



ONE MISSION, TWO PARISHES

Saint Timothy's & Saint Luke the Evangelist
Catholic Parishes, Forest Hill & Blackburn South

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Parish Office tel: 03 9412 8499; Presbytery tel: 03 9877 2292

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WEEKLY BULLETIN: SUNDAY 3 DECEMBER 2023

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT - YEAR B

REACH OUT IN LOVE AND MERCY: MARK 6: 32 - 34



Readings this week: Is 63:16 – 17; 64: 1, 3 – 8; Ps 79; 1 Cor 1:3 – 9; Mk 13:33 - 37.

Gospel Reflection ~ 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.

Have you thought? Beginning Advent: The season of Advent begins this week and continues through the four Sundays of Advent and ends at Christmas Eve. The first week of Advent focuses on the return of the Lord and the following weeks focus more specifically on the anticipation of the birth of Jesus. Rather than simply commemorating an historical event, Advent is a time of preparing our hearts to 'receive' Jesus into the world each year. Advent is traditionally marked by the colour of violet – the same colour as used in Lent. In recent years, some parishes have moved to a more blue/mauve colour for Advent to try to distinguish it from the season of Lent.

Living the Gospel – Stay Awake! By the time the Church begins to celebrate Advent as a period of preparation towards Christmas, the stores have been filling with Christmas paraphernalia for weeks. It starts out small with a few decorations and wrapping paper and eventually takes over every retail outlet. In the midst of this excess of Christmas consumerism, it is often difficult to draw attention to the season of Advent and the need to prepare spiritually for the celebration of Christmas. It is important to stay awake, as we are cautioned in this week's gospel. Awake to what is happening around us in the world and awake to what is happening within us.

Gospel Focus – The Doorkeeper The image of the doorkeeper from this week's gospel is an interesting one. It is not unusual to hear references to people being 'gatekeepers' today in relation to projects or groups working together. The role of the gatekeeper, or the doorkeeper, is to maintain a watching brief – to be alert to dangers or distractions and to ensure that everyone who is important to the process is invited to participate. Today's gospel reminds us that as believers we are to be the doorkeepers, or gatekeepers, of the Kingdom, watching for dangers and welcoming in all those who wish to enter.

REACH OUT IN ...

Whitehorse Deanery
Eastern Region
Archdiocese of Melbourne

Rev Father Gerard
Parish Priest

Sonya O'Farrell

Part-time Parish Secretary

Wednesdays,

Thursdays & Fridays

10.00am – 2.00pm

SUNDAY MASS

ST: & SL: Saturday Vigil @ 6.00pm

Sunday ST: @ 10.30am *Australian*

5.00pm – *Vietnamese*

& SL: @ 8.30am

WEEKDAY MASS & SL: ROSARY

ST: Weds. & Thurs. @ 9.15am

Fri. @ 10.00am

1st Wednesday of the month

@ 10.00am Mass of Anointing.

SL: Tues. @ 5.00pm

Weds., Thurs. & Fri. @ 9.30am

Sat. @ 9.00am

RECONCILIATION

**SL: Saturday 9.30am – 10.00am &
5.30pm – 5.50pm**

SL: EXPOSITION & BENEDICTION

The Blessed Sacrament is exposed
for Adoration Wednesday

Start: 7.00pm | End: 8.00pm

MACS Catholic Primary School
21 Stevens Road, Vermont, 3133 Vic
Tel: (03) 9878 4188

Ms. Anne Maree Jones **Principal**

Email: principal@sttims.catholic.edu.au

Website: <https://sttims.catholic.edu.au/>

MACS Catholic Primary School

46 Orchard Grove,

Blackburn South Vic 3130

Tel: (03) 9877 4023

Mrs. Clare Ryan: **Principal**

Email: principal@slblackburnsth.catholic.edu.au

Website: slblackburnsth.catholic.edu.au

Prayer to Saint Timothy

O God, who adorned Saint Timothy with apostolic virtues, grant, through his intercession that, living justly and devoutly in this present age, we may merit to reach our heavenly homeland. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Patron Saint of stomach and intestinal disorders.

