



Acknowledgement of Country

Acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land, we extend our deepest respect to the Gimuy Walubara Yidinji people, whose enduring connection to their lands, seas, skies, and waterways inspires profound gratitude. We honour their ancestors, their culture, and their stories, which have sustained these lands for countless generations.

With a commitment to the Uluru Statement from the Heart, we recognize the call for Voice, Treaty, and Truth, and the path toward Makarata—a process of healing and truth-telling. We stand in solidarity with efforts to foster unity and understanding, embracing the wisdom and guidance of Elders past and present. Their stewardship of Country teaches us the importance of respect, responsibility, and care for all that sustains us.

Context - Stay alert to the signs of the times

“God speaks in all sorts of ways – through scripture, through nature, through other people. However, unless we slow down and listen, we miss his promptings and his voice.”

Annie O'Connor, The Camino: Finding Stillness and Presence (for Catholic Charismatic Renewal) 2019

Yesterday was the first Sunday of the liturgical season of Advent—a time of preparation that directs our hearts and minds to the anniversary of our Lord’s birth on Christmas.

Many Catholics around the world will have lit the first candle on their Advent wreath, a centuries old Christian tradition. Symbolising hope for the world and her people, the first candle leads us to anticipate the birth of Christ promised by God in the Old Testament.

Sr Mary McGlone of the Sisters of Saint Joseph suggests that “in order to cultivate real hope, we have to admit what is wrong with our world. Once we admit our situation, we are on the road to recovery.”

Scripture

Luke (21:25-28)

And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And 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, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.



Figure 1

Advent wreath. | Credit: Shutterstock

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/249703/everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-advent-wreath>



Reflection

by Nadine Grant – Consultant Formation Identity and Outreach

What are some of the possible signs in our current context that Jesus speaks of and how are we as Christians and Catholics called to respond?

In recent years Australia has experienced major destructive bushfires, rainfall events, and levels of flooding that have broken one hundred-year-old records.

The 2024 Australian State of the Climate Report predicts continued warming, with more extremely hot days and fewer extremely cold days. There will be likely increases in the duration and severity of droughts and more intense short duration heavy rainfall events even in areas where rainfall averages decrease. Sea levels will continue to rise causing increased coastal inundation and erosion. Continued warming and acidification of oceans will impact biodiversity and ocean ecosystems. Compound weather events, where multiple hazards occur together in sequence, will result in increased natural disasters and pressure on response and aid in the coming years.

We are called in Sunday's Gospel to "be on guard" and "be alert at all times" both synonyms for practicing an intentional awareness for what is happening around us. (Luke 21:34,36)

In Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si*, the word awareness appears 14 times, nine of which are in the chapter on education and spirituality. Perhaps the greatest challenge of *Laudato Si* is that of re-thinking or re-imagining how we perceive our world and our place in this world in which we live, move and have our being. Francis calls on us to "strive to promote a new way of thinking about human beings, life, society and our relationship with nature (LS 215)."

Respect for the natural world and for each human being go together. We are related to our world in a network of relationships that are interlocking, so that respect needs to be given both to people and to our environment. We are God's creatures, called to live in communion with the rest of God's creation, without which we cannot survive, let alone thrive.



Figure 2

Brisbane Floods As Death Toll Rises, Sermon On the Mount. Fine Art. Encyclopædia Britannica ImageQuest, Accessed October 29, 2024. https://quest.eb.com/images/107_3363656.



Prayer

Admitting that there is a problem and responding to that problem by initiating change, is an act of hope and demonstrates a belief that we can build a world suffused with peace, justice and love; the world God dreams of.

You are invited to join us in prayer that this hope may become a reality.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit , Amen.

We stay awake, watch and wait, for we do not know the hour or the day of your arrival. Help us read the signs of the times and respond by consciously incorporating more ethical and sustainable practices into our holiday celebrations.

Response: Come, Lord, bringer of hope.

Create in us a desire for a world transformed by considering the gifts and food we buy during Advent and Christmas this year. May we prioritise gifts that do not exploit people, abuse fragile ecosystems and do not need to be transported long distances.

Response: Come, Lord, bringer of hope.

Lead us in your ways, as together we make changes, to dispel models of development, production and consumption that reflect a sense of entitlement and dominion over the rest of creation.

Response: Come, Lord, bringer of hope.

Call to Action

Listen to:

["On this sacred Ground"](#) by Maeve Heaney and Toni Janke reminding us of the sacredness of all that is around us. "We always move forward in faith based on the wisdom of the past while open to the visions and dreams of the reign of God in the future."

Consider:

Reading [this article](#) which gives some practical ideas on living Laudato Si at Christmas.

Follow:

[The days of Advent](#) through these beautiful artworks and reflections put together by Garrett Publishing.