



**OUR LADY
OF LOURDES**
CATHOLIC CHURCH

Reaching up, Reaching out, Reaching in.

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SUNDAY CONNECTION

Readings For December 3, 2017 The First Sunday of Advent

Reading 1 – Isaiah 63:16b-17, 19b; 64:2-7

Isaiah prays for the Lord's forgiveness of the people.

Responsorial - Psalm 80:2-3,15-16,18-19 – A prayer for the Lord's protection.

Reading 2 - 1 Corinthians 1:3-9 - Paul gives thanks to God for the faith of the Corinthians.

Gospel Reading - Mark 13:33-37

Jesus warns his disciples to be watchful so that they will be ready when the Son of Man comes.

Commentary On The Gospel

Today we begin the season of Advent, which marks the start of a new liturgical year for the Church. The readings for Sunday Mass are arranged on a three-year cycle. Each year features a different Gospel—Matthew, Mark, or Luke. Readings from the Gospel of John are interspersed throughout all three years. This week and next week, our readings from Mark's Gospel present two important Advent themes: the Lord's return at the end of time and John the Baptist's preparation for Jesus.

Today's Gospel is taken from the end of Mark's Gospel, the chapter that immediately precedes Mark's account of Jesus' Passion. Having been questioned repeatedly by the scribes and the Pharisees, Jesus is now questioned by his disciples—Peter, James, John, and Andrew—who want details about his prediction of the destruction of the Temple. Jesus answers with many warnings about the difficulties that the disciples will face.

Today's passage comes at the conclusion of Jesus' warnings to his disciples. Jesus emphasizes the need for watchfulness. The Son of Man will come without warning; only the Father knows the exact hour. The disciples must not be caught unprepared when this time comes.

Scholars believe that Mark's Gospel was written around the time of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. They were likely beginning to face persecution as followers of Jesus. In this difficult time, it helped to recall that Jesus had fore-told of such difficulties. Early Christian communities took courage from Jesus' warning to remain alert and watchful, and found in his words a way to persevere through suffering.

Today's Gospel reminds us that Advent is about more than our preparation for the Church's celebration of Christ's birth at Christmas. Advent is also about preparing ourselves for Christ's return in glory at the end of time. Like the disciples and the faithful in Mark's community, we must also stay alert and watchful. Our faithfulness to God, through the good times as well as the difficult times, shows us to be ready for the coming of the Son of Man.