

DIOCESAN ADVENT SERVICE 2017

Song **O Come Emmanuel (French)**
All sing: Rejoice! Rejoice! O Israel
 to you shall come Emmanuel

Opening Prayer **Let us pray,**
 God of promise and hope,
 Grace us with a spirit of calm,
 Empty us of what does not nourish,
 Hold us in your gentle love,
 In Christ, our Lord. Amen.



Reflection **Advent Stillness before Christmas**

Advent is a season that looks back and looks forward at the same time. We look back to the birth of Jesus in simplicity over 2000 years ago. We also look forward with hope to the fullness of the kingdom of God when Jesus comes in tenderness and love to meet us face to face. In Dublin, we look forward to hosting the World Meeting of Families in August and the prayerful preparations beforehand.

Advent is a season of **waiting, of patience** and of **attentiveness**. We wait in a spirit of calm expectation, with our eyes wide open in gentle attentiveness, for the unfolding of the gifts that Jesus has prepared for us.

A Christmas song tells children '**you better watch out**'. In the Gospel of Mark, for the first Sunday of Advent, Jesus challenges us to '**stay awake**'. These two phrases have something in common – being alert and being attentive.

In Advent when we make time for **gentle prayer** we begin to notice anew the presence of Jesus in so many different ways. We appreciate the gifts that we have been given – the people with whom we live and work especially our families.

Quiet thoughtfulness makes us more aware of others needs. In the silence of Advent we are inspired to reach out, like Jesus, to those who find it hard to survive, those who are left out by others and those in need of healing words and touch.

In the **stillness** of Advent we learn to be active in proclaiming the kingdom of God and in spreading the good news of the Gospel. We are mindful too of the words 'Preach the Gospel always, and if necessary also with words.' (Francis of Assisi)

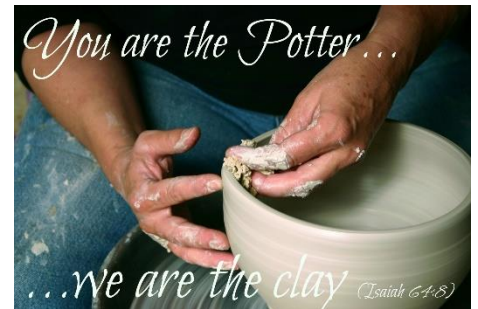
May this Advent be a time for celebrating the joy of love in our families.
May this Advent be a time for making the paths of our relationships more smooth.
May this Advent be a time of peace and moderation as we look forward with hope.

Candle One We light the first candle to represent the Old Testament prophets. They prepared us by their challenging words for justice and their awareness of God's power to shape us if only we will allow it to happen.

Scripture **(Isaiah 64:8)**
Lord, you are our Father;
we the clay, you the potter,
we are all the work of your hand.

Song **The Potter's Hand (Darlene Zschech)**
All sing: Take me, mould me, use me, fill me
I give my life to the potter's hand
Call me, guide me, lead me, walk beside me
I give my life to the Potter's hand

Reflection **The Potter**
O Life-Shaping Potter, Come
As we begin this Advent season,
may we be yielding and pliable,
open to your soft, moulding touch.
Come and shape our lives:
expand our hearts for compassion,
open our eyes to your ways,
tune our ears to your words,
guide our hands to touch others gently,
nudge our feet onto your paths.
Form us into your Advent people,
bringing hope and peace
to your hurting world.



Candle Two We light the second candle to represent John the Baptist who came in humility to prepare a way/chun an bóthar a ullmhú. In Advent we listen to voices crying in the wilderness asking us to open our hearts and our doors to all.

Reading **(John 1:23)**
John said, 'I am, as Isaiah prophesied:
A voice that cries in the wilderness:
Make a straight way for the Lord.'

Song **Prepare the Way of the Lord (Taizé)**
All sing: Prepare the way of the Lord
Prepare the way of the Lord
And all people will see the salvation of our God.

Reflection**An Advent meditation sealed with a promise**

Prepare the way of the Lord
Poor, cluttered hearts starving for the emptiness
That makes fullness possible
It is so little that He asks of us
Give some evidence that you mean to reform
Wear lights in your hearts instead of on your trees.
Our autumned hearts stand waiting for the Father's gift
Come, Lord Jesus, come.
Gospel up our lives with your presence
and we'll wear lights in our hearts instead of on our trees.
Come Emmanuel.

Song**Ullmhaígí Bóthar an Tiarna (Máire Ní Dhuibhir)**

All sing: Ullmhaígí bóthar an Tiarna

Candle Three

We light our third candle to represent Mary that woman of simplicity and trust whose 'yes' made everything possible.

Reading**Luke 1:38**

'I am the handmaid of the Lord, said Mary 'let what you have said be done to me.'

Reflection

For any young woman of Israel, the gift of a child was a special mark of God's favour. But before Mary even has time to take in this news, she is confronted by the announcement that her future son will be 'saviour' – successor to the kingship of David – Son of the Most high. Still trying to come to terms with it all, imagine her consternation as she realises that not even a first step is in place; she is as yet no more than betrothed. It is overwhelming.

