

H  PE

OPEN YOUR EYES!

2024
OLOR
Advent
Reflection



Acknowledgment of Country:

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia who have walked upon and cared for this land for thousands of years. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and future. We honour and acknowledge the continuing deep spiritual relationship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to this country and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of reconciliation.

A word of Introduction:

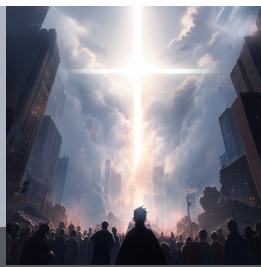
This year we received the declaration approved by Pope Francis called *Dignitas Infinita*, meaning "Infinite Dignity". This of course, refers to the inalienable dignity given to all human persons because we are all made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26). It outlines the need to respect this dignity especially where they are violated like in places of war, in the disabled, in the poor, in minority groups, and in children.

During this season of Advent, we are given 5 weeks to contemplate the face of Christ in all our brothers and sisters so that when we arrive at Christmas, we may come to understand what it means for God to be born into the world. This festive season revolves around a child who is known by many names: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6). Who He will turn out to be for all humanity is the reason why this time of year is known as the great season of hope!

Please feel free to set some time aside to reflect by yourself or form your own groups and gather each week around the Advent Wreath in your parish to reflect on the Gospels. As you begin each week and light the candle, we have suggested a song that can be played from *As One Voice* CDs available in your parish. As you do so, let us place before us our hopes for our parish families and all those whom we reflect on each week. Blessings to you and your family, and may this booklet assist you in your prayers and help you get into the spirit of Christmas!

Fr Hau Le

**1st
Sunday
of
Advent:**



Dignity of those involved in War

Suggested Song for Week 1

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

Neale/Helmore

As we play this song, let us now begin by lighting up the First Violet Candle.

Gospel:

Luke 21:25-28,34-36

That day will be sprung on you suddenly, like a trap

Jesus said to his disciples: 'There will be signs in the sun and moon and stars; on earth nations in agony, bewildered by the clamour of the ocean and its waves; men dying of fear as they await what menaces the world, for the powers of heaven will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to take place, stand erect, hold your heads high, because your liberation is near at hand.

'Watch yourselves, or your hearts will be coarsened with debauchery and drunkenness and the cares of life, and that day will be sprung on you suddenly, like a trap. For it will come down on every living man on the face of the earth. Stay awake, praying at all times for the strength to survive all that is going to happen, and to stand with confidence before the Son of Man.'

Reflection:

The Gospel describes signs that mark the end of the world, but for some this is already a reality who face war in their homeland. War is often the result of what happens when we forget about the dignity of the human person.

Question:

How can I help restore peace to those places where there is war?

Psalm:

(R.) To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.

1. Lord, make me know your ways.
Lord, teach me your paths.
Make me walk in your truth, and teach me:
for you are God my saviour. (R.)
2. The Lord is good and upright.
He shows the path to those who stray,
he guides the humble in the right path;
he teaches his way to the poor. (R.)
3. His ways are faithfulness and love
for those who keep his covenant and will.
The Lord's friendship is for those who revere him;
to them he reveals his covenant. (R.)

Intercessions:

1. We pray for world leaders, that guided by integrity and wisdom, they may work together so that peace may flourish. Lord hear us
2. We pray for all those caught up in violence, that in this time of fear and conflict, they may know God's presence and peace. Lord hear us
3. We pray for our parish and our local community: that we may reach out in solidarity to our brothers and sisters in need. Lord hear us

Closing Prayer:

O God, author and giver of peace,
in whose image and likeness each of us has been created
with a human dignity worthy of respect on earth
and destined for eternal glory.
Give peace in our time, O good and gracious God,
that peace which, as your son the Prince of Peace told us
is a peace which the world cannot give. Amen

**2nd
Sunday
of
Advent:**



Dignity of the Disabled

Suggested Song for Week 2

Advent Chant

Porter/Kirkland

As we play this song, let us now begin by lighting up the Second Violet Candle.

Gospel:

Luke 3:1-6

The call of John the Baptist

In the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar's reign, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judaea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of the lands of Ituraea and Trachonitis, Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, during the pontificate of Annas and Caiaphas the word of God came to John son of Zechariah, in the wilderness. He went through the whole Jordan district proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the sayings of the prophet Isaiah:

A voice cries in the wilderness:

Prepare a way for the Lord,
make his paths straight.