Prayer to Saint Luke the Evangelist

O St. Luke, you were chosen to reveal in preaching and writing God's love for the poor. Moved by the heavenly Spirit of Love, you detailed the life of Jesus, showing His divinity and His genuine compassion for all human beings. Help those who already glory in God's name to persevere in one heart and one mind and inspire all people that they may hear the Good News of Salvation. Amen

Patron Saint of artists, physicians, surgeons, students and butchers.

WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER this weekend all who are sick, especially Max Marino, Caratha McKerrow, Tony Keaney, Kathryn Holmes, Therese O'Donoghue, Stewart Davis, Trevor Stowe, Jerry Donoghue, Veronica and all those Parishioners unable to be among us this weekend. For all who have died recently, especially Father Gerard Dowling OAM DE & Bernadette Bolling, for the casualties of war in Ukraine, Israel and Gaza and for those whose anniversaries occur about this time especially Jack Taya, Mario Cardenti, John Rarela, Margaret Jones, Andrea Kawalevski, Eugena D'Souza, June Dorling, Garry Halourson, Else Rasmussen, Norberto Gonzales, Monica Bone, Josephine Cannestra, Francesco Boccaccio, Maria Cassano, Giosue Iaccarino, Damiano Viola, Gabriel Soosadasan, Gina Berenato, Alan Stewart, Paul Van Raay and Jean Willett. May they rest in peace.

LITURGICAL CALENDAR THIS WEEK: **Advent ~ Monday:** St John Damascene, priest, doctor; **Wednesday:** St Nicholas, bishop; **Thursday:** St Ambrose, bishop, doctor; **Friday:** The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary; **Saturday:** St Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin, hermit. **Masses this weekend:** Preface of Advent I, Eucharistic Prayer I; Eucharistic Acc. No. I.

SL CHRISTMAS CARDS & 2024 COLUMBAN CALENDARS are still available from the Counter in our Church Foyer/Narthex. Donations can be left in the St V de P Poor Box adjacent to where they are available.

ST CHRISTMAS CARDS & 2024 COLUMBAN CALENDARS are now on sale from the Piety Stall. St. Vincent de Paul Society cards are \$3.00 for a pack of 5, Magellan Cards are \$7.00 for a pack of 10 and the 2024 Columban calendars are \$ 9.00 each.

SL CARE GROUP'S annual fund-raising Hamper Raffle for Parish Hospitality begins this weekend. If you have anything suitable and appropriate for the Hamper, please leave it in the Basket in our Church Foyer for collection. Raffle tickets will be available for purchase this weekend.

ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY, BLACKBURN SOUTH CONFERENCE – CHRISTMAS APPEAL 2023:

Our Parish Conference is seeking your assistance with the Christmas Appeal – Christmas will look different this year for hungry families. Your generosity has always enabled us to provide assistance for people in the area who are experiencing hardship. Since the last Christmas Appeal, this has enabled us to provide assistance to 275 households delivering \$19,990 in Woolworths vouchers, \$3350 in Vinnies' store vouchers and \$2790 in donated food from you and the school. This year, the continuing rise in the price of essentials such as rent, food, and utilities will further disadvantage those struggling to make ends meet. Supporting our appeal will benefit the families we serve in this community. You can support the conference's appeal by donating in the envelopes which will be available next weekend, by placing your donation in the Poor Box at the back of the church, or by placing non-perishable items in the basket in the narthex. We are most in need of canned fruit, pasta sauce, packets of soups, small packets of rice and of fruit juices, small jars of coffee, small packets of tea bags, and long-life milk. St Vincent de Paul said that there are no people so rich that they have nothing to receive, and none so poor that they have nothing to give. We thank you in advance for your support of our work in the local community.

