being overwhelmed by global tragedies and disasters, Luke's audience is encouraged to 'stand erect ... with heads held high' and recognise that freedom and release are near. Jesus followers are to be confident in God's presence and care of them, themes that Luke will repeat throughout the year.

Sometimes we can be overwhelmed by global events. At the beginning of this new liturgical year, today's Gospel proclamation is timely. It is a reminder that a different, divine power is at work. Hence, Luke's injunction, 'Stay awake'. We need this reminder. We can forget or be lulled into a form of spiritual forgetfulness by the unimportant or ephemeral. Advent becomes this precious moment to allow ourselves to view the world with faith and confidence in the continual care of God.

Fr Michael Trainor

FIRST READING

Jer 33:14-16

A reading from the prophet Jeremiah

I will cause a good seed to spring forth from David.

See, the days are coming – it is the Lord who speaks – when I am going to fulfil the promise I made to the House of Israel and the House of Judah:

'In those days and at that time,

I will make a virtuous Branch grow for David,

who shall practise honesty and integrity in the land.

In those days Judah shall be saved and Israel shall dwell in confidence.

And this is the name the city will be called: The Lord-our-integrity.'

■ The word of the Lord.

RESP PSALM

Ps 24:4-5, 8-9, 10, 14. R. v. 1

R. To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.

1. Lord, make me know your ways. / Lord, teach me your paths. / Make me walk in your truth, and teach me: / for you are God my saviour. **R.**

2. The Lord is good and upright. / He shows the path to those who stray, / he guides the humble in the right path; / he teaches his way to the poor. **R.**

3. His ways are faithfulness and love / for those who keep his covenant and will. / The Lord's friendship is for those who revere him; / to them he reveals his covenant. **R.**

SECOND READING

1 Thess 3:12–4:2

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Thessalonians

When Christ comes may he strengthen your hearts in holiness.

May the Lord be generous in increasing your love and make you love one another and the



whole human race as much as we love you. And may he so confirm your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless in the sight of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus Christ comes with all his saints.

Finally, brothers, we urge you and appeal to you in the Lord Jesus to make more and more progress in the kind of life that you are meant to live: the life that God wants, as you learnt from us, and as you are already living it. You have not forgotten the instructions we gave you on the authority of the Lord Jesus.

■ The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Ps 84:8

Alleluia, alleluia!

Lord, show us your mercy and love, and grant us your salvation. Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Lk 21:25-28, 34-36

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

Your redemption is near at hand.

Jesus said to his disciples: 'There will be signs in the sun and moon and stars; on earth nations in agony, bewildered by the clamour of the