

Diocesan Advent Service 2016

Entrance Song **Ullmhaíгі Bóthar An Tiarna (Máire Ní Dhuibhir)**
Prepare the way of the Lord

Opening Prayer **Archbishop Diarmuid Martin**
Let us pray,
God of hope and promise,
Be our light as we walk this advent journey
Be our peace as we take time to reflect
Be our strength as we build up your kingdom.
We ask this in the Spirit, through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Introduction

Advent is about slowing down, taking a step back and seeking a quiet time away from the frenzy of life and the pressure of high expectations. Advent offers time for reflection, for resetting and rebooting our spiritual lives. Advent calls us back to our core, our centre and re-connects us to who we really are – people of hope, peace, joy and love. Advent is a season for being **alert**, for life-giving **preparation** and **patient waiting** for what we are about to celebrate.

WAKE UP

Song: **Zion Hears The Watchmen /Sleeper’s Awake (J.S. Bach)**

Reading **Romans 13:11-14**

You know ‘the time’ has come: you must wake up now: our salvation is even nearer than it was when we were converted. The night is almost over, it will be daylight soon — let us give up all the things we prefer to do under cover of the dark; let us arm ourselves and appear in the light.

Silence

Reflection **Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI**

It is the beautiful task of Advent to awaken in all of us memories of goodness and thus to open doors of hope.

Song
All sing: **City of God (Dan Schutte)**
Let us build the city of God
may our tears be turned into dancing
for the lord, our light and our love,
has turned the night into day.

PREPARE

Reading **Matthew 3:1-12**

In due course John the Baptist appeared; he preached in the wilderness of Judaea and this was his message: 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.' This was the man the prophet Isaiah spoke of when he said:

A voice cries in the wilderness:
Prepare a way for the Lord,
make his paths straight.

Song **Prepare Ye The Way of the Lord (Stephen Schwartz)**

All sing: Prepare Ye the way of the Lord
Prepare Ye the way of the Lord.

Silence

Prayer **John the Baptist (Thomas Merton)**

All say: Almighty and forgiving God, oblige us to "make straight the way of the Lord" as did John the Baptist when he announced the coming of the Lord. Help us to greet the presence of the Saviour this Advent with the ointment of true repentance, the water of true mercy, and the acceptance of true love.

WAIT

Song **Behold A Virgin (Ronan McDonagh)**

Reading **James 5:7-10**

Be patient until the Lord's coming. Think of a farmer: how patiently he waits for the precious fruit of the ground until it has had the autumn rains and the spring rains! You too have to be patient; do not lose heart, because the Lord's coming will be soon.

Song: **Wait For The Lord (Taizé)**

All sing: Wait for the Lord whose day is near
Wait for the Lord keep watch take heart.

Reflection **Advent (Cheryl Lawrie)**

.....I've always liked the idea that the church seasons are about rehearsing how to live faithfully in the biggest moments of life. In Advent we rehearse waiting, so that we know how to wait with faith when the times of waiting come in our lives. I've been spending advent – by chance not design – with those for whom this advent is no dress rehearsal.

I've just been listening to the news and almost every story included the word

'waiting'...

waiting to see what the fires will do

waiting for rain

waiting for fighting to stop

waiting for food

waiting for the coroners' report

waiting for sentencing

and I'm holding in my mind those whose stories don't make the news...

waiting for blood test results

waiting for a temporary protection visa

waiting for the next welfare cheque

waiting to see what mood their dad will be in tonight

waiting for release

waiting for refugee status

waiting for it to be over

waiting for it to begin.

I'm still learning what waiting with faith looks like for those who are living it with every breath... or maybe I'm learning that living waiting with every breath is in itself a fierce act of faith.

All sing: Wait for the Lord whose day is near
Wait for the Lord keep watch take heart.

Reflection

Preparing for Christmas in advance and anticipating the celebrations are often mistaken as being two sides of the same coin. Advent is indeed a season of preparation, a time to get ready. However, the first half of the season is directing us in our preparation **not** to the first coming of Christ at Bethlehem but to his second coming in glory at the end of time. We are advised to be ready for the day of his coming and we are encouraged to do this by helping, here and now, to build up Christ's **kingdom of love, justice and peace**. This is a tall order, you might say, in the first two weeks of December when we have so much to do.

Song **Ps. 145 - My Soul Give Praise to the Lord (Ciaran Coll)**

All sing: My soul give praise to the Lord. I will exult you my Lord and king.
My soul give thanks to the Lord. I will sing to the Lord all my life.

Reflection**Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179)**

Your Creator has given you great treasures.
But with his gifts
comes the condition
that you apply his gifts to good works,
that you grow in virtue.
Your task then
Is to make your gift valuable to others
through works of justice,
so that your life and deeds
will mirror their giver

Song**Dona Nobis Pacem**

All sing: Dona nobis pacem, pacem
Dona nobis pacem.

Intercessions 1

All sing: Come to us, O Emmanuel (3)

The eyes of the blind shall be opened (Is 35:5)

Let us pray for all gathered here: that we will widen our view of people and situations in the name of Jesus

What did you go out to see? (Mt 11:7)

Let us pray for all who follow Christ: that they may recognise him in their brothers and sisters.

To give shade, shelter and refuge (Is 4:6)

Let us pray for people throughout the world: that we will be moved to reach out to all who seek comfort, protection and sanctuary

To teach us something about hope (Rom 15:4)

Let us pray for those who are in despair: that they will be lifted up by the example and kindness of others.

