

The French author Simone Weil wrote in her notebook: 'Waiting patiently in expectation is the foundation of the spiritual life.' Without patience, our expectation degenerates into wishful thinking. Patience comes from the Latin word 'patior', which means 'to suffer'. As we wait patiently (which is not always easy), what seems a hindrance becomes a way; what seems an obstacle becomes a door.

### Questions to ponder

1. Are you the type of person who finds it easy to wait?
2. Think back on those moments in your life when you had to wait for an important event. What helped you, if anything, to make that time of waiting a fruitful time?
3. As you enter into this period of Advent, what would you like to receive from God as you wait to celebrate the birth of Christ?

### A prayer

We welcome you, small Child of Bethlehem, whose coming we await with quiet attention. Shield us from the shouts and empty promises of the season, and encourage us to turn our hopes to your coming. We know that your promise is hidden in the stable in Bethlehem and rooted in the offspring of Jesse; let us look for our salvation there. Amen.

### Suggested Advent actions

This week:

- I will look for one small sign that God is present in my daily life. I will give thanks for his presence.
- I will prepare the way of the Lord by making an Advent calendar of proposed contributions of service to others and of positive changes to my spiritual life.

*Fr. John Moore 2015*



## The First Week of Advent

### A devotional guide

**Week 1: 29th November - 5th December 2015**

'Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.'

*Luke 21. 27-28*

**Advent** is a wake-up call to the Church, a time when we are encouraged to take more notice of the presence of God in our lives and in the world and to advance the work of the kingdom of God.

During Advent, we recall both the beginning of Jesus' time on this earth and his return in glory. Our scripture readings remind us that we who have been baptised into the life and death of Jesus have nothing to fear from the end of time. This is not to say that we have the luxury of waiting passively for the Second Coming. The promise of the Second Coming contains an insistent challenge; and the Gospels show us the way to work for the fulness of the kingdom.

## Suggested Scripture readings

During the week, you may decide to set a bit of time each day and read short passages of Scripture that are given to prompt our reflection, response and prayer.

Monday	Matthew 4. 18-22
Tuesday	Isaiah 11. 1-10
Wednesday	Matthew 15. 29-37
Thursday	Psalms 118. 19-27a
Friday	Matthew 9. 27-31
Saturday	Psalms 146. 3-10

We focus here on [Isaiah 11. 1-10](#):

- <sup>1</sup> A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse,  
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.
- <sup>2</sup> The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him,  
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the spirit of counsel and might,  
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.
- <sup>3</sup> His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.  
He shall not judge by what his eyes see,  
or decide by what his ears hear;
- <sup>4</sup> but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,  
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;  
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,  
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.
- <sup>5</sup> Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist,  
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.
- <sup>6</sup> The wolf shall live with the lamb,  
the leopard shall lie down with the kid,  
the calf and the lion and the fatling together,  
and a little child shall lead them.
- <sup>7</sup> The cow and the bear shall graze,  
their young shall lie down together;  
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
- <sup>8</sup> The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,

and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.  
<sup>9</sup> They will not hurt or destroy  
on all my holy mountain;  
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord  
as the waters cover the sea.

<sup>10</sup> On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

## Commentary

Few texts in all of biblical literature are better known or loved than this one, and for good reason. For all who read or hear them read aloud, these verses articulate the deep and persistent human hope for justice and peace; and within the Christian Church, this text expresses the promise of a Messiah who will establish peace on earth. This text is magnificent poetry, but it is not a poem; it is a prophetic voice proclaiming what God will accomplish in the future.

The first part of the proclamation (vv 1-5) proclaims the coming reign of God in the socio-political order, by means of the birth or ascension of a new and ideal King from the line of David.

The second part of the proclamation (vv 6-9) promises the reign of God in the order of creation, with the establishment of peace and tranquillity among all creatures.

As we enter into the first week of Advent, we realise afresh that this beautiful prophecy has not yet been fulfilled; and that we are called to wait for its accomplishment in patience.

**The Advent season is a season of waiting.** One could say that our whole life is an Advent season, that is, a season of waiting for the last Advent, for the time when there will be a new heaven and a new earth.