

First Sunday of Advent

27th November 2022

Scripture:

Isiah 2: 1 - 5

Matthew 24: 37 - 44

Reflection (Isiah 2: 1 -5)

Verse 4 is interesting (cf. "... these will hammer their swords into ploughshares, their spears into sickles). Implements of war viz. the sword which is used for close combat, and the spear which is hurled to inflict harm from a distance, will both be turned into instruments which bring life – farming implements used to produce food.

It is well and good to focus on international conflicts and gang wars where weapons are used with reckless abandon, but it is also important to examine the ways in which we injure people through neglect, indifference, insults, gossip, and domestic violence.

The verse ends with: "no longer will they learn how to make war" (Is 2:4) – in other words, we will all become peacemakers. How nice if this could start in our very homes and communities as we prepare for Christmas.

Bishop Sylvester David OMI
Vicar General/Auxiliary Bishop.

Practical Suggestion

What did I learn about the above reading and reflection? What did I learn about myself? What do I need to let go of? What do I need to embrace?

Closing Prayer

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me bring love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, harmony. Grant that we may not so much seek to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love, to receive sympathy as to give it—for it is in giving that we shall receive; in pardoning that we shall be pardoned; in forgetting ourselves that we shall find unending peace with others. **Amen.**

Monday
28th November 2022

First Week of Advent

Opening Prayer

Scripture:

Matthew 8: 5 -11

Reflection

In Matthew's Gospel today, we are told about a strange encounter that Jesus had with a Roman Centurion.

Remember that the centurion was a Roman soldier and thus represented the brutality of the Roman Empire. There would have been no love lost between the Jews and the Romans. Jesus, so often exemplifies noble qualities in those who were traditionally despised e.g. Tax-collectors, Samaritans and those regarded as 'unclean'. This passage challenges us at a number of levels. I'd like to explore two.

We know the words of the centurion's plea well, for we pray them at Mass. This response at Mass comes after the priest, elevating the body and blood of Christ says, "Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to receive the supper of the Lamb" (the reference to John the Baptist's words when he observes the coming of Jesus). When we respond, "**Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed**", we are expressing our unworthiness to receive Christ but also committing a deep act of faith. Advent, like its cousin Lent, is a liturgical season dedicated to introspection and spiritual growth. It is a sacred call to renew ourselves in preparation for the coming of the Messiah.

The above passage also challenges us to explore our own prejudices. How judgemental are we? Who are the people we battle to love.

Evona Rebelo
Cape Town Catholic Schools Office

Practical Suggestion

What did I learn about the above reading and reflection? What did I learn about myself? What do I need to let go of? What do I need to embrace?

Throughout the remaining week of Advent, commit time each day for praying for those we have judged poorly or those who just annoy us and get under our skin. Just like an oyster can create a beautiful pearl by a grain of sand (an irritant) that gets into its shell, so can we transform our brokenness into a pearl of great price. Each day, bring to mind a person that you are not fond of and bring them before the Lord in prayer.

Closing Prayer

Rejoice and be glad, for with each personal act of reform, we know that all the human family and our whole society move closer to creating the royal road for the coming of Emmanuel.

May the star of Bethlehem which shone brightly over the first crib stand guard over our home, filling it and all the earth with light and peace.

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you because by Your Holy Birth You give hope to all the world. Amen

(From Advent reflections by Fr Edward Hays)

Tuesday
29th November 2022

First Week of Advent

Opening Prayer

Scripture:

Luke 10: 21 - 24

Reflection

Seventy (two) disciples have joyfully returned from a successful mission of sharing the Gospel as Christ had taught them. In seeing and hearing from the disciples, Christ rejoices in the Spirit and gives thanks to the Father for the humble who accepted the Word of God into their lives.

Life can be as complicated as we wish it to be. Alternatively, we can simply turn to God and place our trust and hope that the Lord has all the answers that we need. It is having a childlike faith that allows us to remain joyful, curious, open, and trusting. It is believing that God's goodness is so much more than anything we may encounter and experience.

This is very different to having a negative childish faith, where one refuses to grow and be open to the Lord in our life. Here, we only concerned about our own lives and give little thought to those less fortunate and in need. We

have all the answers for our lives and know better than God. We make constant demand from God and choose to do our own will rather than following Him. In doing so we complicate our lives so much more than it needs to be.

Wayne Golding
St Kizito Children's Programme

Practical Suggestion

What did I learn about the above reading and reflection? What did I learn about myself? What do I need to let go of? What do I need to embrace?

Give a toy or gift for an underprivileged child, and / or support one of our local charities this Advent.

Closing Prayer

Lord, give me the child-like simplicity and purity of faith to gaze upon your face with joy and confidence in your all-merciful love. Remove every doubt, fear and proud thought which would hinder me from receiving your word with trust and humble submission. **Amen**

Wednesday
30th November 2022

St. Andrew

Opening Prayer

Scripture:
Matthew 4: 18 - 22

Reflection

How to render it in English these days? 'I will make you fishers of folk' perhaps. Or 'snarers of souls', to remind us that fishing is a form of hunting. I confess to liking 'fishers of men' but I understand that today it fails the inclusivity test.

But our translation should be punchy because the Lord's original one-liner is probably a joke. I like to think that Andrew and the others laughed. It's not every day that a person's vocation in life is communicated by a joke but, it's one of those jokes which is simultaneously amusing and serious. We laugh

and then realise that our amusement has opened us up to new depths and to a serious question about life, perhaps our own life.