Is there such a thing as being overwhelmed with good news? It appears that this was the case with the young, yet willing, Mary. Am I willing to be overwhelmed by the potential God has placed in my life? **(Sacred Space – December 2017)**

**Song****Mary Did You Know (Lowry/Greene)**

Reflection Magnificat of Betrothal (Ann Johnson - Adapted)

Our souls are filled with wonder at the gift of loving. You have looked upon us with favour as we join our lives in response to you.

And holy, holy, holy is his name

Yes, from this time on all people will call us blessed, for you, the One who dwells in human hearts, have done great things for us.

And holy, holy, holy is his name

Holy, is your name, and your sustaining joy reaches from age to age to those who dare to journey on the difficult pathways of committed love.

And holy, holy, holy is his name

You have shown us the life-changing power of our love in the eyes of those who know us and in the richness of our work.

And holy, holy, holy is his name

The false pride that we treasured, our ability to stand alone, has been cast aside. We understand ourselves and you more tenderly as we begin to experience the treasure of a lifetime of standing together.

And holy, holy, holy is his name

We are no longer lonely. We touch with compassion those who come to us filled with needs.

And holy, holy, holy is his name

You have opened the doors of eternity to us as we searched for you, according to the dreams you shared with those who sought your face from the beginning.

And holy, holy, holy is his name

Reflection St. John of the Cross

The Virgin, weighed
With the Word of God
Comes down the road:
If only you will shelter her.

Candle Four

We light our fourth candle to represent all of us as we journey together this Advent season. May we hold each other in prayer as we are held in the arms of Jesus. May his gentle presence be born again in us so that renewed by the stillness of these weeks we will be led by him into a new year of joy and love in our families.



Scripture **Is 40:11**
He is like a shepherd feeding his flock,
gathering lambs in his arms,
holding them against his breast
and leading to their rest the mother
ewes.

Song **Wait For The Lord (Taize)**
All sing: Wait for the Lord whose day is near.
Wait for the Lord. Be strong, take heart.

Reflection **Patient Trust (Teilhard de Chardin)**
Above all, trust in the slow work of God.
We are quite naturally impatient in everything
to reach the end without delay.
Give Our Lord the benefit of believing
that his hand is leading you,
and accept the anxiety of feeling yourself
in suspense and incomplete.

All sing: Wait for the Lord whose day is near.
Wait for the Lord. Be strong, take heart.

Scripture **Mark 13:33-37**
Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man
going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with
his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep
awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the
evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep
when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.

Address **Archbishop Diarmuid Martin**

Song **My soul in stillness waits (Marty Haugen)**
All sing: For you, O Lord, my soul in stillness waits,
Truly my hope is in you

Reflection 'It is the beautiful task of Advent to awaken in all of us
memories of goodness and thus to open doors of hope'
(Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI)

All sing: For you, O Lord, my soul in stillness waits,
Truly my hope is in you

Reflection 'Attentiveness is the purest and rarest form of generosity'
(Simone Veil)

All sing: For you, O Lord, my soul in stillness waits,
Truly my hope is in you

Reflection 'He promised that he would come but did not say when he would come, and so all generations and ages await him eagerly'
(Ephrem the Syrian)

All sing: For you, O Lord, my soul in stillness waits,
Truly my hope is in you

Reflection 'O branch, coming into leaf, standing upright in your nobility as dawn advances' **(Hildegard of Bingen)**

All sing: For you, O Lord, my soul in stillness waits,
Truly my hope is in you.

Song **Be Born In Me (Herms/Nordeman)**

Intercessions

We pray for joy, peace and hope as we anticipate the coming of Jesus Christ at Christmas and at the end of time.

LORD HEAR US – MUKAMA OTUHURRE

We pray for all families during this time of Advent. That they may pray together and bond with one another in the season of good will and celebration.

LORD HEAR US - MUKAMA OTUHURRE

We pray for hope, that this Advent season will renew us in hope, keep us alert and awake while cherishing justice and peace in our communities.

LORD HEAR US - MUKAMA OTUHURRE

We pray for the grace to prepare our hearts for the Lord's coming: that we may use this time to remove all the stumbling blocks and obstacles from our lives.

LORD HEAR US - MUKAMA OTUHURRE

Song **People of Joy (Brendan Dowd)**

All sing: We are people of joy, a family of hope
Called to be beauty and light to the world
A mirror of God, a community of peace
Singing in harmony.

**Advent :
We Wait for the Lord**



Concluding Prayer

World Meeting of Families 2018

All say:

God, our Father,
We are brothers and sisters in Jesus your Son,
One family, in the Spirit of your love.
Bless us with the joy of love.

Make us patient and kind,
gentle and generous,
welcoming to those in need.
Help us to live your forgiveness and peace.
Protect all families with your loving care,
Especially those for whom we now pray:
[We pause and remember family members and others by name].

Increase our faith,
Strengthen our hope,
Keep us safe in your love,
Make us always grateful for the gift of life that we share.

This we ask, through Christ our Lord,

Amen

Mary, mother and guide, pray for us.
Saint Joseph, father and protector, pray for us.
Saints Joachim and Anne, pray for us.
Saints Louis and Zélie Martin, pray for us.

Song

All sing:

A Joy For All The Earth (Ephrem Feeley)

The joy of love, a joy for all God's family,
The joy of love, transcending time and space.
Our love for each other mirrors God the Father's love.
The joy of love: a joy for all the earth.