

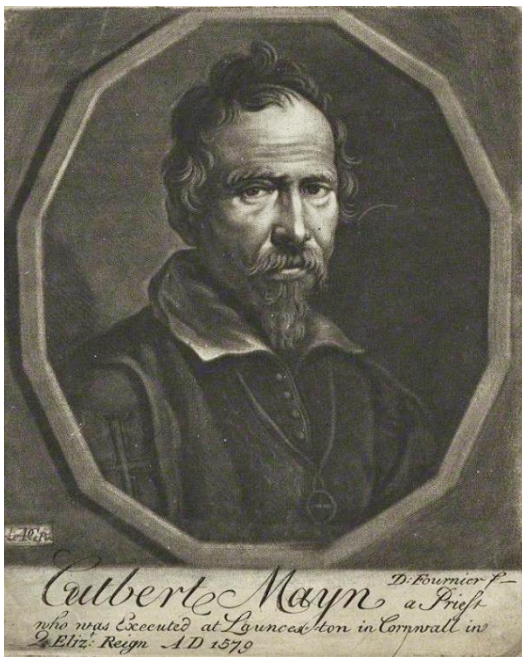
Inspire

ST JAMES & ST BONIFACE,
MID DEVON PARISH,
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FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

This Sunday is the beginning of a new liturgical year being the **First Sunday of Advent**. The first reading from the **Book of Jeremiah** offers a comforting promise of safety to beleaguered Israel: "those days Judah shall be safe and Jerusalem shall dwell secure." **Luke's gospel** offers us a repeat of several of the daily gospels, advising us to be alert and vigilant, watching for signs. "And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."



Monday is the **Memorial of St Cuthbert Mayne** Born at Youlston, near Barnstaple in 1543. Became a Roman Catholic, trained at Douai where he was ordained priest in 1575. He became the first Douai trained Seminary priest to be martyred in 1577. Tuesday is the **Feast of St Andrew**. Friday is the **Memorial of Saint Francis Xavier**, the legendary Jesuit missionary.

CONTEMPLATION

During Advent we can take whatever time we can, alone or with others: *To think about the meaning of our lives just now and see if there are any changes we would like to make.*

To look at the way we prepare for the feast of Christmas and see if we are prepared for the love that God offers us through Jesus

To see how aware we are of God's presence in your life and how we celebrate it.

Light a candle and say: Come, Lord Jesus, into my heart, into my life.

A time for looking closely at what really matters.....Christmas is on the wayanother year has passed ...another year is beginning

Advent can be a time for taking out the binoculars of life - "What is my perspective?" "What is God's perspective?"

THE LORD, MY - INTEGRITY.

Jeremiah Ch 33 v 16

INTEGRITY in all things, my characteristic at work, in my relationships, at home. Sometimes I can lose all perspective, my life is all over the place. There are things that really matter mixed up with things that do not matter at all

I could look closely at my life with God and INTEGRATE:

GOD'S LOVE

GOD'S TRUTH

GOD'S DIRECTION

I could be on the watch for the contradictions as I read the newspapers, watch TV, use the mobile, and look into my own heart.

St Paul urges us to:

"Make more progress in the kind of life you are meant to live and may the Lord be generous in increasing our love for one another."

Thessalonians Ch 4 v 1, Ch 3 v 12

Jesus tells us to: "**Watch yourselves....** "

Look closely at what is happening to me, to my neighbour, to the world in which I live.

See the signs of the times, and watch out for how I can lose my perspective, my values...my integrity

During this first week of Advent ~
Let me be attentive and watchful
to what is going on within me,
to the events going on around me, and
I could pray

Words by Sister Bernadette Arscott

WHEN WILL HE APPEAR?

Into the crowded marketplace strode the warrior. 'Prepare the way for the king!' he called. 'Arm yourselves and be prepared to join the army of the soldier-king. With my king at your head, you will march out and conquer many lands. You will be victorious in many battles. Only the strong and brave need enlist. The king has no place for the weak or the cowardly. He will arrive in two hours.' And the people said, 'No, we cannot go. We are afraid of such a king. We might fail to fight well enough and be sent back in disgrace or even shot.'

The scholar arrived next, wearing his academic gown and carrying some thick books under his arm. 'Come, the clever and the learned and join the scholar-king. With my king, you will travel far, spreading knowledge conquering ignorance, reading and studying writing long discourses, filling shelves with books. He will arrive in two days. Come.' And the people said 'No. We are simple people. Such learning is beyond us.

Next came the merchant, dressed in fine wool and silk and wearing fine leather boots. 'Come', he said, 'Follow the merchant-king. Buy and sell and trade. Grow rich and powerful. Own large estates. Fill the banks with money. He will arrive tomorrow.' And the people said, 'No, we are poor people. We have no money to invest. We barely make a living on our little farms. We could not follow this merchant-king.'

Towards the end of the day, the people heard sweet music and into the marketplace danced a ragged beggarman. He was bow-legged and crooked, yet he danced and twirled about and the people began to clap their hands in time to the merry tune he played on his tin whistle. As he twisted and turned about in the space the people made for him, pieces of his ragged garments flew out and the children tried to grab them as they danced after him. Round and round he went, faster and faster, flinging out his little skinny legs, wagging his head and winking at the people as he passed. Finally he stopped to draw his breath. A man in the crowd shouted out, 'Beggarman, tell us about *your* king. Is he as crazy as yourself?' The crowd roared with laughter, but the beggarman spoke out. 'I tell you,' he said, 'he is even crazier than I am.' Again the crowd roared with laughter.

The beggarman was not to be silenced. 'I tell you; my king is the craziest individual you could ever meet. He turns everything upside-down, inside-out and back-to-front. To him the poor are the important ones. Little children are the wise ones. He has no time for the rich and famous. And I tell you, and this is the craziest thing of all, he loves me! me, with my crooked legs, my rag clothes, with not a penny in my pocket except what I get for playing a few tunes on my tin whistle, he loves me! So now, isn't he crazy?'

'And when is he coming?' asked someone. 'You see, that is the thing', said the beggar-man, 'you never know when he will appear. He can come like the sun breaking out of a cloud, like the first swallow of summer skimming over the meadow, like lightning out of a clear blue sky, like frost in the night. It is better to be always ready to meet him whenever he shows up.'

With that, the beggarman began to play his whistle again and away he went, dancing wildly. The children danced behind him and, one by one, the grown-ups began to join in the dance, abandoning their cares as they followed the crazy musician.' The beggar-man's king is the one for us', they said. 'This is a king we want to follow.'

Ellis Coe RSC – Sister of Charity who now works with a Woman's group in Dublin. Previously Teaching in Zambia and Botswana.