

AWAKE & OPEN TO THE SURPRISES OF GOD THIS CHRISTMAS  
FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT 2019

GOSPEL OF MATTHEW 24/37-44

*'For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left.*

*Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.'*

Today's Gospel passage, as well as giving us examples, commands us to

- *'Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.'* and
- *'Therefore you also must be ready'*

The literal translation **'So be on guard'** is translated as "Keep awake therefore"

**BEING READY INVOLVES BEING ON YOUR GUARD**

To be awake, to be on our guard, to be ready,

*'Being on your guard'* can be a much stronger meaning than be prepared.

Our living the Christian life is one

- of being on our guard
- and being prepared for when God calls us home

It is so important that we do not take God for granted.

It is so important that we be faithful to our calling.

But this gospel passage has another meaning.

We are expected to be ready for the unexpected, the unknown.

**BEING READY ALSO INVOLVES CHECKING IT OUT**

We don't believe everything we hear second hand.

Where there are opportunities, we try to be aware of what is really happening.

Here are a few examples.

- The delegation to PNG
- Sharing by parish members about the recent journey to Blackall
- Audits
- Three day visits by Bishops

One of the reasons a Catholic Church delegation went in early November to Port Moresby,

was to hear and see what was really happening to the ex-Manus Island detainees in Port Moresby. The next step was to report on the findings of the visitation.

Next weekend will be important for our community when we hear back at weekend Masses from parish members who recently visited Blackall.

Each parish in our Archdiocese undergoes annual audits

- For child safety and vulnerable adults
- for financial records

and work health safety checks.

The reports are placed in the parish folder near the front door.

It is all part of accountability.

Our Parish Primary School and Out of School Hours Care are both separately audited.

In our Archdiocese, a Bishop undertakes a three-day visit of each parish every so many years. In the last few years, Bishop Brian and Archbishop Mark have both conducted three day visitations to our parish.

They see for themselves how the parishes live the mission of Jesus.

#### BEING READY INCLUDES AN OPENNESS TO GOD'S SURPRISES

We can plan.

But God is not restricted to our plans.

We live our lives open to the unexpected.

We live our lives open to the surprises of God.

In our preparation for this Christmas, may we be ready with open hearts and minds to the surprise invitations that God may ask of us.

Last Friday morning in our church was the celebration of St Joseph's School Thanksgiving Mass. At one point the four streams of Prep Year, Year One and Year Two prayed together to Jesus with such conviction and energy.

May their example inspire us as we begin our Advent journey to Christmas.

Let us now pause and each of us pray silently for people we include in our Advent journey to Christmas.

Fr Gerry

[Readings: <https://universalis.com/20191201/mass.htm>]

