

### Therefore, Stay Awake, for you know neither the day nor the hour (Mt 25:13)

By: Chiara Lubich

Jesus has just come out of the temple. The disciples proudly point out to him the grandeur and beauty of the buildings. He says to them in reply: “You see all these things, do you not? Amen, I say to you, there will not be left here a stone upon another stone that will not be thrown down” (Mt 24:2). Then he goes up to the Mount of Olives, he sits down and, looking over Jerusalem, he begins to speak of the destruction of the city and of the end of the world.

How will the end of the world come about? - the disciples ask him—and when will it be? It’s a question that subsequent generations of Christians have continued to ask, a question that every human being asks. The future is indeed mysterious and it often frightens us. Today too people ask fortune tellers and look up their horoscopes to know what will happen in the future...

Jesus’ answer is very clear: the end of time coincides with his coming. He, the Lord of history, will return. He is the luminous point of our future. And when will this encounter take place? No one knows. It can come at any moment. Our life is in his hands. He gave it to us; He can take it back, even suddenly, without any warning. In any case, he warns us: you can be ready for this event if you stay awake, if you are vigilant.

**<Therefore, stay awake, for you know neither the day nor the hour>**

In saying this Jesus wants to remind us first of all that he will come. Our life on earth will end and a new life will begin, one that will never end. No one wants to talk about death today... At times, we do all we can to distract ourselves, immersing ourselves completely in our daily occupations to the point of forgetting about the One who gave us life and who will ask to have it back in order to introduce us into the fullness of life, into communion with his Father in heaven.

Will we be ready to meet him? Will our lamps be lit, like those of the prudent virgins who were waiting for the Spouse? In other words, will we be loving? Or will our lamps be extinguished because we are so taken up with the many things to do, the fleeting joys, the possession of material goods, that we forget the one thing necessary: to love?

**<Therefore, stay awake, for you know neither the day nor the hour>**

But how can we stay awake? First of all, we know that whoever loves is capable of staying awake, of waiting. For example, a wife waits for her husband who is coming home from work late or who is returning from a long trip; a mother stays awake worrying about her son who hasn’t come home yet; whoever is in love eagerly awaits the moment to see the one he or she loves... Whoever loves is capable of waiting even when the loved one delays.

We wait for Jesus if we love him and we ardently desire to meet him.

And we wait for him by loving concretely, by serving him, for instance, in those around us or by working to build up a more just society. Jesus himself invites us to live like this by telling us the parable of the faithful servant who, waiting for the return of his master, looked after the servants and the affairs of the house; or the parable of the servants who, always waiting for their master to return home, put to good use the talents they received.

**<Therefore, stay awake, for you know neither the day nor the hour>**

Precisely because we don’t know the day or the hour of his coming, we concentrate more easily on living one day at a time, on the troubles of the day, on what Providence offers to us now.

Some time ago I spontaneously said this prayer to God. I’d like to recall it now.

**Jesus, make me speak always as if it were the last word I say. Make me act always as if it were the last action I take. Make me suffer always as if it were the last suffering I have to offer you. Make me pray always as if it were the last opportunity I have here on earth to converse with you.”**

*Chiara Lubich*

## READINGS OF THE WEEK

Wisdom 6:12-18

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Matthew 25:1-13

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「所以，你們該醒寤、因為你們不知道那日子，  
也不知道那時辰」 (瑪廿五 13)

盧嘉勒

耶穌剛剛由聖殿出來，門徒前來驕傲地把聖殿富麗堂皇的建築指給祂看。耶穌卻回答他們說：「你們不是看見這一切嗎？我實在告訴你們：將來這裡決沒有一塊石頭，留在另一塊石頭上，而不被拆毀的。」(瑪廿四 2) 然後祂上了橄欖山，坐著遠眺耶路撒冷，開始談到聖城將被摧毀和世界的終結。

於是門徒問祂說：「請告訴我們：什麼時候要發生這些事？又什麼是時代窮盡的先兆？」這也是日後基督徒及每一個人都會提出的問題。未來的確神秘，而且時常令我們心生恐懼。甚至今天，人們也照樣算命占卜，希望能預知未來。

耶穌的答案卻非常清楚：時代的窮盡就是祂再度來臨的時候。祂身為歷史的主宰將會再來。祂是我們未來的曙光。

這個相遇又將在何時發生呢？沒有人知道。但任何時刻都有可能。我們的生命本來就掌握在祂手裡。祂賜給我們生命，但祂也能隨時和突然地將它收回。無論如何，祂已預先告誡我們：如果你們醒寤的話，便可以為祂的來臨做好準備。

**「所以，你們該醒寤、因為你們不知道那日子，也不知道那時辰。」**

透過這句聖言，耶穌首先要提醒我們祂將會再來。那時，我們在地上的生命將會結束，而一個永無窮盡的新生命即將開始。今天沒有人想談論死亡。有時，我們甚至會轉移自己的注意力，完全埋首於每日的工作中，以致忘記賜給我們生命的那一位；祂總會收回這生命，為能引導我們達到生命的滿全，在天堂裡與祂的天父共融合一。

但我們是否準備好與祂相遇呢？我們能否像那些明智的童女，點著燈去迎接新郎呢？換句話說，我們是否生活在愛中？或因為我們專注於許多事物，例如短暫的歡樂與物質的享受，以致我們的燈熄滅了，忘記了最重要的事，就是：愛？

**「所以，你們該醒寤、因為你們不知道那日子，也不知道那時辰。」**

但是我們怎能保持醒寤呢？首先，我們知道任何為愛而生活的人都曉得保持醒寤。舉例說，一個妻子能夠等待因工作晚歸或遠行回家的丈夫；一個母親會因為擔心兒子深夜未歸而醒寤不寐；一對在熱戀中的人會殷切期望與愛人相見的時刻。總之，為心中存有愛的人，即使對方有所延遲，都能夠耐心等待。

所以，如果我們愛耶穌，並熱切地渴望和祂相遇的話，我們會等待祂。

我們可以透過具體地去愛、去服務那在我們周遭的人身上的耶穌，或籍著努力建立一個更公義的社會而去等待耶穌。耶穌透過那聰明忠僕的比喻，邀請我們這樣去生活，即在等待主人回家之時，悉心照顧主人的家僕及家中的事情；或透過塔冷通的比喻，指出在我們在等待主人返家之時，要善用所獲得的金錢(即才能)。

**「所以，你們該醒寤、因為你們不知道那日子，也不知道那時辰。」**

正因為我們不知道祂甚麼日子和甚麼時辰會再來，我們更容易專心地在祂所賞賜的每一天去生活，並在每天的辛勞中，在天主上智安排的目前一刻去愛。

早一段日子，我自發地向天主作出以下的祈禱，此刻讓我重溫一片：

「耶穌，讓我時常說每一句話，都像是最後的一句話。讓我時常做的每個行動，就像是最後的一個行動。讓我時常受的每個痛苦，就像我要奉獻給祢最後的一個痛苦。讓我時常在祈禱時，都看作是我在世上最後一個與祢交談的機會。」