

First Sunday of Advent. Gospel of Mark 13:33-37.

Jesus urges his disciples and us to keep alert and awake, because we do not know when the time will come: "It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with a particular task, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch."

If Jesus were to tell this parable today, perhaps he would say that the employer of a firm had to go away on business, and he put his employees in charge, each with a particular task. The employees enjoyed their job, and wanted to show their appreciation for the trust placed upon them, by doing their best during the boss' absence. They got busy at their task, with no fear, but were looking forward to the day when their boss would return, and could present a report of their accomplishments.

The good Lord has entrusted each one of us with a particular task, and to "keep alert", whether in our home or outside; in the community or in our family, wherever we may be.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO KEEP ALERT AND AWAKE?

HOW DO WE DO IT?

To be alert and to keep awake does not mean to live in fear.

I suggest that we look at Jesus in the Gospels, AND LEARN FROM HIM. How did he keep alert and awake?

He did it by remaining continuously in the presence of the Father, even in the midst of a busy day, and living in the awareness that he was the beloved Son of the Father. Daily lifting his heart and mind to the Father in prayer, was his strength and consolation.

We can do the same as Jesus did. Our daily commitment to prayer will remind us that we too, are the beloved children of the Father (Mark 1:11).

Therefore, though we "do not know when the times comes" we have nothing to fear, since "perfect love casts out fear" (1John 4:18); actually we can look forward to MEET JESUS WITH JOY IN OUR HEART when he comes!