

Advent Prayer and Reflection for families 2020

Acknowledgement of Land, Seas and Waterways

Let us acknowledge the Traditional Custodians who have walked upon and cared for these lands, seas and waterways for thousands of years. We acknowledge the continued deep spiritual attachment and relationship of First Nations Peoples to this place and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of Reconciliation. As we approach the birth of Jesus, it is a timely reminder and reflection for us to acknowledge that God has been walking with First Nations peoples over many thousands of years. We pray and give thanks for these ancient peoples who have enriched and sustained our continent over all that time. We praise God for the people who nurtured the lands, seas and waterways here in the place that we call home.

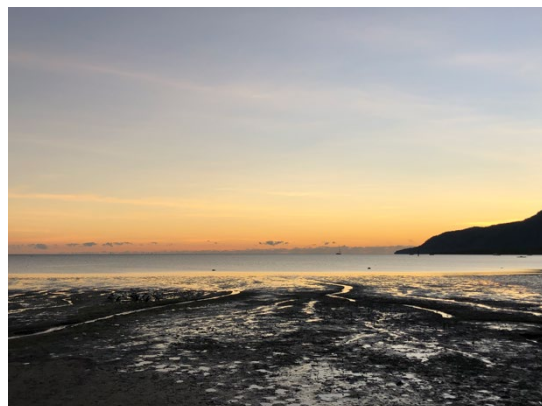


Figure 1 Trinity Inlet 28 May 2020 R McLean

Context of Advent

Advent; the time when we prepare for the coming of Christ at Christmas. This time of year is both a winding down and a winding up. It's about evaluating the year as it wanes, and planning for the year to come. This is a prayer and reflection about that hope we have for the future. It is a mindful hope. An intelligent hope. A hope grounded in justice, brought into focus by a vision of possibility. This reflection reminds us that a world of justice and peace is possible because, as told by the prophets, Jesus is coming to make all things possible.

To remind us of this journey of hope, we can use an Advent Wreath. The Wreath symbolises the endless love God has for us. The Advent Wreath has 5 candles: 3 purple candles representing Hope, Peace and Love; 1 pink candle representing Joy; and the 5th candle, a white one, representing Jesus. This prayer and reflection focuses on the first candle which is also called the prophet's candle. It reminds us of the ways Jesus' coming was foretold in the scriptures. We are invited to watch and wait also, as all our ancestors before us have done. We are invited to do this with *hope*.

Scripture

A reading from the Prophet Micah

(Micah 5:1-3)

Now you are walled around with a wall; siege is laid against us; with a rod they strike the ruler of Israel upon the cheek.

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Reflection by Rachel McLean – Leader Formation, Catholic Education Services, Cairns

And you, my child...will shine on those living in darkness to guide our feet into the path of peace.

This year I have been privileged to share some of the stories of the Holy Land with students and staff in our schools. As we journey through Advent, I invite you to travel to Bethlehem by watching the [Prince of Peace](#), made by St Paul's Church, Auckland, New Zealand. As you watch this film, listen to the stories of these women, men and children as they recount the miracles of 1st Century Bethlehem and what these stories mean for them, and us, today.



Figure 2 Accessed from <https://www.dropbox.com/s/cblviv7w61y...>

Bethlehem is about 10km south of Jerusalem, a small city of about 25 000 people who live behind a wall that separates them from Israel. The 708km wall began construction in 1994. In 2005, the United Nations reported that “ it is difficult to overstate the humanitarian impact of the Barrier.” The people in the film who live behind the wall in Bethlehem, are like the shepherds in the fields, eking out their existence to support family and community. Like the baby born in a manger, the 21st century prophets we hear in *Prince of Peace*, are refugees in their own country. The women, men and children in this film are calling us today to hope. To hope for a better world, a better way of being. Hope for a world that is peaceful and peace-filled.

Pray

God of Hope,

Each day you send us prophets who guide us to you. Open our eyes to see them in unexpected places, open our ears to hear their wisdom in often strange words, open our hearts to truth of your love which they proclaim. Amen

Reflection – *Jerusalem Youth Choir*

During this Covid-19 year, we have had to let go of many things in our prayer and liturgical life. One of these is the Sign of Peace. In lieu of these opportunities, let us offer peace in our minds and our hearts to our family and friends, those that we have worked with and those we have yet to meet. As you recall these people, I invite you to reflect on this song of peace, “[Yihiyeh Beseder](#),” a collaboration with Christian, Jewish and Muslim youth who live and hope in the Holy Land.

Prayer

Loving Creator, Companion on the Journey, Spirit of Wisdom,
Open my eyes;

So that I see you in those who I
encounter.

Prepare my hands;

So that I can receive the bread
that is broken and share it
with those who hunger for
more.

Break open my heart;

So that I may live a life that *is, of,*
and *in* this world.

We ask this prayer, one with the Trinity who accompanies us on the journey, Amen.



Figure 3 Nativity Dr. He Q, 2001 accessed [here](#)

Action

There are some great resources around that you might like to explore during the Australian Summer in terms of what it means to be a prophet in our world:

- A powerful podcast called ‘[White Jesus](#)’
- A huge collection of art from around the world depicting Jesus in through the lens of different cultures (<http://sacredartmeditations.com/life>).
- Jane Maisey’s blog - <https://www.designjane.com/blog/pacific-christmas>
- [Pray as you Go](#) – daily prayer with music and reflections on the Gospel
- [Sacred Space](#) – Daily reflections with pondering