



ST COLUMBANS MISSION SOCIETY

Year A

Advent Resource

Lead kindly light

An online resource for parishes and schools.

St Columbans Mission Society has produced an Advent resource 'Lead kindly light' for the four Sundays in November/December (Year A). The resource was inspired by the hymn 'Lead kindly light' by John Henry Cardinal Newman who wrote it after a life seeking on-going conversion. The resource is an aid to Catholic teaching during the liturgical season of Advent.

The resource is FREE and can be downloaded at www.columban.org.au



Photo: Dzmitrock/Bigstock.com

Lead kindly light 1st Sunday

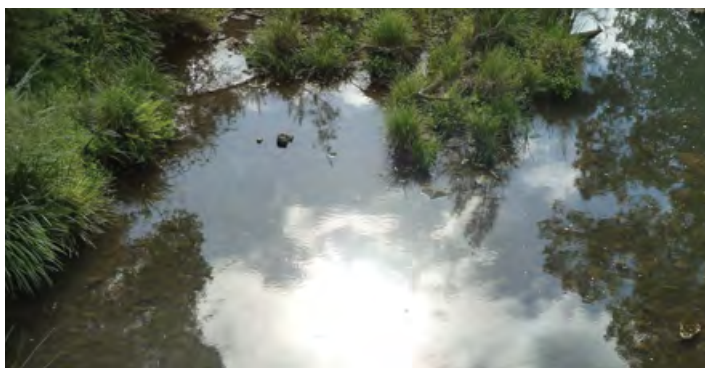
Go rejoicing to the house of the Lord (Psalm 121)

Points for prayer - Sunday scripture

*Vision of Isaiah about Jerusalem
All nations will stream to you
Hammer swords into plough shares
No more training for war
Walk in the light of the Lord
'Wake up', says St Paul
Salvation nearer than when converted
Live decently as people do in the daylight
Let your armour be the Lord
'You know not the hour when the Master is coming',
says Matthew,
They suspected nothing until the flood came.*

Yearnings

During Advent, the Sunday Readings focus on the *spiritual yearnings* of people throughout history fulfilled with the coming of Jesus. The people's yearnings range from personal happiness to worry about a planet in ecological danger, our common home. Advent prayer reminds us of Gospel answers to our yearnings. It lights our way and comforts us with hope in our fears. The whole human family carries a spiritual impulse as it searches for a vision for the future. Advent challenges us to be awake to our life choices. It grows hope.



Inter-linked

Earth is a complex system of interacting physical, chemical and biological "spheres". The systems of air, water, living organisms, land and polar- regions are all inter-linked - holistic. No part of Earth's system can be considered in isolation. Each interacts within the solar system and galaxies beyond. Small changes alter the Earth systems. These inter-connected impacts remind us that every human action has an impact on other human beings and Earth, for good or for bad.

*"Sobriety, when lived freely and consciously, is liberating...happiness means knowing how to limit some needs...and being open to the many different possibilities which life can offer."
Pope Francis, Laudato Si' #223*

Prayers of the faithful

1. God's presence – Lord, the cosmos and diversity of religions are signs of your abiding presence. Continue to lead us by your light.
2. Teachers – Lord, in human history you raised up diverse teachers of wisdom. Challenge us to seek deeper spiritual meanings in our life on earth.
3. Earth – Creator God, you have given us Earth as your first revelation of creative love. May we respect this sign and be led by its messages.
4. Hope – Lord, you chose your People to be a sign of peace. May we listen to all messages of hope in our world and turn swords into plough shares.
5. Lifestyle – God of all, you invite people to praise you with noble simplicity. May the way we live reflect simple choices so all peoples may simply live.

Profile

Jesuit priest Tielhard de Chardin (1881-1955) was the first Catholic in modern times to theologially link the earth sciences and faith. As a scientist he explored the wonder of God's cosmos. As a believer in the Cosmic Christ he wrote prayers as part of developing a theology of infatuation with God's Earth. He celebrated on the altar of Earth. He presented the vision of all life, human and cosmic, leading to an Omega Point in Christ Jesus. <http://goo.gl/AaMYyU>

Missions wide embrace

The entire life of Christians is an exploration into Christ. Each generation pushes back ever so slightly the envelope of His mystery... One of the most significant developments in Catholic understanding of the Christian mission in more recent times is its embrace of creation in all its beauty and vitality. (Archbishop Bathersby, Catholic Earthcare Australia, 30th June, 2002)

Action

- Buy ecologically friendly Christmas gifts - plastic free.
- Plan a less extravagant Christmas celebration.

