



AMDG
2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT
YEAR A, 4 DECEMBER 2016

'Prepare a way for the Lord.'

OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray that nothing may hinder us
from receiving Christ with joy.

God of power and mercy, open our hearts in welcome.
Remove the things that hinder us from receiving Christ
with joy,
so that we may share his wisdom
and become one with him when he comes in glory,
for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

As I walk steadily through Advent towards Christmas, I will be drawn into the demands of this time of the year. And so I consciously slow down ... leave pressures aside ... and re-focus on 'getting ready'.

I reflect back over the week, sharing with God its ups and downs, and speaking with him as I feel drawn.

I ask for the gift of bringing Advent hope to all the practical things that have to be done.

I read the opening prayer once or twice, noticing those words, phrases or ideas that strike me. I repeat them several times, savouring them, and taking time to listen in silence for what God may be trying to say to me.

I draw this time of prayer to a close by re-reading the prayer as my own personal prayer, and – giving thanks – when I feel ready, I take my leave of God.

Here's a text if you've only got a minute ...

In his days justice shall flourish and peace till the moon fails.
Responsorial Psalm

He shall save the poor when they cry, and the needy who are helpless.
Responsorial Psalm

Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight, and all mankind shall see the salvation of God.
Gospel Acclamation

Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is close at hand.
Gospel

Rise up, Jerusalem, stand on the heights, and see the joy that is coming to you from God.
Communion Antiphon

When [Jesus] humbled himself to come among us as a man, he fulfilled the plan you formed long ago and opened for us the way to salvation.
Preface

God of power and mercy, open our hearts in welcome.
Opening Prayer

REFLECTIONS

What does the week hold for me and how do I feel God may be calling me? And ... what do I want to ask of God for myself and for others?

Prepared by St Beuno's Outreach in the
Diocese of Wrexham



LDS

FIRST READING: ISAIAH 11: 1-4A, 5, 6, 9B

A shoot springs from the stock of Jesse, a scion thrusts from his roots: on him the spirit of the Lord rests, a spirit of wisdom and insight, a spirit of counsel and power, a spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.

He does not judge by appearances, he gives no verdict on hearsay, but judges the wretched with integrity, and with equity gives a verdict for the poor of the land ...

The wolf lives with the lamb, the panther lies down with the kid, calf and lion cub feed together, with a little boy to lead them ... the country is filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters swell the sea.

These verses, written while the peoples of Judah were under threat from enemies such as Assyria, are a promise of great hope: for us – one of the main themes of Advent:

- ♦ *The Messiah (the ‘anointed one’) – God’s promised deliverer for a suffering people – will come. He will have the wonderful qualities of God’s Spirit.*
- ♦ *There will be peace: ‘The panther lies down with the kid ...’*

I begin my prayer by reading the text slowly and patiently; waiting for God’s Spirit to enlighten me in his time – not mine.

What are these Godlike qualities the Messiah has? How are they needed in my life? In our world today?

‘The wolf lives with the lamb’ – where is peace needed this Christmas: in my heart, family, friends, etc ...?

Once again I let my prayer be one of waiting.

I end with ‘fear of the Lord,’ that is, deep respect for the God who is so good and loving.

THE GOSPEL: MATTHEW 3: 1-11

In due course John the Baptist appeared; he preached in the wilderness of Judaea and this was his message: ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand’ ... Then Jerusalem and all Judaea and the whole Jordan district made their way to him, and as they were baptised by him in the River Jordan they confessed their sins. But when he saw a number of Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism he said to them, ‘Brood of vipers, who warned you to fly from the retribution that is coming? But if you repent, produce the appropriate fruit, and do not presume to tell yourselves, “We have Abraham for our father,” because, I tell you, God can raise children for Abraham from these stones. Even now the axe is laid to the roots of the trees, so that any tree which fails to produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown on the fire. I baptise you in water for repentance, but the one who follows me is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to carry his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire.’

This scene is full of symbolism: the prophetic figure who brings good news that God will come to those in a place of exile (as were the Jews at the time), in a wilderness and searching for a meaning in life. The prophet’s appearance is meant to startle us, to wake us up from our complacency in the wilderness that is in so many ways our consumerist world today, to help us search for true values.

I ask God’s Spirit to enlighten me as I ponder this reading patiently, with commitment, again and again.

Lord, what do you want to show me?

What causes the darkness within me (amid the glitter of the Christmas lights), which sometimes blinds me to your deeper truths, your wisdom, the gifts I need and am longing for?

I may like to end my prayer asking Mary, the Mother of Jesus, to pray for me that I may have her hope and trust in God’s promises.