A VOCATION VIEW: 'Be watchful! Be alert!' The call towards a vocation can come at an unexpected day and hour, prepare your heart to always say 'yes' to God. (Mark 13:33)

STEWARDSHIP CORNER: "Be watchful! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come." - Mark 13:33 We all take things for granted. In particular, we take time for granted. We make our lives too busy. We plan our days, weeks, months, even years in advance. Remember, our time on earth is a gift. None of us knows how long we will be here. Start today and begin thanking God for each and every day. Take time in silence, every day, and listen to how God is calling you right now to help build His kingdom on earth. (**ST:** Weekly First Collection Presbytery Envelopes: \$90; Thanksgiving Stewardship Envelopes this week: \$105; Vietnamese Donation: \$232.15; Monthly direct debits & Credit cards for Stewardship \$1,455; Monthly direct debits & credit cards for Presbytery \$380; **SL:** Last week's Church Stewardship Envelopes: \$322; Last week's Presbytery Stewardship Envelopes: \$280; Monthly direct debits & credit cards for Stewardship \$2,816.50; Monthly direct debits & credit cards for Presbytery \$1,732.50).

WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS who have walked upon and cared for this land for thousands of years. We acknowledge the continued deep spiritual attachment and relationship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to this country and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of Reconciliation.

WEEKEND PARISH MINISTRY ROSTER

MINISTERS OF THE WORD

SATURDAY 6:00 PM SL
6:00 PM ST
SUNDAY 8:30 AM SL
10:30 AM ST
5.00PM ST

2 AND 3 DECEMBER

Olive Hammill
Maria Deayton
Darren McLean
Alfred Lee & Martin Harris
Thuan Tran & Hieu Nguyen

9 AND 10 DECEMBER

Janice D Souza
Patrick Kelly
Kana Chelliah
Ryan Yee & Joelle Roussety
Mai Le & Loc Le

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF THE EUCHARIST

SATURDAY 6:00 PM SL
6:00 PM ST
SUNDAY 8:30 AM SL
10:30 AM ST
5.00PM ST

2 AND 3 DECEMBER

Anne Lobo
Owen Grealy
Megan McLean
Anico Yee
Hung Dinh

9 AND 10 DECEMBER

Melina Barcellona
Mary Italiano
Beryl Chelliah
Daphne Hickman
Hoang Nguyen

SLIDE OPERATORS

SATURDAY 6:00 PM SL
6:00 PM ST
SUNDAY 8:30 AM SL
10:30 AM ST
5.00PM ST

2 AND 3 DECEMBER

Choir
Michelle Chen
Melina Barcellona
Lee Min Yee
Toan Tran

9 AND 10 DECEMBER

Tony Lobo
Michelle Chen
Rosemary Donaldson
Lee Min Yee
Toan Tran

SL WELCOMERS 2/3 DEC

6:00 PM John Ryan
8:30 AM Joe Brogno
10:30 AM Margaret Gearon
HOSPITALITY

SL CHURCH CLEANING

9th Dec. – Bernard's Team
Bernard O'Malley, Joanne Nolan,
Melina Barcellona
& Anne Allsopp

SL CHURCH FLOWERS

No flowers for Advent

ST CHURCH FLOWERS

No flowers for Advent

ST COUNTERS

This week Team 7:
Barry & Christine Silvester
Next week Team 8:
Fela Colasanti & Chin L Tay

ST CHURCH CLEANING

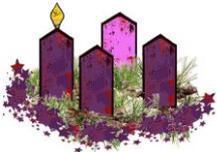
9th Dec. @ 2pm
Toan Tran, Dao Dinh,
Hieu Nguyen & Dieu Nguyen

SL WELCOMERS 9/10 DEC

6:00 PM Edna Lee
9:30 AM Marie Pekish
10:30 AM Volunteer

ST OUR CONGRATULATIONS TO PAUL DUNG NGOC AND ANE THI TAN NHU on the occasion of their Marriage at St Timothy's last Sunday afternoon 26th November. May you have many blessed and happy years together.

