**29th November Collect, Reading, Reflection, and Intercessions Advent One**

**The Collect**

Almighty God, as your kingdom dawns, turn us from the darkness of sin to the
light of holiness, that we may be ready to meet you in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

*Or this more traditional one:*

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and to put on the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility; that on the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen

**Gospel Reading Mark 13.24-37**

Jesus said to his disciples: 24‘In those days, after that suffering,
 the sun will be darkened,
 and the moon will not give its light,
 25and the stars will be falling from heaven,
 and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.
26Then they will see “the Son of Man coming in clouds” with great power and glory. 27Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

28‘From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. 29So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. 30Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. 31Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

32‘But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 33Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. 34It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. 35Therefore, keep awake – for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, 36or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. 37And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.’

**Reflection**

Advent Sunday is also Sennen Feast day, and so now we are 3 for 3 of having all our church feast days in lockdown of one type or another. It is challenging trying to celebrate the witness of the saints of old outside the building that is so very much linked to the history of the parishes.

Sennen Feast always must hold Advent Sunday and Feast in a creative tension. Advent is the beginning of the new church year, a season of penitence and being prepared. Feast seems more like a joyous explosion of wonder and happiness at our community, past present and future.

Into this heady mix is the reading for today, Mark’s gospel sounds very much like a reading for our time. Be alert, he says and I for one am waiting for the following message of wear a mask, wash your hands, and stay two metres apart!

None of us were ready and prepared for the pandemic, nor the reality of the lockdown, but we at least knew by the second lockdown that we could cope, and what we needed. We also knew what to look out for – the R rate, the ways to manage the lockdown, who would be breaking the law or the spirit of the law. We knew to look out for rising temperatures and coughs, and to act. We knew the importance of isolation to prevent the spread of the disease.

We also know that we avoid taking excessive risks, and we check those around us to make sure that they are not going to be in trouble or endanger us.

We knew we could cope; we knew what was needed. We knew who a good role model would be, and who would not! We know what to look out for, and the importance of acting appropriately.

What if we applied this to our faith? To be this alert to the moments of God’s glory around us? To be ready to see God at work around us.

What if we applied this to our own spiritual growth, to check for the things that lead to health and those that take us into a space or situation that leads to us imagining the absence of God, being unable to connect to God? To know we can cope with dry periods in our spiritual life.

What is we applied this to our prayer life, that we knew what to look out for that would help us pray, help us engage with scripture, help us act out our faith in acts of service and love? We would know we must not take excessive risks of stopping praying, stopping reading scriptures, stopping worshipping God.

When Senan (Sennen) first stepped on these shores 1,500 years ago, we know that he was just a man, an ordinary human being like you and I. But he had a mission, he heard God’s call on him and was obedient. He shared the good news of Jesus for this world to the people of Sennen in such a way after his short visit here, the stories of faith, the influence of his prayers remained and created a fertile vibrant growth in this community.

He could not have done this without God. Nor without being alert and attentive to the holy in this place and being alert to God’s whisper in this land. Did Senan know that he could cope with being a forerunner for Christ, or being the one who brought the news of Christ to a community that had not heard of Jesus God’s Son? Did Senan know what was needed for these people at the end of the world?

I think he did.

For Senan like so many of those greats in the history of our Christian faith, knew that for all people the power of knowing Jesus would change lives, the healing of knowing the love of God for yourself would change your life.

So, wherever he went he shared the love and the power of God, and left the communities knowing that it was over to them whether this knowledge would make a difference. Senan leaving so soon in his ministry means that he was not trying to win folk for Christ to make himself important or feted, he knew he was part of a chain of people who would be the church, the people of God in this community.

And the chain of follows is still growing, you and I are standing in the footsteps of Senan, Buriana and Levan, and all the saints who loved God and were alert to God’s call on our lives today. Be alert, **keep awake**, for God is calling you to follow him, love him, serve him today as he called the saints from long ago, and as he will call those who will come after us for generations to come.

**Prayers by Fiona Vinnicombe for 29 November 2020 – Advent 1**

Everlasting God, as we come before you at the start of the Season of Advent we ask you to prepare us for the coming, of your son Jesus Christ and to hear us when we pray in faith for the needs of the Church and the world and to thank you for your goodness. Jesus, you are light even in the darkest places. Help us to trust in you when we are lost or lonely. Shine hope into our hearts we pray.

Lord**in your mercy: hear our prayer**

Mighty God, we pray for your church at this challenging time. Even though we are not able to gather together to praise you and to hear your holy word, give us a sense of expectation and inspiration for this Feast Day of St Sennen and at the start of Advent. We pray for your blessing on all those who lead, preach and teach within the Land’s End Benefice as they seek to do your will and guide us through our spiritual and worldly journey through Advent.

Lord**in your mercy: hear our prayer**

Creator God, govern the hearts and minds of all world leaders and those in authority that they may act justly, honestly and according to your will especially at this time of the global pandemic.

Lord**in your mercy: hear our prayer**

Father God, we pray for those amongst our families, friends and neighbours who are anxious about the preparations for a different festive season, for those concerned about whether they will be able to see family and friends.  Help us as we try to set an example of a true spirit of preparation for that incredibly precious gift of Jesus Christ. May they see in our Services, Carols and Christingles, whether in church or online, the true meaning of Christmas and experience your love for them through the giving of your Son, Jesus Christ

Lord**in your mercy: hear our prayer**

Merciful God, we pray for those for whom this day will be long and painful, for those in hospital or ill at home, those struggling with despair or depression and for all who care for them.  Comfort and heal all who suffer, especially at this time of the Covid 19 pandemic, give them courage and hope in their troubles, and bring them the joy of your salvation.

Lord**in your mercy: hear our prayer**

Be near to all who mourn and comfort them with the knowledge that in the coming of your son Jesus the gates of heaven will be opened wide for all who accept him as Lord and Saviour.

Lord**in your mercy: hear our prayer**

“Keep awake, for you do not know when the Master of the house will come…”

Merciful Father, **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen**