

1st Sunday of Advent (Year C)

Luke 21:25–28, 34–36

'Your redemption is drawing near.'

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples: 'There will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.

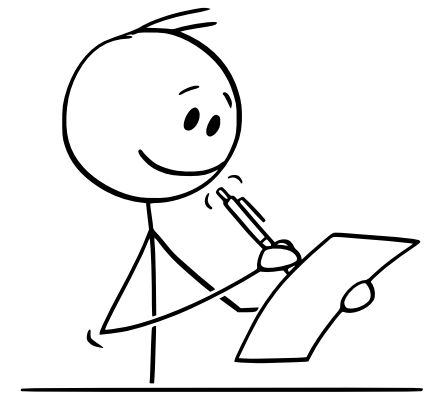
'But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap. For it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth. But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.'

Reflection

This week marks the start of Advent, a season of hope and anticipation for Jesus's coming at Christmas, symbolised by the Church's colour of purple. Today's Gospel speaks of signs of Jesus' arrival, describing distress and hardships. When we face challenges, Jesus encourages us to stand tall, for our Lord is near. The Gospel reminds us not to be weighed down but to pray for strength as we prepare. How can we best prepare for Jesus' arrival, and how can we help others to do the same?

Materials needed

- Pens and strips of paper
- A large bowl or basket



Activity

Begin with a short prayer or reflection about Advent being a season of hope and preparation. Invite everyone to take a moment to consider challenges they face where they need strength and hope.

Read the Gospel and discuss as a group:

- Current challenges or struggles that we or those around us may be facing?
- How could we "stand up and raise our heads" with hope? How would people know someone trusts in Jesus?

Invite each participant to write down or draw a personal challenge or an area where they need strength.

Place the strips of papers in the bowl or basket.

These could be collected from around school and shredded, and then used as hay for the manger.

Call to Action

Encourage each participant to think of one small act of kindness or service they can do this week, to bring hope to someone else, such as:

- Reaching out to a friend in need
- Volunteering at a local charity
- Writing a note of encouragement to someone