

**Lectionary readings: Isaiah 2: 1-5; Psalm 122; Romans 13: 11-14; Matthew 24: 36-44 (First in Advent)**

**For reflection and prayer**

- **Isaiah 2:** Isaiah looks forward to a time of peace when there will be no need of weapons of war: swords and spears will be changed into agricultural instruments. People will be walking in the light of God. How can we put an end to the conflicts, disputes and quarrels we are involved in, at home, in the workplace, at church, in the world? How can we allow God to change us and light up our lives with His presence? How long to hear people say, 'Come, let's go to the house of God', because they see God making a difference to our lives and our churches flowing with love. Let's make this our prayer for Advent.
- **Psalm 122:** *'My spirit soared when a Voice spoke to me: 'Come, come to the heart of Love .... Pray for the peace of the world. May all nations prosper as one. May peace reign among all peoples, and integrity dwell within every heart. Then will friends and neighbours, and former enemies as well, cry out, 'Peace be within you.' For the good of the universe and in gratitude to the Beloved, let us serve the Holy One of all nations with glad hearts.'* (Psalms for Praying) May we open our hearts to God who is Love this Advent.
- **Romans 13:** Advent is a time for waking up to the salvation - healing, wholeness, holiness - that is ours in Christ. We are called to be people living in the light, having our lives lit up by God's presence so that we are living in love. We are called to be alert to where God is

- within us and around us - and to what God is doing. Paul urges us not to waste precious moments in bickering and grabbing everything in sight. We are invited to clothe ourselves in Christ, in selfless love.

- **Matthew 24:** This passage stresses alertness. We need to live with expectation, but live in the present concentrating on life here and now, rather than speculating on what may be going to happen in the future. This moment is the moment of God's coming to us. Are we alert to God coming to us? Are we open to God coming to us? May we be ready this Advent to receive God. May we see God in the people we meet and in the circumstances of our lives. May we journey with God through Advent, open to the possibility of His coming to us every moment.

**A Prayer**

*For Your coming in Christ among us and for Your measureless love of us, we thank You, God. For Your total commitment to us and for Your utter faithfulness to us, we thank You, God. For Your promise of peace within us and for Your healing of conflict between us, we thank You, God. For Your challenge of change set before us and for Your offered guidance to us, we thank You, God. (Donald Hilton)*

***Advent Hope***

*Now is the season of hope unfolding,  
The dark winter season, when hope waits to be born.  
Let us come before God with receptive and willing spirits.  
May our souls magnify God's name,  
And our spirits rejoice in God our Saviour.  
(Kate McIlhagga)*