ON THE JOURNEY THIS WEEK: Fr Joshua Whitehead says that we're invited to have a four-fold response this Advent to cooperate, to make sense of what God gives us. Mother Hilda on why we'll love Jesus to mount a crown with our thumbprints on it on our head. Fr Tony Percy says that there's a sense of urgency in Mark's Gospel, He uses the Greek word "eutheós" (English: immediately) 42 times in his Gospel, and 11 times in the first chapter. Plus, Advent reflections from Fr John Corrigan and Sr Mary Helen Hill OP. Plus, more great music!



ADVENT: The first candle, which is purple, **symbolizes hope**. It is sometimes called the "Prophecy Candle" in remembrance of the prophets, especially Isaiah, who foretold the birth of Christ. It represents the expectation felt in anticipation of the coming Messiah.

MELBOURNE CATHOLICS: Celebrating four new ordinations for Melbourne

CSSV NOVEMBER 2023 NEWSLETTER: Communities Keeping Faith

CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES NATIONAL CONFERENCE: Melbourne, 21-23 February 2024. For Conference Registration click [here](#).

MAJELLAN FAMILY MEDIA: Are we prepared? ADVENT 2023 PREPARE FOR CHRISTMAS WITH THE CATHOLIC GUY, BRUCE DOWNES: Join me and people all around the world for a free Daily Devotional that will guide you on a life-changing journey through Advent. Starting 3rd December, you'll receive a short inspirational video each day filled with real life stories and practical ways to help you in your prayer and spiritual journey. I find, "You don't become what you hope to become. You only become what you do." What will you do this Advent? Register here: <https://BruceDownes.org/Advent/> For more information, email: info@brucedownes.org

MERGER OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WOULD CREATE 'EDUCATION HUB': Three Catholic schools in Melbourne's east are in talks to merge in a bid to create a kindergarten to year 12 "[education hub](#)" for about 1500 students. Source: *Herald Sun*.

SAFETY STATEMENT: We are committed to a safe and nurturing culture for all children and vulnerable persons in our Church. Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish Blackburn South holds the care, safety, wellbeing of children and vulnerable persons as central and fundamental responsibilities of the Church. This commitment is drawn from and inherent to the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ, with love, justice and the sanctity of each human person at the heart of the Gospel.

Love and Mercy: Mark 6: 32 - 34

Parish Groups & Contacts

Lectors, Registrars, Collectors,
Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist,
Slide Projector Operator & Rosters

ST: Corrie Quimbo 9412 8499
SL: Margaret Gearon 0409 807 135

Baptism Preparation

ST: Mary Italiano 9412 8499

Vietnamese Community

Hoang Nguyen 0422 400 116
Andy Tran 0422 382 109

Vietnamese Youth

John Dinh 0448 977 037

Parish Collection Preparers

ST: Barry Silvester &
Michael Kawalevski

Stewardship Counters

SL: Dale Dixon - 0433 885 087
Steve Kilroe-Smith - 0404 864 232

Parish Pastoral Council

As we are one Mission now, it has been suggested that we require only one Chair?

Parishes Safeguarding Committee

Theresa Nguyen, Mary Italiano,
Darren McLean - 0417 774 504
Janette Clark - 9877 2292
Fr Gerard - 9877 2292

Parish History

SL: Margaret Gearon - 0409 807 135
Whitehorse Deanery - Fr Gerard

Finance Committee

Bernard Negline
Parish Accountant

SL: Hall Hire

Sonya O'Farrell @ the
Parish Office - 9877 2292

Church Sacristan

ST: Margaret King & Hoang Nguyen
SL: Greg Grant - 0401 644 474

Church Housekeeping

ST: Margaret King 9412 8499

Church Cleaning & Flowers

SL: Megan McLean - 0419 347 693

Church Linen

SL: Beryl Kanagalinggam

Parish Garden Maintenance

ST: Des Connors, Leo Watson,
Anico Yee & Vietnamese Community
SL: Darren McLean - 0417 774 504

