

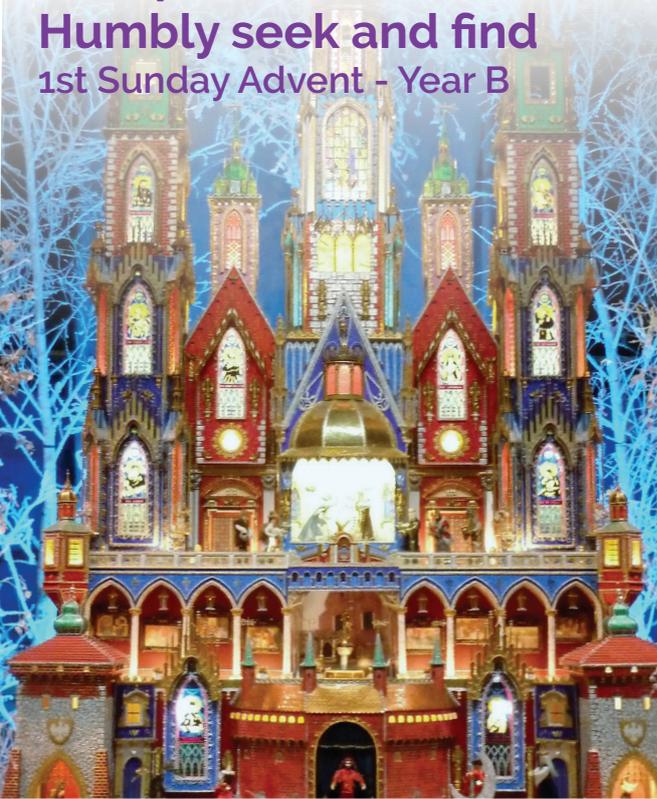


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Online Resource

Whispers of God: Humbly seek and find 1st Sunday Advent - Year B



Let us see your face (Ps 79)

Points for prayer – Sunday scripture

*Our minds are searching
The dawn of his coming
Welcoming the light
Redeemer is your ancient name
Tear open the heavens
We all wither like leaves
We the clay, you the potter
Grace and peace
Teachers and preachers
Stay awake
Hope guides our way*

Searching

In every age wisdom figures looked for answers. Religions prayed to receive a light to live by. Modern social movements focus on the rights of those pushed to the fringes. Some rightly looked to nature as a teacher and praised the Creator. There are multiple whispers of God for those who seek. Jesus was born into this world as the light of God. Many who search recognised the child of Mary as God-with-us, *Emmanuel*. Their searching was rewarded.

We ourselves are dust of the Earth (cf. Gen 2:7); our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters. Pope Francis Laudato Si' #21

Advent season

In Advent we focus on God and the multiple revelations of God over eons. The four coloured candles remind us that God acts in different ways. Scientists and theologians both tell us that the universe itself is God's first revelation and helps us interpret these signs. Many speak of the longings of the human heart that can only be filled by an Ultimate Being. It is up to us to search and find God present in our lives and our planet home. We have the clues to write our own story with our lives.

Prayers of the faithful

1. Signs – God embedded wisdom in the natural world. That we follow our curiosity and look for signs of God in all gifts of creation ... we pray
2. Busyness – The People of Israel patiently pondered the acts of God. That we never become so busy and distracted as to pass over important moments in our lives ... we pray
3. Wisdom – God led his People with prophets. That we listen to the wise experience of parents and teachers as we mould our future ... we pray
4. Movements – The Spirit led the church to reach out to the pagan nations. That we will be awake to the positive messages given by new social movements ... we pray
5. Discernment – Jesus warned about false prophets. That we be discerning about what we choose to read and in our use of the Social Media ... we pray

Mahatma Gandhi

Born in India in 1869 he studied law in London and practiced in South Africa. He trusted the power of the law. Returning to India he worked for Indian independence from British colonialism. He chose the pathway of non-violent civil obedience to advance this cause. He lived simply with deep compassion for poor farmers and urban poor, women and untouchables. A vegetarian he often fasted for both personal purification and public protest. He was assassinated in 1948 but is known as the Father of India.

