

REFLECTION

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"Be vigilant at all times." - Luke 21:25-28, 34-36



As we prepare our hearts for the birth of Jesus this Advent season, today's Gospel reading challenges us to also prepare our hearts for the return of the Son of Man. In our current world it can be so easy to get caught up in the busyness of the season, or the superficial obligations that seem like requirements. Jesus challenges this idea with conviction, cautioning His disciples to live so that they will not be caught unprepared for His return.

In the Bon Secours volunteer program our service is focused on a "Ministry of Presence". This is a fancy way of saying that we are challenged to serve by "being", rather than "doing". It is a radical way of loving others well with a focus on intentional encounters that lead to an authentic connection with others and Christ. When we open our hearts to Jesus, our aim in interactions changes. The Lord has called us to stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters, especially our marginalized counterparts.

It can be easy to allow our hearts to grow numb to the pain and suffering in the world, especially if we are living in a way that is not mindful of the Gospel. The Advent season offers us a time to pause and examine our lives. As we prepare our hearts for Him, we are called to slow down and focus on the parts of our lives that strengthen our connection to God.

PRAYER

Come Lord Jesus, and settle into our hearts this Advent Season. Help us to seek You more each day in our service, in our homes, and in our souls. Help ignite in us fervor to serve You with joyfulness.

Lord, we ask that You help us live vigilantly, working each day to recognize the light of Christ in every interaction we have. Help us slow down so we may intentionally seek You in every encounter. Bless our bodies for Your service and our service for Your glory.

Focus: SOCIAL JUSTICE

As we celebrate the first week of Advent, the Gospel compels us to live mindfully. As Jesus commands the disciples to live vigilantly, he calls us to live with intentionality. It can be so easy to let our own anxieties or activities overwhelm us. When we live wrapped up in our own problems, we turn a blind eye to the suffering of others and miss the rich opportunities the Lord provides to encounter His love in all people. Social Justice calls us to encounter others in a radically intentional way. Living for the Gospel allows us to love in the way that God intended.

SERVICE SUGGESTION

As we start this Advent season, we are all challenged to slow down and look for Christ in our world. In the second reading we implore the Lord to increase our love for one another. A way to spread love in your community can be to pick up trash in your neighborhood. This small act displays our care for God's creation and communicates our respect for those with whom we live. As you serve your neighbors in this way, actively name and notice the unique parts of your community that the Lord has provided. Take the time to thank God for the gift of His creation, which He generously invites us to participate in.