Holy Communion to the housebound - Fr Gerard

Parish Choirs

ST: Mary Italiano & Theresa Nguyen
SL: Lina & Maria Mafi
0411 136 043

Parish & School Fete Committee

SL: Mrs. Clare Ryan - 9877 4023

School Advisory Council

ST: Ms. Anne Maree Jones 9878 4188
SL: Mrs. Clare Ryan - 9877 4023

School Parents' Association

ST: Ms. Anne Maree Jones 9878 4188
SL: Mrs. Clare Ryan - 9877 4023

St Vincent de Paul Conference

For Assistance: 1800 305 330

(Freecall: Monday to Friday 10am-3pm)

Parish Contacts:

ST: John McCoy
SL: Tony Lobo &
Steve Kilroe-Smith

Raise your voices ... Entrance Antiphon: To you, I lift up my soul, O my God. In you, I have trusted; let me not be put to shame. Nor let my enemies exult over me; and let none who hope in you be put to shame.

Response to the Psalm: Lord, make us turn to you, let us see your face and we shall be saved.

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! Lord, show us your mercy and love, and grant us your salvation. Alleluia!

Eucharistic Acclamation: We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

Communion Antiphon: The Lord will bestow his bounty, and our earth shall yield its increase.

Watch out and be ready!

1st Sunday of Advent, Year B

Let's Get Ready

Complete these sentences

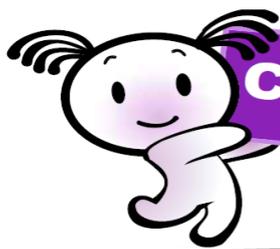
I get ready for church by _____

I get ready for school by _____

I get ready for bed by _____

I get ready for Christmas during Advent by _____

During Advent one way we can prepare for the arrival of Jesus is by helping others. Draw yourself helping another person.



Christmas

Rearrange the following words to complete the sentence below

Jesus

prepare

season

arrival

Advent

_____ is the _____ when
we _____ for the _____
of _____ at _____



Watch out and be ready!

1st Sunday of Advent, Year B

Let's Get Ready

Complete these sentences



During Advent one way we can prepare for the arrival of Jesus is by helping others. Draw yourself helping another person.

I get ready for church by

I get ready for school by

I get ready for bed by

I get ready for Christmas during Advent by



Christmas

Rearrange the following words to complete the sentence below

Jesus

prepare

season

is the

when

arrival

we

for the

Advent

of

at

SUNDAY READINGS

READ AT HOME

First Sunday of Advent

Year B

3 December 2023



Collect

Grant your faithful, we pray, almighty God,
the resolve to run forth to meet your Christ
with righteous deeds at his coming,
so that, gathered at his right hand,
they may be worthy to possess the heavenly kingdom.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

Readings and Commentaries

The coming of Christ at the end of time serves as the bridge between Ordinary Time and the season of Advent. Today's readings conspire together to set the tone. Jesus issues an urgent call for his listeners to be vigilant, to be awake and ready for the day of the Lord. His appeal dovetails with Isaiah's heartfelt prayer for God's return. The prophet makes this plea on behalf of his people, all too conscious of their having turned away from God. The psalm gives voice to their desire – and ours – to turn back to God and find life in him. By contrast with this focus on vigilance and repentance, the apostle Paul invites the Corinthians to share his own spirit of thankfulness and confidence in God's faithfulness.

The call to watch out for the coming of the Lord may seem like a threat, but is meant to challenge us to be fully alive in the here and now. When Jesus first emerged from obscurity into the public arena, his clarion cry was to "repent and believe in the good news" (Mk 1:15). That's the point of repentance: to let go of the ways of death in order to freely embrace the gift of life. The first Sunday of Advent repeats the invitation Paul gave to the Corinthians, to be thankful for "all the graces you have received through Jesus Christ" and to be "steady and without blame until the last day".

A reading from the prophet Isaiah 63:16–17; 64:1, 3–8

You, Lord, yourself are our Father,
Our Redeemer is your ancient name.
Why, Lord, leave us to stray from your ways
and harden our hearts against fearing you?
Return, for the sake of your servants,
the tribes of your inheritance.
Oh, that you would tear the heavens open and come
down
- at your Presence the mountains would melt.
No ear has heard,
no eye has seen
any god but you act like this
for those who trust him.
You guide those who act with integrity
and keep your ways in mind.
You were angry when we were sinners;
we had long been rebels against you.
We were all like men unclean,
all that integrity of ours is like filthy clothing.
We have all withered like leaves
and our sins blew us away like the wind.
No one invoked your name
or roused himself to catch hold of you.
For you hid your face from us
and gave us up to the power of our sins.
And yet, Lord, you are our Father;
we the clay, you the potter,
we are all the work of your hand.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 79:2–3, 15–16, 18–19

R. Lord, make us turn to you, let us see your face
and we shall be saved.

○ shepherd of Israel, hear us,
shine forth from your cherubim throne.
○ Lord, rouse up your might,
○ Lord, come to our help. **R.**

God of hosts, turn again, we implore,
look down from heaven and see,
Visit this vine and protect it,
the vine your right hand has planted. **R.**

May your hand be on the man you have chosen,
the man you have given your strength.
And we shall never forsake you again:
give us life that we may call upon your name. **R.**

First Reading

Of all the books of the Old Testament (apart from the psalms), none is used more often for the Sunday readings than Isaiah. This is especially so at Advent and Christmas. That's because Isaiah offers an unparalleled vision of hope in many passages full of promise and reassurance.

Scholars tell us that we should speak of the “books” of the prophet Isaiah, for what we simply call the “book” appears to be a collection of writings from different historical periods. Today's passage comes from what is usually called “Third Isaiah”. It reflects the situation of the Israelites on their return from exile. Struggling to rebuild their homeland and their lives, they feel abandoned by God and plead for him to return to their aid, even as they confess their rebellion against him.

The reading begins and ends with God being addressed as “our Father”. This double affirmation establishes the frame – a “safety zone” – within which the people can make their plea and confess their sin with trust.

As is usually the case, readers would benefit from a careful look at the full text of Chapters 63 and 64 in their Bible. Knowing the context will help them manage the wide range of emotion found in this reading: trusting faith, urgent pleading, and profound lament for sin. Above all readers need to note that from start to finish the reading is a prayer addressed to God. Their task is to engage the whole congregation in the prayer and to draw them into the progression of its successive moods. It therefore needs to be proclaimed with a blend of deep reverence and personal intimacy and at a measured pace.

Elements of the reading are taken up in the New Testament. Jesus' teaches his disciples to call God “Father”; the apostle Paul quotes the verse “no ear has heard, no eye has seen” in 1 Cor 2:9, and he picks up the image of the potter in Rom 9:20. There are also links between the cry “Oh, that you would tear the heavens open and come down” and Jesus' baptism (see Mk 1:10), and between the quaking of the mountains (NRSV) and the death of Jesus (see Mt 27:51).

Responsorial Psalm

In the first reading the people pleaded with God to turn back to them. In the refrain of the psalm they pray the reverse, that God will make them turn back to him. Either way, it is God who makes it possible for the people to see his face and be reconciled to him. The initiative is entirely God's.

Psalm 79/80 is a plea for the restoration of Israel. Only a few verses are prayed but they are rich in biblical themes: God as shepherd of Israel, as warrior lord, and as vine-dresser. There's allusion to the ark of the covenant (“your cherubim throne”), to the role of the king as God's representative (“the man you have chosen”), and to the identity of Israel as God's own people.