Advent Resource - Year A

Lead kindly light 2nd Sunday

Justice and Peace will flourish (Psalm 71)

Points for prayer - Sunday scripture

*Isaiah says that new shoots will sprout
Knowledge and respectful fear of the Lord
Integrity is the loincloth round His waist
The wolf lives with the lamb
Paul says: Treat each other with friendship
The pagan outsiders praise God
Matthew repeats the Baptist: Repent!
Prepare a way for the Lord
They were baptised and confessed their sins
Produce the appropriate fruit
Baptise you with the Holy Spirit
Gather His wheat into His barn.*



Dialogue

Pope Francis invites us to a new way of faith. *I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all - the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor... Everything is interconnected, and this invites us to develop a spirituality of that global solidarity which flows from the mystery of the Trinity. (Laudato Si' #14)*

Learn from wilderness

Wilderness is a particular geological area where the plants and animals have evolved and flourish undisturbed by human activities. Within its dynamic structure, wilderness carries the cumulative wisdom and genetics of millions of years- a gift of the ages. It is good for the human spirit now to contemplate on this heritage and to care for it since it is borrowed from future generations. It is not to be harmed by insensitive tourism or be the victim of untested biotechnology. Emmanuel- God with us.

www.australianwildlife.org



"The technocratic paradigm also tends to dominate economics and political life ... by itself the market cannot guarantee integral human development." Pope Francis, Laudato Si' #109

Prayers of the faithful

1. Repent – You sent John the Baptist to prepare the way for your Son. God of outreach, help us turn back to your ways with all our heart.
2. Unity – Lord you give us the image of the lamb lying with the wolf. Inspire us to take the initiative and approach the outsider in friendship.
3. Darkness – Lord, you created both dark and light in the cosmos. Draw us to find you in dark circumstances and the voids of life.
4. Friends – Your Son Jesus called us friends. Show us how to value our friends and to make new friends among those who work for good.
5. Integrity – Jesus taught that we will be known by the fruits we bear. Lord, help us to put aside a self-centred lifestyle and stand erect in goodness.

Profile

St Hildegarde of Bingen wrote of Earth as Mother... *it forms not only the basic raw material for humankind but also the substance of God's Son.* As a sign of Incarnation, in her Middle Age Rhine River monastery she taught her nuns the use of herbs for healing the sick. Sister Calasactus RSM in the 1950s taught biology and there was a special place in her garden for plants mentioned in the Bible.

Missions wide embrace

(Dialogue) is demanded by deep respect for everything that has been brought about in human beings by the Spirit who blows where it wills ... Other religions constitute a positive challenge for the Church (56). (John Paul II, 'Mission of the Redeemer', 1990)

Action

- Join various communities for Christmas celebrations.
- Fill Christmas cribs with scenes from your local nature surrounds.
- Give a wildlife protection membership as a Christmas gift.

Advent Resource - Year A

Lead kindly light 3rd Sunday

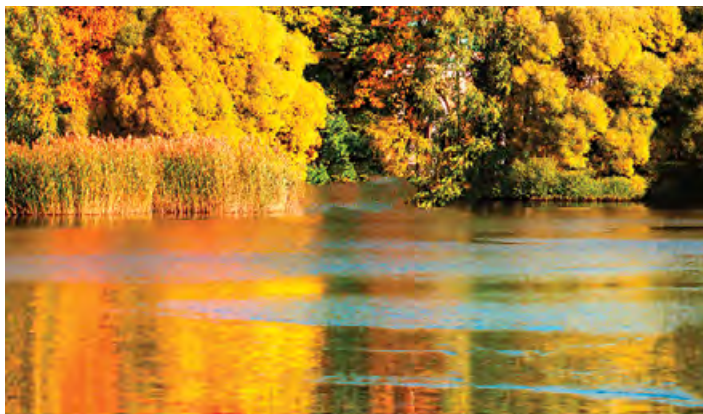
The Lord gives sight to the blind (Psalm 145)

Points for prayer - Sunday scripture

*Isaiah says 'let the dry-lands bloom'
Steady all trembling knees. Courage!
The eyes of the blind shall be opened
James says, 'patient until the Lord's coming'
Think of the farmer: how patient
The Judge is already at the gates
Matthew: 'Are you the one who has come?'
The blind see again and the lame walk
I am going to send my messenger before me
The least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than
the Baptist.*

Praise

Mary's Magnificat is a hymn of praise. St Thomas Aquinas wrote Eucharistic poems that have nourished Christian life for a millennium. Australians James McAuley and Richard Connolly's hymn *Cosmic Praise* puts God the Creator within our ecologically aware world, even naming the obscure algae diatoms resident of the ocean. Sing a new song they ask, a line totally at one with Thomas Berry's *New Story of Cosmic Salvation*.