Every valley will be filled in,
every mountain and hill be laid low,
winding ways will be straightened
and rough roads made smooth.

And all mankind shall see the salvation of God.

Reflection:

The pro-life position that we as Catholics take can often be like John the Baptist's voice in the wilderness. God's salvation is meant for all no matter what circumstances they may find themselves in life, the path to the Lord is always open.

Questions:

How far do we allow the dignity of the human person to extend? And is human life ever a burden?

Psalm:

(R.) The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.

1. When the Lord delivered Zion from bondage,
it seemed like a dream.
Then was our mouth filled with laughter,
on our lips there were songs. (R.)
2. The heathens themselves said: 'What marvels
the Lord worked for them!'
What marvels the Lord worked for us!
Indeed we were glad. (R.)
3. Deliver us, O Lord, from our bondage
as streams in dry land.
Those who are sowing in tears
will sing when they reap. (R.)
4. They go out, they go out, full of tears,
carrying seed for the sowing:
they come back, they come back, full of song,
carrying their sheaves. (R.)

Intercessions:

1. We pray for those who are disabled, that we might cherish
the gifts God has given them, and in their lives hear the
voice of our loving God. Lord hear us
2. We pray for those deprived of their human needs, and
their human rights: that they may be given the dignity
which God confers on all his people. Lord hear us

Closing Prayer:

Lord Our God, you make every person in your divine image.
Help us to appreciate all those, living with disabilities, who
contribute their time and talents, even in the face of obstacles
or misunderstanding. Guide our actions to create truly
welcoming communities that are open to the gifts of each
individual, celebrating our interdependence with respect for all
life. Amen

**3rd
Sunday
of
Advent:
(Gaudete Sunday)**



Dignity of the Poor

Suggested Song for Week 3

O Come All Ye Faithful

Wade

As we play this song, let us now begin by lighting up the Rose Candle.

Gospel:

Luke 3:10-18

'Someone is coming who will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire'

When all the people asked John, 'What must we do?' he answered, 'If anyone has two tunics he must share with the man who has none, and the one with something to eat must do the same.' There were tax collectors too who came for baptism, and these said to him, 'Master, what must we do?' He said to them, 'Exact no more than your rate.' Some soldiers asked him in their turn, 'What about us? What must we do?' He said to them, 'No intimidation! No extortion! Be content with your pay!'

A feeling of expectancy had grown among the people, who were beginning to think that John might be the Christ, so John declared before them all, 'I baptise you with water, but someone is coming, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to undo the strap of his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fan is in his hand to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his barn; but the chaff he will burn in a fire that will never go out.' As well as this, there were many other things he said to exhort the people and to announce the Good News to them.

Reflection:

While the poor in our community lack many material things in life, they can never lose their God-given dignity as a human person. As such, we should do what we can to restore their humanity in the charity shown towards them.

Question:

How can I do my part this Christmas to ensure the message of hope is shared with those most in need?

Psalm:

(R.) Cry out with joy and gladness: for among you is the great and Holy One of Israel.

1. Truly, God is my salvation, I trust, I shall not fear.
For the Lord is my strength, my song, he became my saviour. With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. (R.)
2. Give thanks to the Lord, give praise to his name!
Make his mighty deeds known to the peoples!
Declare the greatness of his name. (R.)
3. Sing a psalm to the Lord
for he has done glorious deeds,
make them known to all the earth!
People of Zion, sing and shout for joy
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel. (R.)

Intercessions:

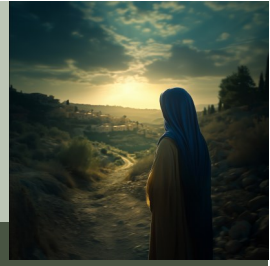
1. We pray for all who are forgotten or thrown away,
and especially for the poor, the sick and the aged: that
God might change our hearts and move us to love them
as the image of Christ. Lord hear us.
2. We pray for all who are lonely or afraid, that Christ might
lead us to them.
Lord hear us.

Closing Prayer:

O God, comforter of the poor, whose dignity is often assaulted and who can be so vulnerable, or even forgotten. Help us to hear their cries and come to their aid.