Responsorial Psalm cont...

The refrain is relatively long. There needs to be a pause between the two parts of the petition to allow each its proper weight. Readers will need to ensure that the congregation doesn't mistake the first part for the whole refrain and respond prematurely. They can do this by the right combination of vocal tone and visual cue.

Overall the whole psalm is a heartfelt plea for divine assistance and should be proclaimed in that spirit.

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians 1:3–9

May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ send you grace and peace.

I never stop thanking God for all the graces you have received through Jesus Christ. I thank him that you have been enriched in so many ways, especially in your teachers and preachers; the witness to Christ has indeed been strong among you so that you will not be without any of the gifts of the Spirit while you are waiting for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed; and he will keep you steady and without blame until the last day, the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, because God by calling you has joined you to his Son, Jesus Christ; and God is faithful.

Second Reading

Most of Paul's letters are prompted by problems that have been reported to him, yet they begin with a greeting to the community and a prayer of thanksgiving. 1 Corinthians is no exception. In this case the greeting has become one of the options for the presider to use at the beginning of Mass.

Today's passage has been chosen for its reference to "the last day, the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" which the Corinthians are eagerly waiting for, the day when the Lord Jesus Christ will be revealed. This first letter of Paul's to Corinth is early enough for the expectation of the end times still to be strong. Paul seeks to arouse no fear or anxiety about the day of the Lord. On the contrary he implies confidence and hope, for God "has joined you to his Son" and "will keep you steady and without blame." Above all, "God is faithful".

It is only when we read the whole of the letter that we realise that even in the opening thanksgiving Paul is alluding to problems at Corinth. The wealth of spiritual gifts with which the community has been blessed has led, we find later, to divisions and rivalries. Nonetheless the reading as it stands is full of warm praise and encouragement. It should not present any major challenge to the reader, provided it is proclaimed steadily in a joyful spirit. Care may need to be taken with the second-last section ("and he will keep you steady . . .") as the phrases tend to pile up on top of one another.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark 13:33–37

Jesus said to his disciples: 'Be on your guard, stay awake, because you never know when the time will come. It is like a man travelling abroad: he has gone from home, and left his servants in charge, each with his own task; and he has told the doorkeeper to stay awake. So stay awake, because you do not know when the master of the house is coming, evening, midnight, cockcrow, dawn; if he comes unexpectedly, he must not find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake!'

Gospel

All three synoptic gospels include an account of Jesus speaking in Jerusalem about the end times before he enters upon the passion that leads to his death. The language of Jesus' discourse is full of foreboding: he warns of upheavals in heaven and on earth, of destruction and desolation, persecution and betrayal. All of these are features of the apocalyptic literature that seems to have been common enough in Jesus' day. Now it is all but impossible for us to disentangle where he (or the evangelist) is talking about the destruction of Jerusalem, about a final cosmic conflict, or about the coming of the Son of Man.

Three times we are warned to "stay awake!". It's the same admonition that Jesus repeats to Peter, James and John in the garden of Gethsemane, when he is facing his own "end time". His whole mission and his very life are under threat and he has to summon every ounce of energy to go on. Jesus wants us to be under no illusions as to what is at stake when the cost of discipleship confronts us. We need to be alert and ready to choose life.

An alternative translation of the scripture readings is given here from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV). This may be particularly useful for those in parishes which use the NRSV Lectionary.

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

FIRST READING (NRSV)

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah 63:16–17; 64:1, 3–8

You, O Lord, are our father;
'Our Redeemer from of old' is your name.
Why, O Lord, do you make us stray from your ways
and harden our heart, so that we do not fear you?
Turn back for the sake of your servants,
for the sake of the tribes that are your heritage.
O that you would tear open the heavens and come down,
so that the mountains would quake at your presence.
When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect,
you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.
From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived,
no eye has seen any God besides you,
who works for those who wait for him.
You meet those who gladly do right,
those who remember you in your ways.
But you were angry, and we sinned;
because you hid yourself we transgressed.
We have all become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.
We all fade like a leaf,
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.
There is no one who calls on your name,
or attempts to take hold of you;
for you have hidden your face from us,
and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.
Yet, O Lord, you are our Father;
we are the clay, and you are our potter;
we are all the work of your hand.

