

A PRAYER A DAY FOR ADVENT



Week One

Sunday 2 December

Stay awake, praying at all times....” Luke 21:25-28, 34-36

On this first Sunday of Advent, we reflect that St Luke tells us to “stay awake” for the Master’s coming. It’s not a case of “Quick, look busy!” but a call to believe our Lord is coming and to live as if we believe it.

Lord, help me to use this Advent to prepare for your coming at Christmas and at the end of time. Amen



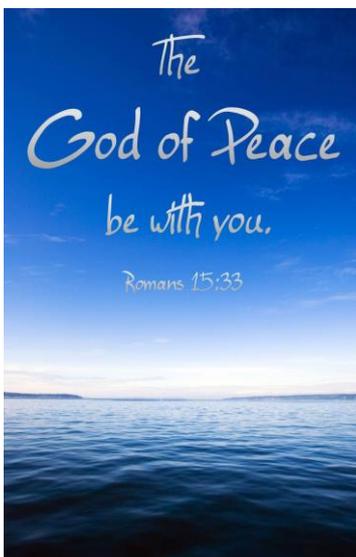
Monday 3 December

“Many will come from east and west...” Matthew 8:5-11

In today’s Gospel, Jesus challenged his audience - the Chosen People – to welcome outsiders, when he said that many non-Israelites will feast in the kingdom of heaven.

Globally, too often we still fail to welcome outsiders. Refugees around the world experience this. Imagine you are forced to leave home right now. What would you do?

Lord, help me to welcome others into my circle of friends, just as you did. Amen



Tuesday 4 December

“In his days justice shall flourish and peace till the moon fails.” Psalm 71



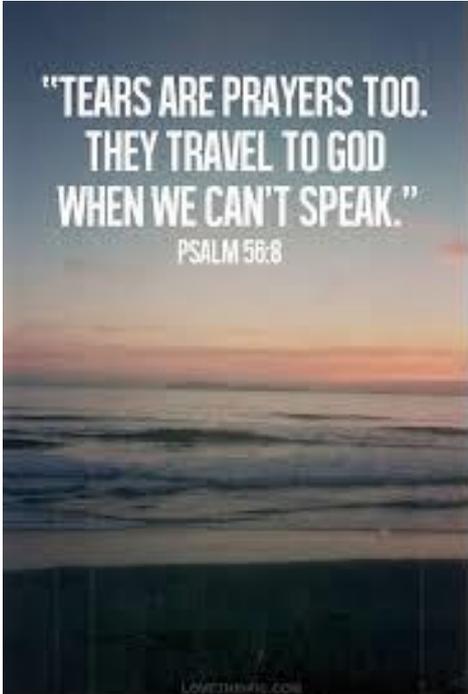
Today's psalm reminds us that the Old Testament people longed for a Messiah to bring justice and peace.

The first days of Advent look ahead to this prophecy being fulfilled, when Christ returns at the end of time and there is peace forever.

But we don't have to wait until then to live in God's kingdom – Jesus said it is all around us. We are called to live justly and peacefully right now!

Holy Spirit, help me to really listen, so that I can understand the other's viewpoint and build peace and justice wherever I go. Amen.

Wednesday 5 December



**“TEARS ARE PRAYERS TOO.
THEY TRAVEL TO GOD
WHEN WE CAN'T SPEAK.”**
PSALM 56:8

“The Lord God will wipe away the tears from every cheek.” Isaiah 25:6-10

Isaiah promises that God will wipe away tears. God uses our hands to do this and to offer support.

You may know someone who may feel left out and awkward if they are not included. How can you avoid this? What action can you take?

Lord, help me to be aware of other people's sorrows today. Help me to bring comfort and hope. Amen.

Thursday 6 December

“Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them...” *Matthew 7:21, 24-27*

In today’s Gospel, Jesus says that wise people act on his words, rather than just listening to them.

Jesus said so many things:

- love one another
- don’t worry about your life
- be reconciled
- don’t store up treasures on earth
- Pray for those who persecute you...

What one thing that Jesus said will I try to act on today?

Living Word, help me to put your words into practice. Amen.



Friday 7 December

“...after shadow and darkness, the eyes of the blind will see.” *Isaiah 29:17-24*

In today’s Gospel, Jesus restores sight to two blind men. Have you walked around with your eyes shut to the injustices that are evident in our world today? How can you learn to see what is in front of you?