Teach us to see with your eyes their tremendous dignity and to care for them as you care. Let us see in them your face, that through our solidarity with them they may experience your compassion, concern and love. Amen

**4th
Sunday
of
Advent:**



Dignity of the Minority

Suggested Song for Week 4

Christmas Psalm

Farrell

As we play this song, let us now begin by lighting up the Third Violet Candle.

Gospel:

Luke 1:39-45

Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord?

Mary set out and went as quickly as she could to a town in the hill country of Judah. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. Now as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She gave a loud cry and said, 'Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord? For the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy. Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled.'

Reflection:

The unusual circumstances of child-bearing in both these women, remind us of those who suffer from social stigma of being a minority. This can be race, colour, or beliefs.

Question:

How have I contributed to this social stigma and how can I help to alleviate it?

Psalm:

- (R.) Lord, make us turn to you;
let us see your face and we shall be saved.
1. O Shepherd of Israel, hear us,
shine forth from your cherubim throne.
O Lord, rouse up your might,
O Lord, come to our help. (R.)
 2. God of hosts, turn again, we implore,
look down from heaven and see.
Visit this vine and protect it,
the vine your right hand has planted. (R.)
 3. May your hand be on the man you have chosen,
† he man you have given your strength.
And we shall never forsake you again:
give us life that we may call upon your name. (R.)

Intercessions:

1. We pray for all who are forgotten or cast off, that we might
value each human life, as a priceless gift from God. Lord
hear us
2. We pray for those afraid of losing their dignity and future:
women, children, minority groups, and any who may face
persecution. Lord hear us

Closing Prayer:

O God, you created all people in your image. We thank you for
the amazing variety of races and cultures in this world. Enrich our
lives by ever-widening circles of friendship, and show us your
presence in those who differ most from us, until our knowledge
of your love is made perfect in our love for all your children;
through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Christmas:



Dignity of Children

Suggested Song for Week 5

Hark, The Herald Angels Sing

Wesley/Mendelssohn

As we play this song, let us now begin by lighting up the White Candle

Gospel:

Luke 2:1-14 (midnight Mass Gospel)

'In the town of David a saviour has been born to you'

Caesar Augustus issued a decree for a census of the whole world to be taken. This census – the first – took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria, and everyone went to his own town to be registered. So Joseph set out from the town of Nazareth in Galilee and travelled up to Judaea, to the town of David called Bethlehem, since he was of David's House and line, in order to be registered together with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to a son, her first born. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them at the inn.

In the countryside close by there were shepherds who lived in the fields and took it in turns to watch their flocks during the night. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone round them. They were terrified, but the angel said, 'Do not be afraid. Listen, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in the town of David a saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. And here is a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.' And suddenly with the angel there was a great throng of the heavenly host, praising God and singing: 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace to men who enjoy his favour.'

Reflection:

Christmas is made special by children most of all by the child-Jesus. His dignity was announced by an angel when He was first in Mary's womb. Our love for children extends to all stages of their development especially when they are most vulnerable.

Questions:

What does it mean when Jesus says, "unless you become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven"?
What can we learn from our children?

Psalm:

(R.) Today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord.

1. O sing a new song to the Lord,
sing to the Lord all the earth.
O sing to the Lord, bless his name. (R.)
2. Proclaim his help day by day,
tell among the nations his glory
and his wonders among all the peoples. (R.)
3. Let the heavens rejoice and earth be glad,
let the sea and all within it thunder praise,
let the land and all it bears rejoice,
all the trees of the wood shout for joy
at the presence of the Lord for he comes,
he comes to rule the earth. (R.)
4. With justice he will rule the world,
he will judge the peoples with his truth. (R.)

Intercessions:

1. We pray for every little child: That we might accept and preserve each one as a sign of the infinite love of God for us. Lord hear us
2. For the children of our country, especially those who are forgotten or neglected: that their presence might remind us of the infinite value of human life.
Lord hear us
3. For orphaned children throughout the world, and especially those who are abused or neglected, that we might work to save them. Lord hear us

Closing Prayer:

Loving Father, help us to value our children at all stages of life especially when they are most vulnerable. That like the child Jesus born to us at Christmas, they may always be loved and cared for and never seen as a burden but always as a gift from God. Amen

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