Action

- Make a list of questions you have about the Earth-Faith link and research them.
- Subscribe to an online Catholic News service or enrol in Religious Studies.

Mission's wide embrace

I invite all Christians, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them ...the Lord does not disappoint those who take this risk ... always capable of restoring our joy, which impels us onwards. Pope Francis Joy of the Gospel #3

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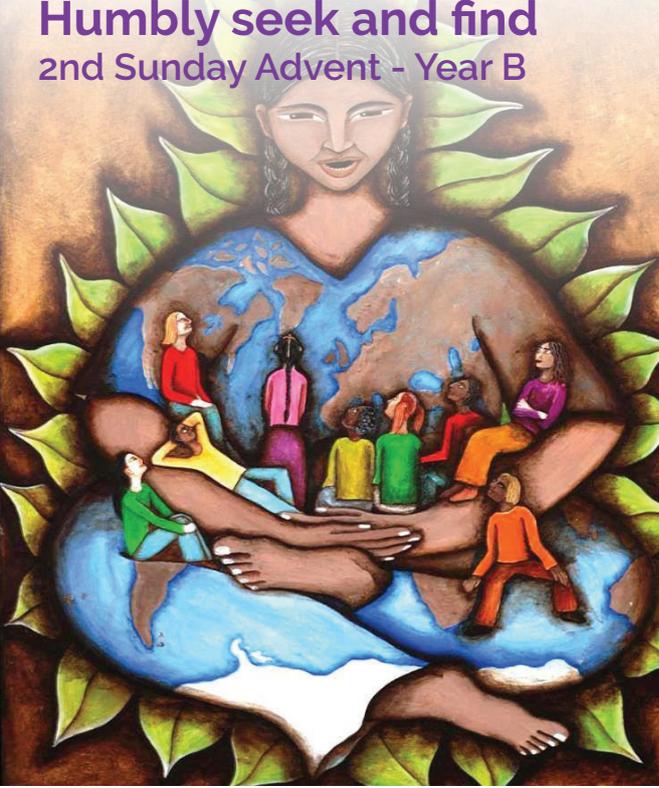


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Online Resource

Whispers of God: Humbly seek and find 2nd Sunday Advent - Year B



Prepare a way in the wilderness (Is 40)

Points for prayer – Sunday scripture

*Radiant in a waring world
May greed not impede us
Let every valley be filled in
Gathering lambs in his arms
Justice and mercy have embraced
Our Earth shall yield its fruit
Not slow to carry out promises
Wanting nobody to be lost
The Lord will come like a thief
Living holy and saintly lives
The new Heavens and the new Earth
Prepare the way of the Lord
Beginning of the Good News
Proclaiming a baptism of repentance
Baptise you with the Holy Spirit*

Fully human

The human fully alive is the glory of God said St Irenaeus. Growth for the human person means embracing our God given physical, mental and spiritual self. As a person moves through the stages of life – childhood, adolescence, young adult, maturity, wisdom and old age – they mature. It is to God's pleasure that every person has the chance to grow to fulfilment. This is our human calling.

By developing our individual, God-given capacities, an ecological conversion can inspire us to greater creativity and enthusiasm. Pope Francis Laudato Si' #220

Advent season

Advent is a time of being awake, preparing ourselves as human beings to welcome the coming of God with us - *Emmanuel*. If we want to be a sports person we have to train, put in the hours and the effort. Likewise, if we want to be a spiritual person we have to do the exercises. Hearing the Baptist's call we prepare the way. Choosing to act out of goodness and searching for meaning in life takes effort.

Prayers of the faithful

1. Our Bodies – Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. That we care for our physical health and use our bodies with respect ... we pray
2. Desires – God gave us both mind and feeling. That we temper our desires and imagine ways to be fully alive human beings ... we pray
3. Relationships – God's made us as loving social beings. That we relate to others with justice and compassion ... we pray
4. Greed – Scripture warns against the lure of money. That we curb the greed that pushes us into frantic lifestyles and exploiting Earth ... we pray
5. Common Good – God promises a new Heaven and Earth. That we be active in forming government policies carrying hope for the common good ... we pray

Caroline Chisholm (1808-1877)

On her grave stone are the words *The Emigrant's Friend*. She was a wife, convert and mother of six. Born in England she arrived in Australia with her husband in 1838. A familiar figure on the wharves she helped settle immigrant girls. She moved around the country to settle families on farms. Back in England she lobbied the House of Lords for better conditions for Australian settlers. Working closely with her husband she returned to Australia 1854-1866 setting up employment agencies. <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/chisholm-caroline-1894>

Action

- Find a style of prayer that suits your personality www.heartoflife.abundance.org.au
- Volunteer with the Australian Catholic Migrant & Refugee Office www.acmro.catholic.org.au

Mission's wide embrace

(by) renewed encounter with God's love ... we are liberated from our narrowness and self-absorption. We become fully human when we become more than human. Pope Francis Joy of the Gospel #8

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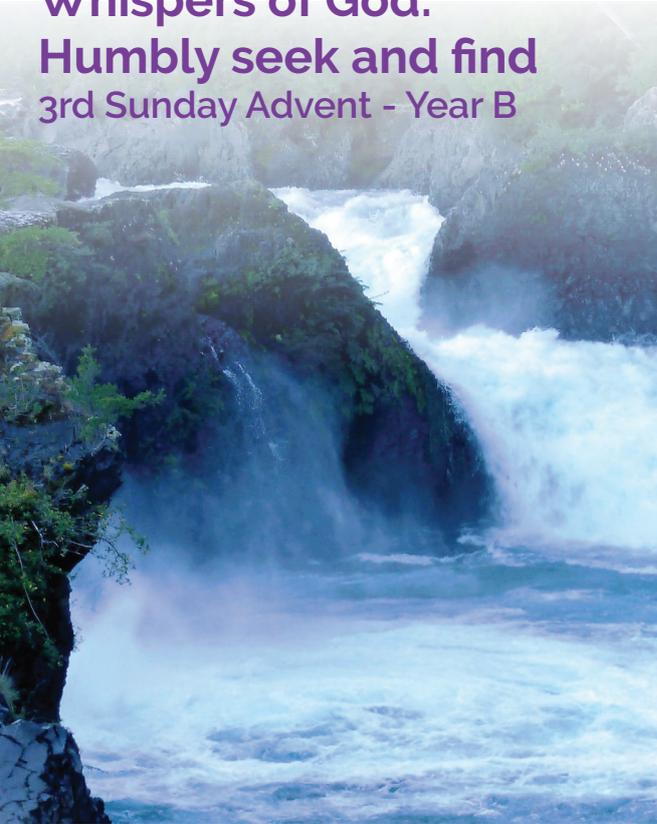


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Online Resource

Whispers of God: Humbly seek and find 3rd Sunday Advent - Year B



Hold on to what is good (1 Th 5)

Points for Prayer – Sunday scripture

*Await the birthday of Christ
Earth rejoices
Look forward with longing
Spirit of the Lord given me
Sent to bring good news
The cloak of integrity
In the sight of the nations
My soul rejoices in my God
Fills the starving with good
Be happy at all times; pray
Never suppress the Spirit
Lord will not fail you
Witness, speak for the light*

Ordinary

Generation Y (16-30 year olds) are under pressure to value the individual, consumption and global pluralism. What seemed like ordinary family and work values a few years back have to be reformulated. It means effort and negotiating. Advent offers a time to make a special effort in listening and reflection to seek what is good for us, those around us and our world. We pause; we decide on values important to us; we act.

... dare to turn what is happening in the world into our own personal suffering and thus discover what each of us can do about it. Pope Francis Laudato Si' #19

7 Day retreat

The Readings for Masses from 17-24th December can be used as a 7 day retreat. Genesis and the Prophets offer us the big picture. The human calling is compared to a love affair with God in the Song of Songs. Nature images for meditation are plentiful. The promises offered us in the birth of Jesus lead us to sing with Mary the Great Magnificat in praise of what God has done for us.

