



The Year Of Youth

First Sunday of Advent 2017

'Stay awake!'

From the Readings

'May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ send you grace and peace.' 1 Corinthians 1:3-5

'Be on your guard, stay awake, because you never know when the time will come. It is like a man travelling abroad: he has gone from his home, and left his servants in charge, each with his own work to do; and he has told the doorkeeper to stay awake. So stay awake, because you do not know when the master of the house is coming, evening, midnight, cockcrow or dawn; if he comes unexpectedly, he must not find you asleep. And what I am saying to you I say to all: Stay awake!' Mark 13:33-37

Reflections

The people of Mark's Gospel lived in extremely challenging times. It wasn't easy to be a faithful follower of Jesus. They were a tiny minority. Persecution, possible imprisonment and martyrdom, were never far away. Jesus had prepared them for this. He entrusted them to live as he had taught them. He reminded them of the need to be vigilant and ready, trusting God, whatever might come.

Put your ear to the ground
and listen,
hurried, worried footsteps,
bitterness, rebellion.
Hope
hasn't yet begun.
Listen again.
Put out feelers.
The Lord is there.
He is far less likely
to abandon us
in hardship
than in times of need.

Dom Helder Camara, *Dom Helder Camara: Essential Writings*, 2009, 95

Our world is being torn apart by wars and violence, and wounded by a widespread individualism which divides human beings, setting them against one another as they pursue their own wellbeing. In various countries, conflicts and old divisions from the past are re-emerging. I especially ask Christians in communities throughout the world to offer a radiant and attractive witness of fraternal communion. Let everyone admire how you encourage and accompany one another: "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." Pope Francis, *Evangelium Gaudium*, 99

Words of Comfort

'Know
at the edge
you are never alone.
Just call.'

Noel Davis, *Heart Coming Home*, Narooma NSW: Lifeflow
Education, 2017, 96

For Thinking & Talking

1. Imagine

looking back over your life on
earth,
when you are finally held forever
in the loving arms of God, with
all those who have gone before
you.

Which moments of grace and
peace, love and joy, will you
remember most fondly?

2. Translate to life:

From this imagining, is there
anything you might like to
change in your life now?

3. Express the heart:

Find words or an image for

- Insights gained from these readings and reflections
- A hope or intention for the future.

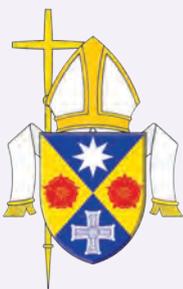


Prayer

Blessing

What is a blessing but a rain of grace
falling generously into the lives of those in need;
and who among us is without need?
May the Spirit touch your spirit
May this day be a pathway strewn with blessings.
May your work this day be your love made visible.
May you breathe upon the wounds of those with whom you work.
May you open yourself to God's breathing.
May you honour the flame of love that burns inside you.
May your voice this day be a voice of encouragement.
May your life be an answer to someone's prayer.
May you own a grateful heart.
May you have enough joy to give you hope,
enough pain to make you wise.
May there be no room in your heart for hatred.
May you be free from violent thoughts.
When you look into the window of your soul
may you see the face of God.
May the lamp of your life shine upon all you meet this day.

Adapted from: Macrina Wiederkehr, page 85, *Seven Sacred Pauses*, 2008, 85



THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SANDHURST

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