Lord, where there is darkness, let me bring only light. Open my eyes to see the world as you do. Amen.

Saturday 8 December

The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin

Mary

“She was deeply disturbed by these words...”

Luke 1:26-38

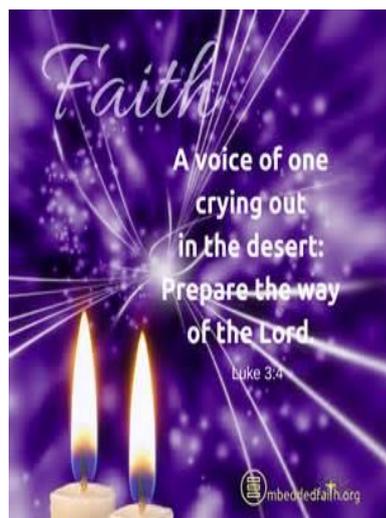
In Saturday’s Gospel, the Word of God comes to Mary and turns her life upside down. We know what she said.

How do you respond to God’s call?

Holy Mary, full of grace, you treasure the life of Jesus in your heart. Pray for us when hope seems to fade away. Encourage us, we pray, to keep believing that nothing is impossible to God. Amen



Week Two



Sunday 9 December

A voice cries in the wilderness: prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight. Mark 1:1-8

In the Gospel today, the Word comes to John the Baptist and sends him out to preach a message which will eventually lead to his execution

How might the Word of God want to shake you out of my comfort zone? Will you accept of will you resist?

Lord, shake me up! Show me new possibilities and help me to respond bravely, like Mary and John. Amen.

Monday 10 December

“They were filled with awe, saying, ‘We have seen strange things today.’” Luke 5:17-26

The crowds in today’s reading see Jesus forgiving and healing a lame man. In awe, they praise God.

What are you in awe of on a daily basis? How do you give thanks and praise God for all the things we see?



Lord, help me to notice and praise the many awesome things you do around me every day. Amen.

Tuesday 11 December

“Console my people, console them’, says your God.” Isaiah 40:1-11

Today’s reading tells us that God wants to console his people and wants us to be part of doing the consoling.



Many of you did this by praying or sending donations to support others in need during the year.

It's easy to forget that people closer to us have concerns too - we can be so wrapped up in our own lives. But it might take only a smile to console someone who feels downhearted. Today smile at someone who looks as though they need a friend.

Lord, open my eyes today to see every person, made in your image, as my sister or brother. Amen.

Wednesday 12 December

Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened... Matthew 11:28-30

There are a growing number of people who have sought refuge in neighbouring countries. You may not have direct contact with refugees, but a food bank near you may well be supporting people who have fled their country for refuge.

Jesus, you promised rest to those who are overburdened. May all refugees and migrants find a safe place to rest. Amen.



Thursday 13 December

"Their tongue is parched with thirst. I, the Lord, will answer them." Isaiah 41:13-2



Deserts often feature in the Bible. The Hebrew people wandered forty years in a desert and had to rely on God to provide them with water.

As we approach Christmas, think of those who have great needs in their everyday life. What do you want? What do you need?

Find three ways to save water today.

Lord, give water in the desert and help us all to care for our planet. Amen

Friday 14 December

“I, the Lord your God... lead you in the way that you must go.” Isaiah 48:17-19



Isaiah the prophet said that God would lead his people. If we choose to let God lead us, we can build a better, fairer world.

We like to think we can choose where we go. We do not want to be forced.

We use our free will to make decisions and choices. Is that the way you are? Are you choices God filled or

based on your desire?

Lord, help me to allow you to lead me every step along the way I must go. Amen.

Saturday 15 December

“Elijah is to come to see that everything is once more as it should be.....”

Mathew 17-101-13

Each person throughout the world is loved and valued by God. Let us recognise migrants and refugees for who they are: members of God’s family, made in his image.

As Pope Francis has said: “Christ asks us to welcome our brother and sister migrants with arms wide open.”

Let us open our arms wide today.

God of all, help us to see that all people are loved by you. Made in your image, may we recognise each other as sisters and brothers, members of one family throughout the world. May we know that no one is beyond your reach. Amen



Week Three

Sunday 16 December

"I want you to be happy, always happy in the Lord." Philippians 4:4-7



This Sunday is Gaudete ("rejoice") Sunday. It reminds us that all the joy of Christmas is almost here!

