

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How is God inviting you to “stay awake” in a healthy, hopeful way this Advent?
- Which old survival patterns are you being called to release as you step into greater freedom?
- How can you open your heart to the healing presence of Christ in small, practical ways this season?

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### CIR ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### A THANKSGIVING MESSAGE OF HOPE

During this season of gratitude, we pause to thank God for the gift of recovery and for the grace that continues to reshape our lives each day. We give thanks for the people who walk beside us, for the courage to begin again, and for the quiet ways God restores what we once believed was lost. May our hearts remain open to His mercy as we grow in humility, compassion, and service. With grateful expectation, we trust that God's goodness will continue to carry us forward—one day at a time.

## ACDH RECOVERY REFLECTION



## FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Advent marks the beginning of a new liturgical year—a time of hope, expectation, and gentle awakening. For adult children of dysfunctional homes, this season carries special meaning. Many of us learned early in life to remain on high alert for danger, unpredictability, or emotional instability. Advent invites us not into hypervigilance, but into *holy* vigilance—watchfulness rooted in trust rather than fear.

Jesus opens this season with a call to spiritual wakefulness (Matthew 24:37, 42):

*Jesus says to His disciples: “As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man... Therefore, stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come.”*

Before recovery, “staying awake” often meant scanning for threats, walking on eggshells, or bracing for emotional storms. But Jesus speaks of staying awake to God's presence, not the behavior of others. Advent is an invitation to redirect our attention toward the One who brings peace, not chaos.

He continues with another image (Matthew 24:43–44):

*Be sure of this: if the master of the house had known the hour of night when the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and not let his house be broken into. So too, you also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come.*

For adult children, preparation is not about controlling others or predicting outcomes. It is about remaining grounded in truth, prayer, self-awareness, and healthy boundaries. Recovery helps us shift from surviving our past to living fully in the present.

Most of us experienced the collapse of our coping mechanisms before we were able to welcome God’s healing into our lives. Admitting our powerlessness was not a sign of weakness—it was the first step toward emotional freedom. Advent mirrors this pattern: something must fall away before something new can be born.

Saint Paul echoes this awakening in Sunday’s second reading (Romans 13:11–14):

*It is the hour now for you to awake from sleep. For our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed; the night is advanced, the day is at hand. Let us then throw off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us conduct ourselves properly as in the day, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in promiscuity and lust, not in rivalry and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the desires of the flesh.*

For adult children, the “works of darkness” often include shame, people-pleasing, isolation, perfectionism, or reactivity—patterns we learned to survive dysfunction. Advent calls us to lay these down and put on Christ’s peace, dignity, and truth. The Steps help us do this through honesty, inventory, making amends, and learning to trust God rather than fear.

Advent is a season of gentle preparation. We wait not for crisis, but for Christ. We stay awake not to potential harm, but to God’s healing presence. We prepare our hearts not by striving, but by surrendering. Each day, God teaches us that our worth is not in what we endured, but in who we are: beloved sons and daughters in His Kingdom.

## MASS READINGS

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**FIRST READING** Isaiah 2:1-5

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM** Psalm 19:8, 9, 10, 11

**SECOND READING** Romans 13:11-14

**GOSPEL** Matthew 24:37-44