SECOND READING (NRSV)

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians 1:3–9

My brothers and sisters:
Grace to you and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ.
I give thanks to my God always for you
because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus,
for in every way you have been enriched in him,
in speech and knowledge of every kind—
just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you—
so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift
as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ.
He will also strengthen you to the end,
so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.
God is faithful;
by him you were called into fellowship with his Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

GOSPEL (NRSV)

A reading from the holy gospel according to Mark 13:31–37

Jesus said to his disciples:

"Heaven and earth will pass away,
but my words will not pass away.

But about that day or hour no one knows,
neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come.

"It is like a man going on a journey,
when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge,
each with a particular task,
and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch.

Therefore, keep awake—
in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn,
or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly.

"And what I say to you I say to all:
Keep awake."

Concluding Prayer

Solemn Blessing for Advent

May the almighty and merciful God,
by whose grace we have placed our faith
in the First Coming of his Only Begotten Son
and yearn for his coming again
sanctify us by the radiance of Christ's Advent
and enrich us with his blessing.

Amen.

As we run the race of this present life,
may he make us firm in faith,
joyful in hope and active in charity.

Amen.

So that, rejoicing now with devotion
at the Redeemer's coming in the flesh,
we may be endowed with the rich reward of eternal life
when he comes again in majesty.

Amen.

And may the blessing of almighty God,
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, come down on us
and remain with us for ever.

Amen.

(Adapted from the Solemn Blessing for Advent, *The Roman Missal* p. 709)

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EDUCATION

Merger of Catholic schools would create 'education hub'

30 November 2023



A merger of the three schools "would offer a seamless K-12 Catholic education" for local families (Supplied)

Three Catholic schools in Melbourne's east are in talks to merge in a bid to create a kindergarten to year 12 "education hub" for about 1500 students. Source: *Herald Sun*.

Emmaus College, St Timothy's Primary School and Holy Saviour Parish Primary School, which are all in Vermont South, are proposed to merge in 2025.

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools director of learning and regional services Mary Oski said news of the merger has been "overwhelmingly positive" within the school community.

"We are excited to share that we are actively exploring the potential for a K-12 Catholic Education Hub in Vermont and Vermont South," Dr Oski said.

"This innovative concept would offer a seamless K-12 Catholic education for children and families currently attending St Timothy's Primary School, Holy Saviour Parish Primary School and Emmaus Secondary College.

"This proposal aligns with our responsibility to be responsive to demographic change and use resources as effectively as possible across the archdiocese."

There are 50 pupils enrolled at St Timothy's Primary School, 1392 pupils at Emmaus College and 75 in Holy Saviour.

Emmaus College principal Karen Jebb said: "We are excited about the prospect of offering a seamless K-12 educational journey for local families."

Holy Saviour Primary School principal Steve Evans said: "This K-12 setting would open doors to explore more innovative ways to deliver primary education in our local community".

St Timothy's principal Anne Maree Jones said: "This proposal would allow us to access the facilities and specialised services of a large school, whilst maintaining the personalised approach of a small school community."

The merger comes amid plans to open seven new catholic schools over the next three years, including Marymede Catholic College in Doreen and St Teresa of Kolkata Catholic Primary in Tarneit North, which are set to open next year.

FULL STORY

[Three Catholic schools in Vermont South set for merger to create K-12 learning hub](#) (By Suzan Delibasic, *Herald Sun*)

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[Three Catholic schools to link up in mega-merger](#) (*The Age*)

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