Prayers of the faithful

1. Family – Jesus grew up in the family of Nazareth. That we will look for the presence of God in the loving actions of our families ... we pray
2. Work – Jesus called his disciples when they were workers. That we work well knowing that this is our gifted moment in human history ... we pray
3. Sickness – Jesus cared for the sick. That we will accept sickness and being 'bent out of shape' as chances to grow as human and spiritual people ... we pray
4. Service – Jesus came to serve, not to be served. That we look for chances to serve others as catechists or in a local service club ... we pray
5. Celebration – Jesus joined in the joy of the Feast of Cana. That we plan Christmas as a time of shared celebration and not busy competition ... we pray

Karl Rahner

Karl was born in Germany 1904 and joined the Jesuits. A philosopher and theologian his studies ranged from patristics to mysticism. In some 4,000 written works over his life time he probed the truth until his death in 1984. Even though facing censorship he was appointed an advisor to Vatican II by Pope John XXIII (along with friends Congar, de Lubac and Chenu). His Theological Investigations explored God as Mystery and God's self-communication but always with a dedicated pastoral eye.

Action

- Join the local St Vincent de Paul Society or Catholic Youth Ministry
- Join Marriage Encounter or teach catechism in a State school.

Mission's wide embrace

The Church which "goes forth" is a community of missionary disciples ... gets involved by word and deed in people's daily lives; it bridges distances ... thus take on the "smell of the sheep" ... celebrates at every small victory. Pope Francis Joy of the Gospel #24

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Online Resource

Whispers of God: Humbly seek and find 4th Sunday Advent - Year B



*Revelation of mystery kept secret for ages
(Rm 16)*

Points for Prayer – Sunday scripture

*Eternal Word took flesh
Prepare us for his coming
Build me a house
I will be a Father to him
Sing the goodness of God
My God the rock
Strength to live Revelation of mystery
Broadcast to the pagans
The Lord is with you
Nothing is impossible with God
I am the handmaid of the Lord
She will call him Emmanuel*

Joy in human family

Every family has a member who does not seem to 'fit' yet they belong. Even the physical place on Earth where we live invites us to belong – it is 'country'. In the give-and-take of the extended family and friends, members learn patience and love. It takes effort to live positively with messy situations. Stories of testing times surround the birth of Jesus – having to travel to fill out a census; escaping a jealous ruler; being lauded by foreign visitors.

all sound spirituality entails both welcoming divine love and adoration, confident in the Lord because of his infinite power. In the Bible, the God who liberates and saves is the same God who created the universe. Pope Francis Laudato Si #73

Incarnation

Carols by Candlelight have become an Australian secular ritual. Everyone feels comfortable as they hold a candle and sing. Even the great outdoors is like a comforting blanket. The wonderful mystery revealed in the person of Jesus is that we find the world of God in our lives and in this world. Life on Earth is sacred. God is with us – *Emmanuel*.

Prayers of the faithful

1. Affirm – Jesus built up the confidence of the disciples. That we tell our family and friends that we value them as gifts in our lives... we pray
2. Parish – Local communities feature in the Acts of the Apostles. That we help grow the vitality of our parish as a rock of refuge in God ... we pray
3. Outsiders – Jesus reached out to the social outsider. That we reach out to those separated from family, the lonely and shut-ins ... we pray
4. Solstice – God gives us a place to belong. That the Christmas solstice remind us to care for a local part of Earth where we live ... we pray
5. Hope – Nothing is impossible with God. That we spread hope by showing an interest in others and care for Earth as our common home ... we pray

Mary McAleese

She was born in Belfast in 1951. Her family were tested as a Catholic family in a militant Protestant neighbourhood. She became a lawyer and journalist, and campaigned for more recognition of women in the Catholic Church, even ordination. She was elected President of Ireland 1997-2011. A figure of integrity she urged the Church to face up to sexual abuse and internal cover-ups. She personally visited the down and outs http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_McAleese

Action

- Personally make a Christmas card or prepare a bunch of flowers.
- As a family, care for your garden or join a local community garden

Mission's wide embrace

Mary is able to recognize the traces of God's Spirit in events great and small. She constantly contemplates the mystery of God in our world, in human history and in our daily lives. ... We implore her maternal intercession that the Church may become a home for many peoples, a mother for all peoples, and that the way may be opened to the birth of a new world. Pope Francis Joy of the Gospel #288

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