

realpeople

the gospel in everyday language



Today's readings:

A vision of peace. Isaiah. 2:1-5
Salvation is near. Romans 13:11-14
Stay awake, stand ready. Matthew 24:37-44

Next week:

A prophet cries out in the wilderness. Isaiah 11:1-10;
Romans 15:4-9; Matthew 3:1-12

In a nutshell

Advent is a spiritual 'wake up call'. It is an opportunity to lift ourselves out of our self-absorption, open our hearts and realign our lives with gospel values as we prepare to receive Jesus at Christmas. Our hearts must be awake and ready to grasp the priorities of God. Advent is a time to remember this and to start afresh.



A wake-up call

'I was feeding our baby when my husband told me the news of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the USA. We just looked at our children and wondered what was ahead for them. We prayed for peace all day, and we still are.' (Anne-Louise)

'One of my teenage boys cried and cried when the towers collapsed. We held hands and prayed.' (Rob)

The terrorist attacks on innocent civilians in New York had an amazing effect on Australian society.

In Australia, on the morning of Tuesday 11th September, it was acceptable to dismiss prayer, knock church-goers and scoff at talk of a moral code.

By Wednesday morning 12th September Australians everywhere were praying, filling churches and talking about morality.

On Tuesday morning in Australia it was cool to bag the Yanks. By Wednesday morning the sight of an American flag evoked sombre respect.

On Tuesday morning 'world peace' was an academic question to many. By Wednesday morning it was a heartfelt concern for all.

In just 24 hours our priorities as a nation, at least in part, had been shaken up, examined and reordered.

Through the painful experience of tragedy, the September 11th terrorist attacks served as an unwelcome 'wake-up call'; a stark reminder of our human vulnerability and our dependence on God.

In good times and bad, the Church teaches that our hearts must always be awake and vigilant to the priorities of God. This is our calling as Christians.

This is the message of Advent.

An unexpected gift

The Advent message - 'Wake up and welcome God's presence in your midst!' - can be felt in the shock and embrace of an unexpected pregnancy. A parent shares:

We were perfectly happy with a daughter, aged ten, and a son, aged seven, when I found out that we were having another baby. We now have a beautiful baby girl who has changed the dynamics of our whole family. I think it has greatly surprised our other two children just how much they love her, and the joy we all have in watching her grow and develop.

Source: *In Their Own Words* (Bishops' Committee for Family and for Life, 2000)



church below the rooftops

A new perspective

My husband is back at work after a bone marrow transplant two years ago. Life is returning to some sort of normality but it is vastly different too. We all go about our daily business—work, school, family life—but we realise that life is precious. We try not to take things for granted. We enjoy special time together... a shared meal at night, a trip to the movies, a day at the beach. We try to make the most of every moment we have.

Source: *In Their Own Words* (Bishops' Committee for Family and for Life, 2000)

'Christmas Specials'

As you prepare for the festive season, resist getting caught up in 'doing' instead of 'being'. Treasure the gift of your family, and the simple blessings of life.

As your gift to the world this Christmas, pray for peace.



RealPeople offers faith reflections from the saints and prophets of everyday life.

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