

Waiting in Hope

An Advent bulletin for the home
Week Two: 6 December 2020

A Central Figure of Advent: John the Baptist

Over the weeks of Advent we encounter a number of key characters in the unfolding story of our salvation. In the Gospel this Sunday we are introduced to John the Baptist. An older cousin of Jesus, he was a prophet sent by God to prepare people for the coming of Jesus Christ into the world. His life was one of continually pointing to Jesus. When his mother, Elizabeth, was pregnant with John, she was visited by Mary, and John leapt in her womb. This revealed to Elizabeth that the child Mary carried was the Son of God.

John's desert ministry was all about calling people to be ready for Jesus and the change he would bring to their lives. John's call to repentance is not mere fire and brimstone, scare tactics, but is a call rooted in the belief that God is coming to His people and we need to be ready. John's message provokes us into action, calling us to turn back to God and to ready ourselves for Christ to come into our lives. Crucially, this personal readying involves looking beyond ourselves, to how we treat others and live with others. As followers of Jesus, it calls us to lives of justice and right relationship with one another; it calls us to acts of kindness and charity to neighbour and stranger.

**For the desert places in which we walk,
the streets we roam, the paths we cross,
guide our feet, take us to places where You would go.
Give us words that You would use
that in this Advent season of promise and preparation
we might point the way with John the Baptist
to the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!**

~ written by John Birch

Linking with your Parish Does your parish have a website, Facebook page or other social media accounts? Why not explore ways of connecting with your parish?

Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

On Tuesday, December 8, we celebrate this feast day of Mary, remembering that from the first moment of her existence in the womb of her mother Anne, Mary was preserved free from Original Sin, she was full of grace. See

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bqeUpvMXLk8&feature=emb_logo for a short video on the meaning of this feast.

An Advent Tradition

While the Christmas tree is very much part of the Christmas season, over the course of Advent the tree will begin to appear in more and more homes, signalling that we are getting closer to the feast of Christmas.

In the midst of winter, the evergreen tree, dressed with lights, reminds us of the life and light that comes to us through Christ. The colourful decorations of the tree are a reminder of the paradise tree of the garden of Eden, hung with the bright colour of fruit.

*Families are invited
to say the following prayer
together
when they put up the
Christmas tree
in their home*



A Blessing Prayer

Lord God,
let your blessing come upon us
as we gather around this tree.

May its light
and the cheer it gives us
be a sign of the joy
that fills our hearts.
As we delight in this tree
may we come to
the knowledge and joy
of the Christmas gift
of salvation and peace.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
R. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.



An Advent hymn to think about.... O Comfort My People

People will recognise the traditional Irish setting of this Advent hymn as *Bí íosa im chroíse (Jesus, be in my heart)*. The words are based on the bible text of Isaiah 40 and were adapted and put to music by the late Chrysogonus Waddell, an American Trappist monk, liturgist and musician.

The soothing melody carries a strong proclamation of hope as we continue our Advent journey. In Isaiah 40, the prophet is looking ahead to a time of great pain when the People of God will experience exile from their homeland. His message from God to the people answers the questions they will have in the midst of their shock and suffering – Does God want to deliver us? Can God deliver us? Will God do it? God’s response is yes; I have not forsaken you, I have not abandoned you, I am with you.

Wherever we are today, Isaiah’s message from God still holds true. God speaks to us with words of comfort. In the root of the word, comfort is not just about being soothed. It is about being strengthened, being encouraged. Today, this Advent, God is coming to us to bring us comfort, to bring us strength and encouragement, to speak to our hearts with the good news of His love. Is your heart open for God?

1. *O Comfort my people and calm all their fear, and tell them the time of salvation is near. O tell them I come to remove all their shame. Then they will for ever give praise to my name.*

2. *Proclaim to the cities of Judah my word; that ‘gentle yet strong’ is the hand of the Lord. I rescue the captives, my people defend. And bring them to justice and joy without end.*

3. *All mountains and hills shall become as a plain, for vanished are mourning and hunger and pain. And never again shall these war against you. Behold I come quickly to make all things new.*

An Advent Family Prayer at Bedtime for Week 2

You might like to light the first two candles of your Advent wreath or your Advent Candle to begin your prayer

Loving God,
on this Advent night we turn to you in prayer.
As we wait for the coming of your Son,
we ask you to bless our family.
Comfort us with your healing
and help us to welcome your light into our lives,
a light that gives us the gift of peace.
May your peace guard
our hearts, our minds and our home.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**
Together we pray: **Come, Lord Jesus.**



Weekly Advent Gospel Link

*Prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight his paths.*

On the second Sunday of Advent we hear again from Mark’s Gospel. We are now in Year B of the three year cycle of Sunday readings named Year A, B and C. Today, the text we hear comes from the start of Mark’s writing and he opens with a very direct message. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is **the** Good News, the gospel. Mark’s whole Gospel is about revealing for us who Jesus is.

Every day we listen out for the news of the day. But the Gospel of Jesus is the news of our salvation. And the message of John the Baptist points firmly to Jesus as the source of our salvation. The challenging figure of John the Baptist continues to call us, even today, to examine ourselves as we prepare to welcome Jesus into our lives once more. John reminds us that we are a baptised, forgiven people. We can be grateful for this forgiveness but we can also choose to be a better person as a result of it. And we can choose to share forgiveness with others in our lives. A key part of our Advent preparation is about figuring out this question: *what would it mean for me to be a better person, to be a forgiven and forgiving person, straightening the path for Jesus to take root in my life?*

See kandle.ie for weekly Scripture reflections on the Advent Sunday readings by Fr Liam Lawton

Be One in a Million!



Trócaire supporters are set to deliver their one millionth gift to families in the developing world this Christmas. This year’s Christmas Gift range includes new gifts to help people cope with the impact of Covid-19, including the Gift of quarantine care for families who have lost all their income due to quarantine or self-isolation.

There are 17 Trócaire gifts to choose from, such as chicks, beehives and solar lamps, ranging in price from €5 to €1000. Gifts can be purchased online at www.trocaire.org/gifts