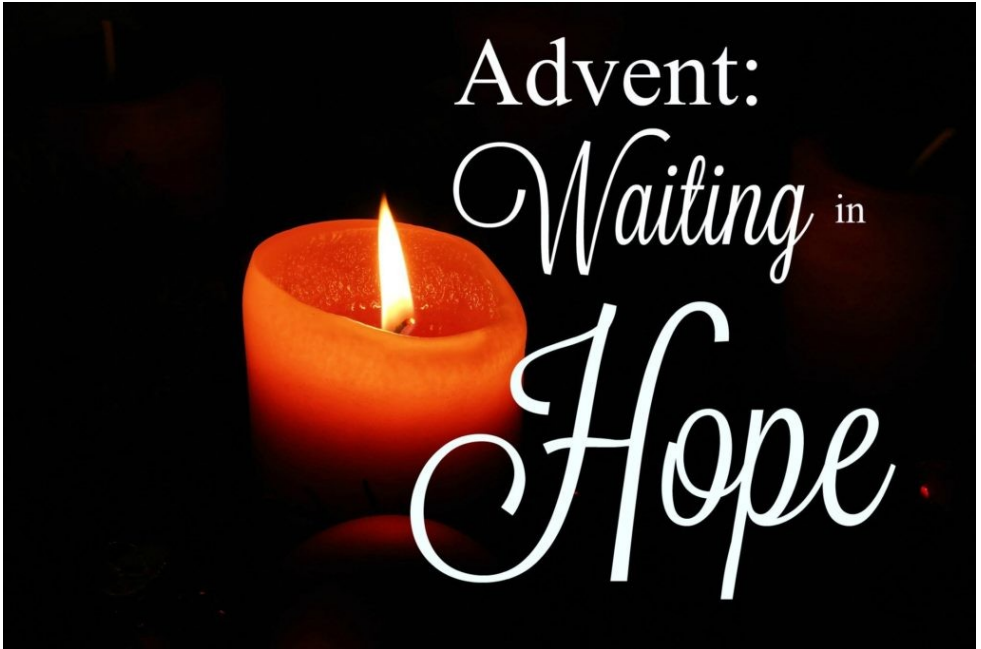


Lectio Divina: Waiting in Hope and Confidence



Lectio Divina – Listening to God’s Word with our hearts

“And the word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us”

In Imaginative Contemplation we pray with the Scriptures, allowing Christ in the Scriptures to speak to us through our imagination. In Lectio Divina we pray with the Scriptures by dwelling on God’s word by listening with our heart. In Imaginative Contemplation, Jesus’ words, actions, teaching and relationships with people become familiar to us when we enter into the Scripture passage using our imagination. In Lectio Divina, God’s word becomes familiar to us by listening with our hearts and dwelling on His words. Listening with our hearts is something we do automatically in everyday life when we for example dwell on the beauty of nature or listening to someone we love or recall a poignant memory.

Lectio Divina or divine reading has four parts: reading, repeating, responding and resting.

- Reading:** Begin by reading the Scripture Passage slowly until a word or a phrase resonates with you. Then stop for the moment.
- Repeating:** Dwell on the words you have chosen. Repeat them again and again as though God is saying them to you. Try not to analyse them, just let them speak to you. Savour the words.
- Responding:** Allow God's heart to speak to your heart. He wants to be close to you so ask yourself what this invitation could mean. Speak to God with your heart. Be open to what he is trying to reveal to you. Share with God whatever is coming into your heart and mind.
- Resting:** Rest in the embrace and love of God. It is God's response to us. Your whole being is focussed on God so dwell in the moment. When you feel ready, move on.

As you listen to the following passage, note which parts move you but don't analyse anything. Then when you are ready, **read, repeat, respond** and **rest** and when you have dwelt on the words that initially resonated with you, continue on reading the passage and repeat the process.

Reading Isaiah 63:16-17; 64:1. 3-8

You, Lord, yourself are our Father,
Our Redeemer is your ancient name.
Why, Yahweh, leave us to stray from your ways and harden our hearts
against fearing you?
Return, for the sake of your servants,
the tribes of your inheritance.
Oh, that you would tear the heavens open and come down
- at your presence the mountains would melt.
No ear has heard, no eye has seen
any god but you act like this
for those who trust him.
You guide those who act with integrity
and keep your ways in mind.
You were angry when we were sinners;
we had long been rebels against you.
We were all like men unclean,
all that integrity of ours like filthy clothing.
We have all withered like leaves

and our sins blew us away like the wind.
No one invoked your name
or roused himself to catch hold of you.
For you hid your face from us
and gave us up to the power of our sins.
And yet, Yahweh, you are our Father;
we the clay, you the potter,
we are all the work of your hand.

Questions for Reflection

1. What word, sentence or phrase most caught your attention?
2. Like Isaiah, are you looking forward to the coming of God in these days of Pandemic?
3. Will Advent this year help us see clearly the direction in which we should be going?
4. Do you associate with the people in the reading who feel that their cry isn't being heard, that God has deserted them?
5. Can you trust that God is faithful? Can you think of ways God has been faithful to you despite experiencing difficult times?
6. Where would you like God to enter your life in a new way?
7. Can you think of ways during this Advent Season that you could be the "clay" so that you can be manipulated by God to do his work?
8. Advent speaks of hope and confidence in waiting. Do you trust enough to wait patiently and expectantly, or does waiting make you want to give up on God?

Let us now spend 10 minutes in quiet Reflection

End Prayer

Let us pray that during this Advent Season, we keep our focus on Christ. Let's be awake to what he wants us to see so that when Christmas comes, we can see God has come in a new way today, and that he is with us every day.

Pope Francis tells us "The Lord comes, Here is the root of our hope: the assurance that the consolation of God reaches us among the tribulations of the world, a consolation that is not made of words, but of presence, of His presence that comes among us."

The “O” Antiphons

A series of seven ancient antiphons, called the “O” Antiphons, feature in the last seven days of Advent (Dec 17 – 24) – the Octave before Christmas. They express the Church’s faith and each one highlights a different title for the Messiah. Each one also refers to the prophecy of Isaiah looking forward to the coming of the Messiah. They are used at Mass as verses before the Gospel and are also said before the Magnificat in Evening Prayer. They can also become our own prayer as we wait expectantly this Advent for the birth of Christ..

O Wisdom of our God Most High, guiding creation with power and love:
come to teach us the path of knowledge!

O Leader of the House of Israel, giver of the Law to Moses on Sinai:
come to rescue us with your mighty power!

O Root of Jesse’s stem, sign of God’s love for all his people:
come to save us without delay!

O Key of David, opening the gates of God’s eternal Kingdom:
come and free the prisoners of darkness!

O Radiant Dawn, splendour of eternal light, sun of justice:
come and shine on those who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death!

O King of all nations and keystone of the Church:
come and save us, whom you formed from the dust!

O Emmanuel, our King and Giver of Law:
come to save us, Lord our God!

Scripture texts: from the Jerusalem Bible 1966 by Dartington Longman & Todd Ltd and Doubleday and Company Ltd