

Inspire

ST JAMES & ST BONIFACE,
MID DEVON PARISH,
NR_6_05-12-21



2ND WEEK OF ADVENT

OPENNESS TO THE WORD OF GOD

The Second Sunday of Advent. **Luke's Gospel** offers us a first look at the promise of John the Baptist as he cries out, "Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill shall be made low. The winding roads shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

Tuesday is the **Memorial of Saint Ambrose, Bishop and Doctor of the Church.** Wednesday is the **Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary**, with its own special readings.

The gospels show Jesus as the fulfilment of the liberation promised. Jesus heals the paralytic. He tends to the lost sheep of his flock. He comforts us who labour and are burdened. Jesus teaches a true wisdom.

Sunday of the Third Week of Advent begins with **the Prophet Zephaniah's** announcement of liberation and God's presence among the people after decades of their own infidelity. In **Luke's Gospel**, John the Baptist is the focus of the expectation in the people who come to him asking what to do. He exhorts them to integrity and charity and announces the one who is to come: "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."

DAILY PRAYER THIS WEEK

Finding intimacy with God amid our busy lives begins with getting in touch with our own desires. Advent is a wonderful time to ask many questions. The readings this week offer some possible ways to talk with the Lord about our desires. A way of fulfilling Bible Sunday!

We can begin by trying to get in touch with a part of my heart that is divided, with a desert separating the two parts. For example, is there a disconnect between my primary commitments and the amount of time and attention that I give to them? Is there a distance between who I say I am and who I am? Do I experience something missing between what I believe and how I live those beliefs? We all have these contradictions and inconsistencies within us. These are the places into which we can let our Advent desiring grow.

Advent is about our coming to a felt sense of our need for a Saviour and letting our Saviour into our hearts to save us. Advent comes alive for us as we identify our desires and let them be expressed as longing and expectant hope.

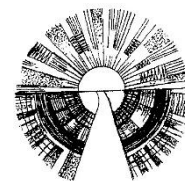
CONTEMPLATION

A time for "Straightening things out". Sharp bends, Humps in the road, Cobble streets, Uneven pavements, can slow us down, trip us up, make us wary, be uncomfortable.

A smooth, straight and even path through life sounds delightful!

The prophet Baruch says: *Ch 5 v 1-2*

"... put on the beauty of the glory of God. Wrap the cloak of the integrity of God around you."



Once I start looking at the difficulties, the ups and downs of my life,

clothed with something of the beauty of God, these sufferings may take on a different perspective. . .

Perhaps ...they "slow me down" ...

Perhaps ...they are revealing "LOVE" to me.

Once I wrap the cloak of integrity around me ~I can feel a strength, a fortitude, a determination, to keep going ~ no matter what!

St Paul urges us to :

"improve our knowledge and deepen our perception of what is best" and may our love for each other increase more and more"

Philippians Ch 1 v 9

The Word of God came to John
"Prepare a way for the Lord.
Make his paths straight" ~

So, with the help and strength of God's Spirit I need to straighten things out a little in my life so that following John the Baptist's example "I can prepare a way for the Lord."



This week let us pray: **O loving God ~ we hear your voice within us and around us inviting us to prepare the way for you ~ Help us to be open to every opportunity to make the way straight that leads to new life with you and with one another.**

We ask this in the name of Jesus our way, our truth and our life ~ Amen

Words by Sister Bernadette Arscott

"Christ, said the monk, "is meant to be bread for daily use and not cake for parties. So, live today as though Christ died yesterday, arose this morning, and is coming back tomorrow."

A 7-year-old boy proudly tells his father: "I finally know what the Bible means!" Surprised the father replied: "What do you mean, you "know" what the Bible means? What does it mean?" "That's easy, dad.....It stands for **Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth.**"

One of the most **sincere** forms of **respect** is *actually listening* to what **another** has to say.

Bryant H. McGill

An Abba said: "No one can build a house from the top down; rather, you build the foundation first and then build upwards.

The foundation means your neighbour whom you must win, and you ought to start from there. For all the commandments of Christ depend on this.

To pray is to listen to that voice of love. That is what obedience is all about. The word 'obedience' comes from the Latin word *obaudire*, which means to listen with great attentiveness. Without listening, we become 'deaf' to the voice of love. Henri Nouwen

The Ministry of listening is a three-way exchange: Me, The Person, and God. There is a simple lesson about the way God has made us: two eyes, two ears, and one tongue. Conversation should be carried out in the same ratio. The ears are obvious in listening. The use of the eyes, external and internal, are important in seeing those things of which the person is unaware.

ETTY HILLESUM, MEDITATOR AND PEACE ACTIVIST (1914-1943)

And isn't it true that one can pray anywhere, in a wooden barracks just as well as in a stone monastery, or indeed, anywhere on this earth where God, in these troubled times, feels like casting his likeness.

One must always carry a great silence within one, a silence, into which one can always withdraw, even in the midst of all the hustle and bustle and in the midst of the most animated conversation. One must always keep drawing fresh strength from within oneself...

On November 30, 1943, Etty Hillesum died in a swirl of Zyklon B gas at Auschwitz. She had shared her people's fate. The drop of water that had been Etty fell into the ocean of love and returned to her God.