PATHWAYS IN ADVENT

Fourth Sunday of Advent



Pathway:
The Church that Accompanies

Process

Opening Prayer

Say the opening prayer together

Gracious God, we wait for you in hope.
As we walk the Advent pathway,
may we be alert to the wonders of your deeds
and the signs of your presence in our world.
Open our hearts and minds to hear and share the
message of hope, joy, peace, reconciliation and love
as we await your coming and respond to our
Baptismal call to live the Gospel in our daily lives.
We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen

Proclaim the Gospel

Read the Gospel passage aloud slowly. Pause.
Re-read the passage, noticing what is striking you as you hear the words of the Gospel

Reflect and Share

Pause for a time of silence to listen to what God is saying to you in this Gospel text
In turn, each person shares what stays with them
Listen to one another without interruption
Pause before hearing from the next person, in order to receive what has been shared

Response after each person shares

ALL: Your word, O Lord, is a lamp for my feet and a light for my path.

(Psalm 118:105)

Gospel Text

Matthew 1:18-24

This is how Jesus Christ came to be born. His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph; but before they came to live together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit.

Her husband Joseph, being a man of honour and wanting to spare her publicity, decided to divorce her informally. He had made up his mind to do this when the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, and said, *'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because she has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins.'*

Now all this took place to fulfil the words spoken by the Lord through the prophet: *'The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and they will call him Emmanuel, a name which means 'God-is-with-us'.*

When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had told him to do: he took his wife to his home.



Kildare and Leighlin
Diocesan Commission for Liturgical Formation

Read and Reflect on the Pathway

The following quotes are taken from the Irish Synodal Assembly working document, October 2026, 'Is not this what God asks of you?' Micah 6:8

"[In many ways, the Church already accompanies people] What is perhaps now emerging as different is a longing for a Church that can accompany people in their search for God.

The desire for accompaniment extends to people in every state of life, including single men and women, widows and widowers, separated and divorced persons, those returning to the faith, and those discovering it for the first time. The model for such accompaniment is the Risen Christ on the road to Emmaus

From the Working Document
Pathway 4: The Church that accompanies

"The Church must walk alongside people at every stage of life, providing opportunities for encounter, learning, reflection, belonging and mission."

The Working Group on Formation and Catechesis

Reflect and Share

Your word, O Lord, is a lamp for my feet and a light for my path.
Prayerfully consider these quotes.
Notice what draws you, where you see something of the Gospel, where the Spirit might be inviting us/you to change, deepen or begin again in the light of this pathway.
Listen to one another without interruption, pausing briefly before moving on to the next person.

Respond in Action

Do not be afraid. As you consider accompaniment and how it might be lived and experienced even deeper, what is God inviting you and others to bring to birth in your parish?

Prayer of Intercession

May we be a Church that accompanies people along the path of life and faith, walking with those who are searching for God.
R. Is not this what God asks of us?

Concluding Prayer

Say the closing prayer together

Loving God,
we give praise and thanks
that you have sent your Son to be our light in the darkness of this world.
As we await your coming, help us to be a Church that proclaims the gospel,
a Church of welcome and belonging,
a Church where the wounded find a place of healing,
a Church that accompanies one another and a Church that empowers each of us to be ministers of your gospel.
May your Word be a lamp for our feet and a light for our path.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.
Maranatha. Come, Lord Jesus.

Learn more about the Synodal Pathways at www.synod.ie or

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