

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF DEACONS

1st Sunday Of Advent – Year B Woke?

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Woke was once an innocuous word describing arising from sleep. It has come to mean adherence to a set of values – essentially issues of social and racial justice (and is now being used as a put-down by people opposed to those values). Nevertheless, particularly as we enter Advent and anticipate Christmas in this challenging year, it seems to fit just right. “Stay awake! Be alert!” our gospel insists (*Mark 13:33-37*).

Emerging from Covid restrictions this Advent, we have much to eagerly anticipate. Advent is about reflection, awareness, improvement, in preparation for welcoming Jesus in our midst. We might ask ourselves if we are staying awake, being aware of our lives, accepting our weaknesses and struggles and ready to change. Have we simply bunkered down and ignored the world or are we alert to the increased sufferings of the poor, the outcast, the lonely, the despised and rejected?

What prevents us being “woke” to injustices? Are we distracted by our own pleasures, laziness, jealousy, pride or selfishness? Reflection brings new awareness, but where do we start on a path of renewal, of being awake and watchful? Jesus knows our struggles but he likes to hear us ask for help. It shows we are already aware and serious.

Advent, with its messages of hope and faith, is time to renew our faith and commitment to God through simple honest prayer (*1 Cor 1:3-9*); an opportunity to be more loving to those within our own homes and communities – we’ll find ways; to reconcile with those who have hurt us – that can be a hard one but so rewarding, and to share our times and our treasure with the less fortunate – maybe it is time to give through one of the many programs aiding our brothers and sisters in need in Australia or overseas. Then we will really be ready to welcome Jesus into our hearts and homes at Christmas.