

In the celebration of the Mass, after we recite the Our Father, and before we pray the concluding doxology, “For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory...”, the priest prays a short intervention.

**“Deliver us Lord from every evil and grant us peace in our days, that by the help of your mercy, we may be free from sin and safe from all distress, as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour Jesus Christ” (repeat)**

During Advent we are awaiting the blessed hope and coming of our Saviour Jesus Christ. And we do so in the two fold sense. We remember the first coming of Jesus when he was born of the Virgin Mary at Bethlehem. We know that the birth of every child is a blessed event. It is a hope filled event. To embrace an infant is a moment of tenderness, gentleness, love and to look at them is to see hope for the future. To see Mary and the baby Jesus is a moment of true joy.

But at the same time Advent, and in particular the beginning of Advent, speaks about the second coming of Jesus, the final judgement and encounter with the Lord at the end of our days and at the end of time. But do we greet this coming with the same sense of hope and joy.

We pray it at every Mass, “May we be free from sin... as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

The Gospel today speaks about wakefulness. “Beware; keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come.” And what I say to you I say to all, “Keep awake,”

Next week we will encounter John the Baptist, the herald of Jesus, who tells us to Repent and prepare the way of the Lord.

In Advent the clergy wear purple vestments as a sign that this is a penitential season. Not the same as Lent but we are called to use this time for a sincere attentiveness to our sinful ways, to repent of our sins, to turn from the evil that is within our hearts towards the light of Christ. We are watchful as we prepare for the coming of our Lord.

But in addition to praying for freedom from sin we pray that we may be free from all distress as we await the coming of Jesus.

In the weekly missalettes there was a quote from St. Francis of Assisi on Friday of this past week. He said, "By the anxieties and worries of this life Satan tries to dull a person's heart and make a dwelling for himself there." (Repeat)

And so we are also awake to the anxieties and worries of this life, especially in these days where our world has been thrown into so much turmoil because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Each day we follow the media for the next piece of distressing news.

And so let us pray this Advent with ever greater fervour. Let us not allow Satan to dull our hearts as we pray,

**"Deliver us Lord from every evil and grant us peace in our days, that by the help of your mercy, we may be free from sin and safe from all distress, as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour Jesus Christ"**