

# Taking Our Hearts to the Lord

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Scripture Sharing Group Resource, Advent 2015, Week 1

**Reader 1:** A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke (Luke 21:25-28, 34-36)

Jesus said to his disciples: “There will be signs in the sun and moon and stars, on earth nations in agony, bewildered by the clamour of the ocean and its waves; people dying of fear as they await what menaces the world, for the powers of heaven will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to take place, stand erect, hold your heads high, because your liberation is near at hand.”

“Watch yourselves, or your hearts will be coarsened with debauchery and drunkenness and the cares of life, and that day will be sprung on you suddenly, like a trap. For it will come down on every living person on the face of the earth. Stay awake, praying at all times for the strength to survive, all that is going to happen, and to stand with confidence before the Son of Man.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Silence**

**Leader:** Let us read the Gospel passage aloud together.

**Everyone:** A Reading from the Holy Gospel ....

**Silence**

**Leader:** Let us listen to a short reflection on this Gospel passage.

**Reader 2:** Reflection on the Gospel

Many of us know some degree of woundedness and easily empathise with persons and communities adversely affected by very traumatic experiences. Our natural tendency is to be sympathetic to all who encounter a seismic shaking of *the powers of heaven* in their lives.

When something of this magnitude happens, be it though abuse, war, death, illness etc., it takes time to pick up the pieces. This gospel passage is good news in that it reminds us that God also seeks to help, as suggested by the line “*And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory... for your liberation is near at hand*”.

Present day realities, however, frequently remind us of how slow the work of recovery, restoration and healing can be. Think for a moment of the people of Haiti or of victims of human atrocities. Such signs, Christ suggests, ought in the first instance to lead us to prayer. Why? Because it is through prayer that we receive the graces necessary to prevent the coarsening of our hearts in the face of hardship. Grace, to quote St. Thomas Aquinas, builds on nature, empowering us to be true instruments of the Holy Spirit in our broken messed-up world and allowing us “*stand with confidence before the Son of Man*”.

**Silence**

**Leader:** I invite you to share any thought or consideration prompted by the Gospel passage and /or the reflection.

**Sharing**

**Leader:** Let us return to our Advent Prayer.

*Group returns to page 20 of Advent booklet*