All sing: Come to us, O Emmanuel (3)

Reflection

The notion of the closeness of God to His people, highlighted in the name Emmanuel (God-is-with-us), was not unique to the Chosen People of Israel. It found resonance with the Irish Christians who, from collections of Irish prayers, clearly enjoyed the nearness of their God as they carried out their normal domestic and agricultural functions. We have records of prayers and customs associated with daily activities

such as putting the baby to bed and lighting the fire and other ones for travelling at night or going to seek the counsel of another.

Song **Teacht Chríost (Padraig Mac Piarais)**

*I cleaned my heart tonight before the arrival of the child –
I opened the door of my heart – do not pass me by.*

Reflection

It is significant that on 21 December the sun reaches its point of closeness to the earth which reinforces the idea of the proximity of the source of nourishment and growth to God's people. The Feast of Saint John the Baptist, who is such a central Advent character, is celebrated on 24th of June, just after the summer solstice, when the sun is furthest from the earth. This finds a parallel too with John's intention that he, as the prophet, would decrease while Christ, the fulfilment would increase.

How can we capture this feeling of closeness to Christ at this special time?

Song **Immanuel (Michael Card)**

Intercessions 2

All sing: Come to us, O Emmanuel (3)

Prepare a way for the Lord (Mt 3:3)

Let us pray for all Christians as we journey through Advent: that we will make space and time for listening prayer during these precious days.

Peace be to your homes (Ps.122:7)

Let us pray for all who follow Christ: that our homes may be places of peace and reconciliation.

You too have to be patient (James 5:8)

Let us pray for the grace of patience: that we will wait in joyful hope for the goodness that is in store for us

Calf and lion cub feed together (Isaiah 11:6)

Let us pray for all people who are at war with each other: that they will learn to live together in peace and harmony.

All sing: Come to us, O Emmanuel (3)

Address **Archbishop Diarmuid Martin**

Blessing of Advent Wreath

We ask you, God, our creator, to bless
this Advent wreath.
May it remind us that Jesus is in our midst
and that we are surrounded by his love and care.

Bless these candles on our wreath.
May they remind us that Jesus is the
Light of the World.

Bless these evergreens on our wreath.
May they remind us that Jesus' love for us
is everlasting and that nothing we do will
ever take it away.

May this wreath remind us to prepare well
for Christmas, each and every day of the
Advent season.
We ask these things in Jesus' name.

Song

Lux Mundi (Trevor Thomson)

All sing:

Lux mundi, tenebras dissipa, et corda nostra illumina,
et corda nostra illumina.

*(Light of the world, scatter the darkness of night and shed your
light within our hearts)*

Advent Reflection (Ruth Patterson adapted)

I wonder will God begin again with us this Christmas?

Two thousand years since God began before in such a little,
mighty way, two thousand years since Heaven stood on tiptoe
and all creation held its breath, as one little faithful soul said
"yes" and opened up the way for God to come; two thousand
years ago God spoke, and into the shadows of our exiled state
God came in Jesus. God saw that it was good and the Light shone.

There was another time, before the dawn of history, when God
who was and is and evermore shall be, looked out on emptiness,
on formless void cloaked in darkness. God spoke. God saw that it
was good and Light began to shine.

But darkness armed itself for war, willing once again the chaos where it would be at home, and, waiting to usurp the place of God, used the flower of all of God's creation, the beloved of his heart, to seek to overcome the Light.

Even in the darkness God never ceased to look with love on all he had made.

So, when the time was right, two thousand years ago God dealt a shattering blow to the Darkness. God spoke His Word, and Living Flame, Unconquerable Light shone in darkness and darkness could not overpower it.

Song **Lux Mundi (Trevor Thomson)**

All sing: Lux mundi, tenebras dissipa, et corda nostra illumina,
et corda nostra illumina.

Reflection **Lady Mary (Thomas Merton)**

Lady Mary, you whose "yes" opened the door to our salvation, show us how we can say "yes" without reservations. Teach us to wait, as we hang in the balance of the past and the possible. Let us make loving choices as you did, agreeing freely to God's plan for us. Mother us as we make our way to your Son. Amen.

Instrumental **Cantigas de Santa Maria (13th c.)**

Concluding Prayer Come Lord Christ,
to restore all that has been lost
through struggle and fear
in sorrow and in pain.

Come, Lord Christ,
to restore the balance of hope
for those oppressed and hungry for justice,
overlooked and counted of little worth.

Come, Lord Christ,
to restore to wholeness
the image that is tarnished
with sin and shame,
neglect and distraction.

Come, Lord Christ,
in poverty and humility

to raise us to your eternal glory. Amen.

Advent Blessing

ARCHBISHOP DIARMUID MARTIN

May the almighty and merciful God,
by whose grace you have placed your faith
in the First Coming of his Only Begotten Son
and yearn for his coming again,
sanctify you by the radiance of Christ's Advent
and enrich you with his blessing.

Amen.

As you run the race of this present life,
may he make you firm in faith,
joyful in hope and active in charity.

Amen.

So that, rejoicing now with devotion
at the Redeemer's coming in the flesh,
you may be endowed with the rich reward of eternal life
when he comes again in majesty.

Amen.

Recessional Song O Come Emmanuel (French Traditional)

All sing:

O Come, O Come Emmanuel,
To free your captive ,
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of Man appear.
Rejoice, Rejoice, O Israel, to you shall come Emmanuel.

O come great daystar radiance bright
And heal us with your glorious light,
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night
And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice, Rejoice O Israel, to you shall come Emmanuel.

O key of David's city, come,
And open wide our heav'nly home
Make safe the way that leads above
Protect us ever by your love.
Rejoice, Rejoice, O Israel, to you shall come Emmanuel.