But St Paul says we should be happy, not just at Christmas, but "always". Is that possible? Paul thinks so – if we give thanks to God for everything.

Lord, thank you for your many gifts. Help me to share your joy, this Advent and always. Amen

Monday 17 December



"Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife..." Matthew 1:1-17

Poor Joseph! All was going well – a lovely fiancée, a good job... then he finds out that Mary is pregnant.

But, like Joseph of the Technicolor Dreamcoat, he has a dream, acts on it, and the rest is history!

What dreams are you nurturing? Will you act on them?

Lord, like Joseph, help me to believe that the dreams that come from you are worthy of my life. Amen.

Tuesday 18 December

“Emmanuel, a name which means God-is-with-us’.” Matthew 1:18-24



As ‘Emmanuel’, Jesus really was, and is, God-with-us. We can meet him in the people around us and in our own hearts. Dwelling within us, he still wants to speak out for justice, just as he did while on earth.

Who around you is feeling vulnerable today, and how can you be ‘Emmanuel’ to them?

Lord Jesus, thank you that you are with us. Help us to be your hands, your voice, in our world. Amen

Wednesday 19 December



Zechariah said to the angel, ‘How can I be sure of this?’” Luke 1:5-25

Our lives would be so much easier if an angel appeared every time we needed to know what to do!

At least, you’d think so. But in today’s reading, an aged Zechariah is told by an angel that he will have a son (John the Baptist). And he still doesn’t believe it!

So maybe it’s not angels and miracles but ordinary things that will help us to believe in God and to work out what we ought to do in life...
...like responding to the issues right in front of us, such as the fact that one in ten of our sisters and brothers survives on less than £1.50 a

day.

Lord, I’m sorry that I sometimes look away when others need me. Help me to serve others as you did. Amen.

Thursday 20 December

“Rejoice, so highly favoured! The Lord is with you.” Luke 1:26-38



In today's reading, the angel says Mary is “highly favoured”. Mary could have said, “Favoured? I’m a pregnant teenager with no husband and no experience, and now I have to raise the Son of God!” But she said, “Let what you have said be done to me.”

Have you ever had someone tell you how lucky you are and felt like shouting, “If only you knew!”?

It can be hard to really understand what other people are going through.

Lord, remind me not to assume I know what another person is going through. Help me take time to listen and to empathise. Amen.

Friday 21 December

“...of all women you are the most blessed.” Luke 1:39-45



In today's reading, Elizabeth greets Mary. Mary's response to Elizabeth's greeting is a song - “The Magnificat” - praising God who lifts up the poor.

Mary's song wasn't a ditty either. The words are so revolutionary, challenging those in power, that a number of unjust governments in the last century banned people from using it.

Who knew Mary was such a radical!

Is there a song that stirs your soul and inspires you? Listen to it today

Mary, help me to be as radical as you. Amen

Saturday 22 December



'My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord...' Luke 1:46-56

In the Gospels this weekend, Mary hurries off to help Elizabeth and sings a song of praise to God.

Mary responded generously to the challenges of every day. Do I meet challenges head on or do I avoid them and try to make my life as easy as possible?

Mary, pray for me and show me how to step beyond my own concerns to help others. Amen.

Week Four

Sunday 23 December

“What will this child turn out to be?’ They wondered. And indeed the hand of the Lord was with him.” Luke 1:57-66



In the Gospels this weekend, Mary hurries off to help Elizabeth and we hear about the birth of John the Baptist. His father Zechariah challenges all those who questioned him to be called 'John'.

What challenges do you speak up against?

Dear Lord, give us the courage to use our voices to speak up and say what we truly believe in. Allow us to share the good news with each other. Amen

Monday 24 December



“...to guide our feet into the way of peace.” Luke 1:67-79

It is Christmas Eve. The wait of Advent is nearly over. Tomorrow we will celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

John the Baptist’s father said that Jesus would guide us towards peace.

Pray with your family or friends for lasting peace in the world..

Prince of peace, help me to be a peacemaker, forgiving anyone who has hurt me. Amen.

Tuesday 25 December



The Word was made flesh, he lived among us...” John 1:1-18

Today we thank God for the joy he gives us and pray for help to build a just world where everyone shares Earth’s bounty and all children have the nourishing food they need to grow up strong and healthy.

Jesus, you enter into our poverty and transform it. Empower me with hope and joy, to live and share your good news for all. Amen.