Vision for a future

The Australian Department of the Environment designs and implements the Australian Government's policies and programmes. It helps to conserve the environment and promotes action on global warming. The department has four pillars: clean air, clean land, clean water and national heritage. Every few years it publishes *State of the Environment Australia* – an environmental reality score card for the nation. It also points to possible and hopeful future directions. It challenges both the media to report their findings and business boards to take its data into decision making.

“Saint Francis shows us just how inseparable is the bond between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society and interior peace.” Pope Francis, Laudato Si’ #10

Prayers of the faithful

1. Courage – God, you gave your Chosen People leaders and prophets. Strengthen our trembling knees to do what is right and comfort us in trials.
2. Wisdom – God of wisdom, heal our deafness to the warnings of global warming activists so we can speak with courage to our leaders.
3. Patience – God, you show patience with your People. Help us not to give up but be constant in our strivings for personal and national integrity.
4. Vision – Baptised into Christ we have been reborn. God of Life, open our minds and hearts to the vision of a better world that gives hope to all.
5. Joy – God, your People bloomed like desert flowers. Help us to recognise with joy your presence in all good things that blossom in our nation.

Profile

Blessed John Henry Cardinal Newman lived first as a committed Anglican lecturer at *Oxford University*. Knowing the limitations of theological language he valued story and analogy. He wrote the hymn *“Lead kindly light”* and the play *The Dream of Gerontius*. He lived his phrase: *To live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often*. He became a Catholic, was ordained and made a Cardinal for his contribution to growing the faith.

Missions wide embrace

Thanks solely to this encounter – or renewed encounter – with God’s love, which blossoms into an enriching friendship, 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)

Action

- Meditate on the Weekday Scripture Readings 16-23rd December as a personal retreat.
- Learn how Climate Change is impacting poor Pacific Islanders.

Advent Resource - Year A

Lead kindly light 4th Sunday

Let the King of Glory enter (Psalm 23)

Points for prayer - Sunday scripture

*Isaiah says not to test the patience of God
In watchful hope announcing glory
The maiden will bear a son
Emmanuel: meaning 'God with us'
Paul chosen as an apostle of Good News
The Son of God took human nature
Preach the obedience of faith to all nations
Called to be saints
Joseph: unafraid takes Mary home as his wife
You will name him Jesus
He will save the people from their sins.*

Integral living

Franciscan expert, Sr Ilia Delio says that Franciscan theology permeates the environmental encyclical *Laudato Si'*. It shows a deep Franciscan understanding of creation flowing forth from the heart of God in which every creature expresses God in some way - a mirror or footprint - leading us to love and praise the creator. *God's love is the fundamental moving force in all created things (#77)*. Advent looks to the coming of Jesus as human fulfilment.



Mystery of Holism

Mutuality in the science of ecology has emerged slowly. In the last 150 years ecology debated a holistic view, an integrated view that values mutuality. Biologist, Ernst Haeckel in 1866 wrote that all earth's living organisms constituted a unified whole. Later, metrics quantified mutuality. Land ethics leader, Aldo Leopold was among those who reconsidered holism. Ethical considerations emerged and the environmental movement started. Many religions and thinkers helped regain this view. (*J Grimm and M E Tucker, Ecology and Religion, Island Press, Washington, 2014*)

“Stop and give thanks to God before and after meals. I ask all believers to return to this beautiful and meaningful custom... reminds us of our dependence on the God for life.” Pope Francis, Laudato Si’ #227

Prayers of the faithful

1. Obedient – Creative God, you reach out to all in your unconditional covenants of love. May we make the submission of faith with our lives.
2. Patient – God of history, you patiently guided your People over millennia. May we be patient with ourselves and in the service of others.
3. Search – God, Giver of Freedom, lead us to search out all that is good, entering into freely dialogue as we learn to share and work with others.
4. Gospel – Your Son presented the Gospel as good news and having the power to make a difference. Inspire us to be evangelisers.
5. Eucharist – Your Son Jesus gave us many meanings and challenges in the Last Supper. May our communities welcome the stranger as friend.

Profile

Pope Francis named Mother Teresa, Saint of Kolkata, as an icon of mercy for our age – a woman of prayer and concrete acts of charity. She understood the path to peace and invites us to draw from the source of love: Jesus crucified and risen. Her prayer led her to the extreme edges of society recognizing the poor and the marginalized as her family, witnessing to God's caress.

Missions wide embrace

I have decided to discuss at length the following questions:

- *Reform of the Church's missionary outreach;*
- *The temptations faced by pastoral workers;*
- *The Church, understood as the entire People of God which evangelizes;*
- *The homily and its preparation;*
- *The inclusion of the poor in society;*
- *Peace and dialogue within society;*
- *The spiritual motivations for mission.*

(Pope Francis *Joy of the Gospel* #17)

Action

- Invite someone who is alone to your Christmas dinner.
- Contribute to Christmas Mass celebrations - organise family and friends to dress up for the festival.