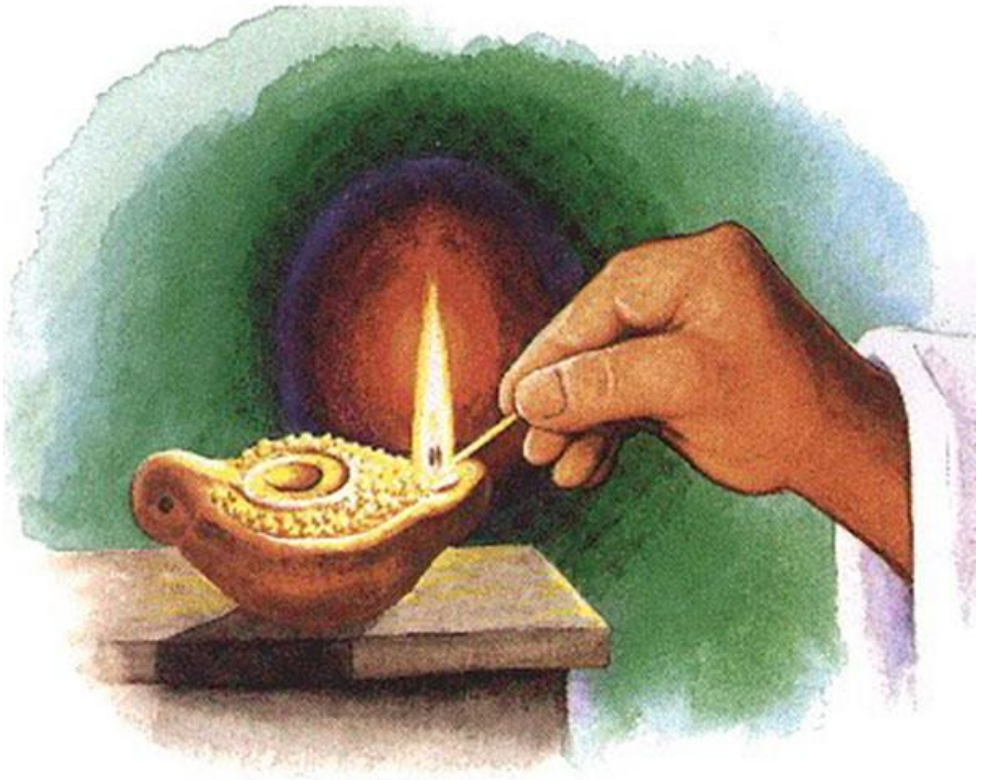


**'Common Heart – Common Journey'**



Watch out

*Be vigilant*

Dear Sister,

the Sunday Gospel which this year introduces us to the season of Advent offers us a very clear and significant invitation: "*Watch out, be vigilant*". (cfr Mc 13:33-37) The invitation that Jesus addressed to his disciples - and is now addressing to us - is an invitation that does not only concern the time that prepares us for Christmas but concerns every day life. Being attentive and vigilant are in fact important attitudes so as not to lose sight of what gives meaning to who we are and what we do.

We want to believe, due to the power that the Word of God has, that, precisely in the situation that each of us is experiencing now, He is calling us to be attentive and not to have hearts and minds that are asleep. He is inviting us to look with perseverance and love at those signs that reveal to us His presence and His action.

Let us together ask the Lord for the grace to deeply grasp the meaning of these invitations that the Word addresses to us.

### ***Don't fall asleep***

There is a type of sleep that does not concern the body but concerns spiritual life and consciousness.

It is the sleep that comes when we fall into habit and no longer place ourselves in an attitude of seeking the Will of the Lord. Everything appears normal, nothing questions us anymore and our hearts gradually harden and become indifferent. We let ourselves live and rebel against everything that calls into question our way of being and doing. In the most serious cases this type of sleep affects our conscience, making it unable to distinguish what is good and what is bad. The need for conversion is no longer felt.

Even a certain sadness and loss of hope can make us fall asleep like the disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane who, abandoning themselves to

despondency, are unable to stay awake even for an hour next to their Master. (Mt 26:40-41)

Our communities themselves can fall asleep when they no longer constructively cultivate a style of living community and mission life... when they no longer find significant spaces to meet and collaborate together. They gradually deteriorate.

It then becomes urgent to let ourselves be shaken by the words of St. Paul: "*You are all children of the light and children of the day...So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober*".(1 Tes 5:5-6)

### **Watch out**

Watch out is an invitation to "*be awake*", open, focused, interested. We can be attentive when we feel that something is drawing us deeply, or when we feel a certain sense of danger.

*Paying attention* above all means committing to safeguarding and not wasting something precious and delicate that you possess, as the apostle St. John reminds us: "*Watch out that you do not lose what we have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully*". (2 Gv 1,8)

There are situations and realities that can affect the beauty of our faith and our humanity. If we lose careful familiarity with the Word of God, openness to the Holy Spirit and listening deeply to the reality in which we live, we lose flavour and light. (Mt 5:13)

For this reason Jesus invites his disciples several times to be attentive; He knows the human heart in depth and knows that evil can destroy even the most important realities of life and suffocate the grace given by the Gospel. He knows that hypocrisy and the presumption of always feeling right and better can harden our souls, preventing true conversion. (Mc 4:24)

### **Be vigilant**

*Being vigilant* can have various meanings. It could mean, as Pope Francis underlines: "*Vigilance means this: not to allow our hearts to become lazy or our*

*spiritual life to soften into mediocrity".* (28 Novembre 2021). It can indicate the attitude of the sentry who keeps watch at night, watching the horizon so that no enemy can take his soldiers by surprise. It can also express the attitude of someone who waits longingly for the person they love or someone who is vulnerable, small or weak, and depends on others to care for them.

Vigilance leads us to create an inner space for each person. It encourages us to be close to humanity in search of meaningful answers to "resurrect" from the rubble of hatred, indifference and lack of values.

For this reason the vigilance desired by Jesus is an active, industrious, faithful vigilance. *"It is like a man travelling abroad: he has gone from his home, and left his servants in charge, each with his own work to do; and he has told the doorkeeper to stay awake"* (Mc 13:34)

During this Advent season, recognizing ourselves in these servants to whom God has given all His trust, full power and all responsibility, *let us take extended personal and community time* to meditate more deeply on the daily Word of God. Let us be shaken by it. *There is always a sleep from which we must wake up and a vigilance that we must revive to make space for God and others: **are we aware of it?***

Awake, awake, Zion,  
clothe yourself with strength!  
Put on your garments of splendor... Isaiah 52:1

Dear Sister, I keep you with love in my prayers.  
Blessed time of Advent! *Let's wake up and be vigilant!*

*Sr. Dorina*

Sr Dorina  
Congregational Leader

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