The theological truth in this phrase is that all the baptised are called to 'lure' people to the good news. Whether we call it the 'new evangelisation' or some other high-sounding title, it comes down to the Lord's funny, pithy saying about our common vocation to introduce people to him and to his Gospel.

Fr Chris Chatteris SJ
St Francis Xavier Orientation Seminary

Practical Suggestion

What did I learn about the above reading and reflection? What did I learn about myself? What do I need to let go of? What do I need to embrace?

Make a list of the priests, deacons and religious brothers & sisters who have influenced your life and your faith. Remember to pray for them.

Closing Prayer

Lord, make me a better person, more considerate towards others, more honest with myself, more faithful to you.

Help me to find my true vocation in life, and grant that through it I may find happiness myself and bring happiness to others.

May I have the generosity to answer your call. I ask this through Christ our Lord. AMEN.

Thursday
01st December 2022

First Week of Advent

Opening Prayer

Scripture:

Matthew 7: 21, 24 - 27

Reflection

As we reflect on today's gospel the message is clear that not everyone will enter the kingdom of heaven, unless he does the will of our heavenly Father. Listening to the word is not enough. We have to action it. The witness of a Christian life is the most important form of mission.

Many of the women who seek refuge at Mater Domini encounter a stormy period or shaky foundation due to an unplanned pregnancy. Often these women find themselves in a storm with little or no support.

It is a blessing and joy to witness when this foundation restored in women through acceptance, prayer and fellowship. The mothers experience faith, love, joy and peace which offers a renewed spiritual hope for them and their unborn babies. These women could have opted for abortion. Instead of a life built on the sand they chose to face their fears and give their babies life, a life built on a good foundation, Jesus Christ, our solid rock.

Bernadette Ross
Mater Domini

Practical Suggestion

What did I learn about the above reading and reflection? What did I learn about myself? What do I need to let go of? What do I need to embrace?

The expectation of the Lord's birth makes us sensitive to the value of life and the duties to respect and defend it from conception. In these days of advent, the whole world awaits the birth of an infant who will take away the sins of the world. As we journey with the pregnant Mary and await the day that was foretold by the prophets, keep in mind and pray for the unborn and women who feel lost and unsupported during pregnancy.

Closing Prayer

Father of Life, we pray that we will always be rooted in you. Forgive us our trespasses especially where we have disrespected human life, and broken your commandment that says “Thou shall not kill.” Heal us and purify us from all our iniquities.

Blessed Mother Mary, Virgin mother of the living, Mother of life. Pray for us. Amen

Friday
02nd December 2022

First Week of Advent

Opening Prayer

Scripture:

Matthew 9: 27 - 31

Reflection

Today’s Gospel brings us a message of hope and faith.

The two blind men boldly called out “Son of David have mercy on us.” Jesus entered their home with love and compassion and asked them, “Do you believe that I can help you?” They answered “Yes Lord!” The Gospel reminds us that we can call on the Son of David to have mercy on us, give us hope and help restore our brokenness.

Daily, we are faced with problems and challenges where we can easily despair. Remember God loves us and is always there for us. Let us place our trust and hope in Him.

Couples are challenged in their marriages because of the contrary messages that the world teaches. If couples put their hope in God, He will give them strength and guidance to live their Marriages.

We just came through a Pandemic. It was a difficult and scary time for all of us. Hope and faith helped us during these challenging times.

We can spread the message of hope by the way we live our lives. We are invited to go out and spread the Good news of hope to everyone. As the blind men could not keep God love to themselves, we invited to do the same. Lord help us never to lose Faith and Hope

Mark and Josie Jordan
Western Cape Marriage Encounter

Practical Suggestion

What did I learn about the above reading and reflection? What did I learn about myself? What do I need to let go of? What do I need to embrace?

Closing Prayer

Almighty Father, give us true faith that grows in us each day, especially in our marriages. Give us hope and love that we may serve our spouses. In this way we become a light to the world in sharing the Good news.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace, as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:13).

Saturday
03rd December 2022

St Francis Xavier

Opening Prayer

Scripture:

Matthew 9: 35 – 10: 1, 5 - 8

Reflection

In today’s gospel, Jesus recognizes the immense need for missionary work to be done for his kingdom to grow. This is still an ongoing necessity for our world today, especially with the rate at which societal and political trends continue to consume the minds and hearts of our church. Just as Jesus summoned the twelve disciples, we are reminded that we, too are called to be missionary disciples by proclaiming the good news.

The words of Jesus’ great commission may seem complex and overwhelming, and at times we may feel unqualified and inadequate to follow what we’ve been charged to do. During this time of Advent, preparing for the birth of our Saviour, we are called to renew our faith in what Jesus has equipped us to do. No matter your age, culture, education, circumstances or background, God will provide YOU with what you need to fulfill his purpose!

So step out of your comfort zone and be open in prayer to what God is calling you to do in your life. Ensure that others know that Jesus loves them and wants to be a part of their lives through your affirming words and kind actions each day.

Dominique Yon
Youth Office - Archdiocese of Cape Town

Practical Suggestion

What did I learn about the above reading and reflection? What did I learn about myself? What do I need to let go of? What do I need to embrace?

Closing Prayer

Lord, help me to be a courageous disciple each day, and in doing so, grow closer to you.