

Waiting in Hope Longing for Peace

An Advent bulletin for home and Parish
Week Three and Four 2023



Rejoice Sunday & Bambinelli

The Third Sunday of Advent is traditionally referred to as Gaudete or Rejoice Sunday. The rose coloured candle we light this day represents this joy, which is echoed in the Entrance Antiphon

of the Mass: 'Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice. Indeed, the Lord is near.'

St John Paul II began a tradition in Rome that continues today. On this Sunday, children and their families from across Rome come to St Peter's Square, bringing with them the figure of the infant Jesus from their crib. After the Angelus, the children raise up the figures and the Pope blesses them. The day is now also known affectionally as **Bambinelli Sunday**, the Italian for babies. In many places the blessed figure is wrapped and placed under the family Christmas tree to be unwrapped and finally placed in the crib at Christmas – reminding us of the first and most important gift of Christmas!

Keeping Christmas 2023 in the Home and Parish - a Family Prayer Companion

A four-page leaflet for the home is now available on the Advent Resource page of www.kandle.ie It contains some prayers for the 12 days of Christmas, including:

- + Christmas Eve: Prayer for placing figure of Jesus in the crib
- + Christmas Day: Prayer before your Family Christmas Meal
- + A Prayer at the Crib for the 12 days of Christmas
- + Feast of the Holy Family: A Family Prayer
- + Feast of Mary, Mother of God (January 1): Prayer suggestion
- + Epiphany (January 6): Prayer for chalking your front door and placing Magi at the crib.



An Advent Tradition The Nativity Scene

In Advent 2019 Pope Francis once more encouraged families to have a nativity scene or crib in the home. He said that it '... helps us to relive the history of what took place in Bethlehem When, at Christmas, we place the statue of the Infant Jesus in the manger, the nativity scene suddenly comes alive. God appears as a child, for us to take into our arms. Beneath weakness and frailty, he conceals his power that creates and transforms all things.'



A Blessing Prayer by the Family Crib

God of all people,
from the very beginning of creation
you have shown us your love:
when our need for a Saviour was great
you sent your Son to be born of the Virgin Mary.
To our lives He brings joy and peace, justice,
mercy, and love.
Lord, bless our family and all who will look
upon this crib in the coming days;
may it remind us of the humble birth of Jesus,
and lift our thoughts to Him,
who is God-with-us, our Emmanuel and
the Saviour of all. Amen.

Advent Scripture Study Video Series

If you haven't had a chance to yet, make sure you take a look at this video series from Fr Seán Maher on the Balyna Parish YouTube channel.

ADVENT GOSPEL LINK

3rd Sunday of Advent: The figure of John the Baptist once more takes centre stage in our Gospel reading, though this time the account comes from John 1:6-8,19-28, rather than Mark's gospel. While he may be centre stage, John is once more pointing firmly to Christ as our saviour. In this passage he highlights an important Advent theme: Jesus has already come into the world as our saviour. During Advent, we pray that we will be able to recognize Jesus' presence in our midst and to follow the example of John the Baptist by pointing others to the good news of Jesus. *How am I in my words and actions spreading the Advent message of hope in Jesus? What acts of kindness, patience and generosity can I share with others as I prepare for Christmas?*



4th Sunday of Advent: Because Mark's gospel doesn't start until the baptism of the adult Jesus, today we hear the account of the Annunciation from the gospel of Luke.

As we prepare to welcome Christ, we might embrace a few phrases from this gospel passage. The angel, a messenger from God, says to Mary and is saying to us today: 'The Lord is with you', 'Do not be afraid', 'Nothing is impossible to God'.

At this Christmas time, can we respond to God's message to us and be the person God has created us to be - a person wonderfully made. Can we, like Mary, say to God: 'Let what you have said be done to me.'

See www.kandle.ie for our weekly Scripture Sharing Reflections on the Advent Sunday readings.



An Advent hymn to think about...

O Come, Divine Messiah

The composer of this Advent carol was the French poet and playwright, Simon-Joseph Pellegrin (1663 – 1745). While there is a strong sense of petition in this hymn, its musical setting conveys an overriding confidence in God. Drawing on texts from Matthew, Luke, Isaiah and Psalm 62, the hymn proclaims that our Saviour will come - in peace and in meekness, in human weakness, dispelling the darkness and sadness of this world as hope sings its triumph.

Always
remember...



An Advent Tradition Reconciliation: Celebrating God's Forgiveness



An important aspect of preparing for Christmas for many people is the celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation or confession. The honest assessment of our lives that Advent calls for will, invariably, lead us to seek God's forgiveness, mercy, and love. As we draw closer to Christmas take some time to consider: *What in your life would you like to change? From whom do you need to share or seek forgiveness? For what do you want to say sorry to God?*

Look out for the schedule of communal celebrations of reconciliation /penance and individual confession in your parish.

An Advent Household Prayer

We invite you take a moment to light your Advent wreath /candle, to thank God for your Advent Day & to pray this prayer in union with the rest of our diocesan family, praying for peace in our world & lives.

Loving God,
as your light grows in the dark of winter,
bring its strength and its hope
to the people of the Holy Land and to all people
who suffer through war and conflict.
Just as you sent the star of Bethlehem
to lead the way to your Son,
guide all people - leaders and citizens –
to follow your ways of peace and justice.
As we remember the difficult journey of Mary
and Joseph, may the Holy Family be a source of
courage for each of us,
helping us to reach out in friendship
to the oppressed and displaced of this world.
Help us to see in the Christ-child we welcome this
Christmas, the one who came to bring an end to
all divisions. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.
And may the Lord bless us and keep us safe
this Advent day and always. Amen.
Come, Lord Jesus, Prince of Peace.

