

“And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.” v. 37

I wonder what the average age was of the first hearers of this message to keep awake! It certainly is pointed to my age group 'cuz we can wind down pretty early and doze off quite easily when we sit.

This text from Mark is for us, for all who do fade or drift off early, and run the risk of missing the main event. Yet whatever age we are this text is a direct call to stay awake, remain alert for the coming of the Son-of-Man at an unexpected moment.

As Jesus notes in his little parable, ***“It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch... for you don't know when the master of the house will return.” vs. 34&35***

The temptation for the Christian community (the servants), who have been left in charge during the physical absence of Jesus (the householder), is to get lethargic, fall fast asleep at the wheel. Remember the scene in the garden of Gethsemane where Jesus invited the disciples to stay awake and pray with him? Problem was they kept dozing off to sleep!

On this first Sunday of Advent we read from the end of Mark's gospel account (Ch.13) and hear Jesus' word of warning that we are to stay awake, alert and be alive to the life that has been given to each one of us, and as the body of Christ, content with today while trusting God for tomorrow.

To be awake and alert, to watch and wait for Messiah's coming, is not a passive activity, some star-gazing retreat from the task given. It is a posture of living each day in faithfulness, concentrating on the signs of grace we can see and not engage in speculating about what we cannot possibly know.

Being alert and alive to the ever-invading presence and love of God can be seen in diligent work for justice, acts of forgiveness, and lifting up one another amid the sorrows and challenges of the day.

The Church gathers this first Sunday of Advent fighting off its drowsiness, distractions, and its fears in the darkness of this age. It gathers to light one candle (on the wreath), pray for and remember God's redeeming grace, seen as we bless and share bread and wine of the new covenant in Christ Jesus.

All of this we do so that we can stay awake and be alert to God's coming anew this day, this season! ***“And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”***