

1. Read (Seek) — Read the verses slowly and prayerfully several times. Write down any words or phrases that seem to stand out:

2. Meditate (Find) — Now begin to reflect on the verses and ask God what it means and how he wants to speak to you through the passage. **God what are you saying to me through this?**

3. Pray (Ask) — Respond from your heart to what God has been saying to you. **What do you want me to know?** Write down your prayer to him or record whatever he says to you.

4. Contemplate (Taste) — Be quiet before the Lord enjoying His presence. **How is God calling you to act in response to what he has shown you?**

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[1] Modern Catholic Dictionary pg. 408

[2] Modern Catholic Dictionary pg. 408

[3] Sermon 175, 3, 3.

Quick Connect

What is the Gospel saying? Mark 13:33-37 — Pg. 1

What is the Church saying Past and Present? Pages 1-3

What is God saying to you through this passage? Page 4

Gospel Reading – Mark 13:33-37 – Roman Missal

Jesus said to his disciples: "Be watchful! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come. It is like a man traveling abroad. He leaves home and places his servants in charge, each with his own work, and orders the gatekeeper to be on the watch. Watch, therefore; you do not know when the Lord of the house is coming, whether in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning. May he not come suddenly and find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to all: 'Watch!'"

Spiritual Reading – Office of Readings

From *St. Cyril of Jerusalem*

We do not preach only one coming of Christ, but a second as well, much more glorious than the first. The first coming was marked by patience; the second will bring the crown of a Divine Kingdom. In general, whatever relates to our Lord Jesus Christ has two aspects. There is a birth from God before the ages, and a birth from a virgin at the fullness of time. There is a hidden coming, like that of rain on fleece, and a coming before all eyes, still in the future. At the first coming He was wrapped in swaddling clothes in a manger. At his second coming He will be clothed in light as in a garment. In the first coming He endured the cross, despising the shame; in the second coming He will be in glory, escorted by an army of angels. We look then beyond the first coming and await the second. At the first coming we said: *Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord*. At the second we shall say it again; we shall go out with the angels to meet the Lord and cry out in adoration: *Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord*. The Savior will not come to be judged again, but to judge those by whom He was judged. At His own judgment He was silent; then He will address those, who committed the outrages against Him, when they crucified Him and will remind them: *You did these things, and I was silent*. His first coming was to fulfill his plan of love, to teach men by gentle persuasion. This time, whether men like it or not, they will be subjects of his kingdom by necessity. The prophet Malachi speaks of the two comings. *And the Lord whom you seek will come suddenly to His temple*: That is One coming.

Patience is a Virtue – Lesson and Discussion

“...you do not know when the Lord of the house is coming”

The start of Advent is one of preparation and anticipation. We anxiously await the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. When we were little kids, we could almost not contain ourselves because of the gifts we could not open until Christmas Day. We had to wait patiently for the day to arrive so that we could open them. The people of God were waiting ever patiently for over two thousand years for their promised Messiah.

In a world full of immediate gratification and constant connection with everyone around us, we have lost what it means to be truly patient. An old saying that many our parents may have said is, “Good things come to those who wait”.

What is Patience? We have all heard it said, “Patience is a virtue”, but many people do not know what this truly means. Patience is “a form of the moral virtue of fortitude. It enables one to endure present evils without sadness or resentment in conformity with the will of God. Patience is mainly concerned with bearing the evils caused by another.”[1] In our Catholic faith, patience is a fruit of the Holy Spirit that we receive at Baptism and Confirmation. It grows when we are practicing its brother virtue, the gift of fortitude. As we read here patience is to give us the strength and perseverance to ride out the evils that are done to us and to be accepting to whatever God wills for us during the times of trials.

Are there different levels of patience? Sometimes we hear or say, “My patience is growing thin.” We can have different grades of patience: “The three grades of patience are: to bear difficulties without interior complaint, to use hardships to make progress in virtue, and even to desire the cross and afflictions out of love for God and accept them with spiritual joy.”[2] If we are truly practicing patience we not only endure hard times in our lives, but we are able to let go of complaining and accept the cross for the love of God.

What if someone has no patience? This is like saying someone has no talents. God made us, and if we are baptized Christians, we all have patience within us. We do not follow every impulse we have. We all have gifts; we just have to discover what they are, and work hard at them. Working on our talents takes lots of practice and lots of patience, especially when we do not see the results the way we want them to be. If someone is impatient, especially in times of distress or pain, they should look to Christ as their example. In Jesus’ Passion, we see Him bear the burden of the injustice set against not only Himself, but his followers as well. He took it all “in patience, as a means of instructing our own patience”[3].

How is God so patient with us? “God is Love” (1 John 4:8, 16), and “This love is poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has

been given to us.” (Romans 5:5) If we are practicing the gifts of the Holy Spirit, we will bear good fruit, one of which is patience: “...the fruit of the Spirit:...love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control.” (Galatians 5:22-23) Remember God is infinitely patient with us. He is the Father, and He waits for the Prodigal Sons, us, to come back to Him. He endures all of our sins so that we can repent and come back to Him in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Christ is patient with us in the Most Blessed Sacrament. He waits and even longs for us to be with Him at Mass and/or Adoration. He waits patiently to take our burdens and struggles, wanting to place them on His shoulders, but we must go to Him and ask this from Him. God never forces Himself on us but is willing to place patience upon us if we ask of it from Him.

God is patient with us. The fact that He waits for us gives us the freedom and the chance for conversion. “And consider the patience of our Lord as salvation.” (2 Peter 3:15) The people of Israel were expected to be patient, but this patience was a time for conversion. Those preparing to enter the Church or preparing to receive a Sacrament, or a person who has asked the Church for the declaration of nullity regarding their marriage are expected to be patient. All of these things are chances for conversion. As a Church we are the bride awaiting our groom. This waiting and longing, this hunger and thirst that we have, is a time for conversion.

In what areas of our life can we better work on patience? What steps are we going to take in order to build up our patience? How can we notice when we need to be more patient?