



## SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT ~ YEAR A

*Your kingdom is at hand,  
O God of justice and peace;  
you made John the Baptist its herald  
to announce the coming of your Christ,  
who baptises with the Holy Spirit and with fire.*

*Give us a spirit of repentance  
to make us worthy of the kingdom.  
Let complacency yield to conviction,  
that in our day justice will flourish  
and conflict give way  
to the peace you bestow in Christ.*

*We ask this through him whose coming is certain, whose day draws near:  
your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God for ever and ever. Amen.*

*Opening Prayers: Collects in Contemporary language.  
Scripture-related prayers for Sundays and Holy Days, Years A, B & C.  
Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2001.*

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We, the people of Boonah Catholic parish,  
acknowledge the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation.

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which our parish is located  
and where we conduct our mission and ministry.

We pay our respects to ancestors and elders, past and present.

As a local community of faith within the Church of Brisbane,  
we are committed to honouring Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples'  
unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas  
and their rich contribution to society.

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*Warm greetings to the members of the Boonah Catholic community and beyond on the 2nd Sunday of Advent. It is the second Sunday of the new liturgical year – Year A!*

## 1. Reflections on the Sunday Word.

**The reflection for this Sunday is offered by Julian McDonald, a Christian Brother who lives in Sydney.**

The famed American novelist, Stephen King tells very gripping stories. He is so skilled at wring them that he has published nearly seventy horror, crime and science-fiction novels and sold over 350 million copies. He has grown wealthy on the royalties that have accrued from those novels. In addition to being a brilliant creator of stories, he's a prominent social activist. For instance, in 2012 he called for wealthy Americans, including himself, to pay higher taxes, citing it as "a practical necessity and moral imperative that those who have received much should be obligated to pay tax in the same proportion." Then, in 2013, following the horrific Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting (December 14, 2012) which claimed 28 lives, he called for gun owners to unite to support a ban on automatic and semi-automatic weapons. He argued: "These are weapons of mass destruction. When lunatics want to make war on the unarmed and unprepared, these are the weapons they use."

In 2001, King was invited to deliver the Commencement/Graduation address to the graduating class of Vassar College, a Liberal Arts University situated in Poughkeepsie, N.Y. While he is not a member of any church, King gave an extraordinary oration which resonates with the message proclaimed by John the Baptist as reported in today's gospel-reading from Matthew. The following is an extract from King's address":



*What are you going to do, Vassar class of 2001?  
Who will be the doctors, the lawyers, the writers, the painters, the executives, the politicians?  
Who's going to look around at age forty-five,  
surprised as hell to find himself or herself the head concierge at the Hotel Carlyle in New York and say:  
'How the hell did I wind up here?'*

*What will you do?*

*Well, I'll tell you one thing you're not going to do, and that's take it with you.*

*I'm worth I don't know how many millions of dollars.*

*I'm still in the Third World compared to Bill Gates, but on the whole I'm doing okay – and a couple of years ago I found out what 'you can't take it with you' means.*

*I found out while I was lying in a ditch at the side of a country road,  
covered with mud and blood and with the tibia of my right leg poking out the side of my jeans like the  
branch of a tree taken down in a thunderstorm.*

*I had a Mastercard in my wallet, but when you're lying in the ditch with broken glass in your hair, no  
one accepts Mastercard.*

*If you find yourself in the Emergency Room with a serious heart attack,  
or if the doctor tells you yeah, that lump in your breast is a tumour,  
you can't wave your Diners Club at it and make it go away . . .*

*The man who saved my life was a volunteer paramedic . . .*

*He did the things that needed to be done at the scene,  
and then drove me to the nearest hospital at a hundred and ten miles an hour.*

*And while he may have an American Express Card, I doubt very much if it's a gold one . . .*

*We all know that life is ephemeral, but on that particular day and in the months that followed,  
I got a painful but an extremely valuable look at life's simple, backstage truths:*

*We come in naked and broke.*

*We may be dressed when we go out, but we're just as broke.*

*Warren Buffet? **Going to go out broke.***

*Bill Gates? **Going to go out broke.***

*Tom Hanks? **Going to go out broke . . .***

*Steve King? **Broke.***

*You guys? **Broke. Not a crying dime.***

*And how long in between? How long have you got to be in the chips?*

*Just the blink of an eye!*

*No matter how large your bank account,  
your kids will still play their music too loud when you get to be my age.*

*No matter how many credit cards you have,  
sooner or later things will begin to go wrong with the only three things you have which you can really  
call your own: your body, your spirit and your mind.*

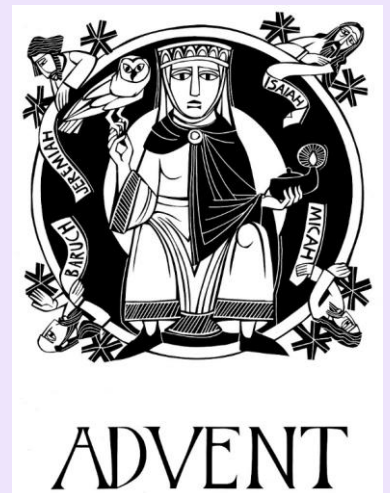
*Yet for a short period - let's say forty years,*

*but the merest blink in the larger course of things –*

*you and your contemporaries will wield enormous powers . . .*

*But of all the power which will shortly come into your hands –*

*gradually at first, but then with a speed that will take your breath away –  
the greatest is undoubtedly the power of compassion, the ability to give.*



*We have enormous resources in this country, resources you yourselves will soon command, but they are only yours on loan.*

*Only yours to give for a short time . . .*

*Should you give away what you have? **Of course, you should.***

*I want you to consider making your lives one long gift to others, and why not.*

*All you have is on loan, anyway . . .*

*All that lasts is what you hand on.*

*The rest is smoke and mirrors!"*

(Stephen King, Commencement Address, Vassar College, 2001)

In the gospel for this Second Sunday of Advent, we hear tell of another social activist who challenged people in his part of the world more than two thousand years before Stephen King. John the Baptist was a prophet, to boot, and he suddenly appeared out of nowhere in the Judean desert. His strange diet and his unusual dress led to his being labelled as something of an eccentric. Well-versed in the Scriptures of his tradition, he became convinced that the appearance of the Messiah, long awaited by his people, was imminent.

He therefore called those who came to hear him to tidy up their lives by taking seriously what their prophets had been calling them to for centuries. To welcome the Messiah in a fitting manner, they would need a change of heart. So, he called them to repentance. While some, no doubt, came out of curiosity, to get a glimpse of him, many heeded his call to prepare themselves for what John proclaimed God was about to do in their very midst. They witnessed to their readiness by stepping forward to participate in the ritual baptism that John was conducting in the waters of the River Jordan.

John appealed to the hearts of those who gathered to hear him. He reminded them of the emptiness of their lives and the injustice they had cultivated by neglecting to reach out to widows, the poor and strangers. He called them to reclaim the best in their tradition. Like the other prophets before him, he spoke the truth as he saw it, without hesitation, without flinching. His call is to us, too, to open our hearts to what God has in mind for us. John was really asking his people if they were satisfied with their world and with the way in which they lived in it.

Those same issues are relevant to us as we prepare in Advent to invite Jesus to be born into our lives. There are unhealthy things in our lives and our world that are of our own creation. In very different ways, both John the Baptist and Stephen King alluded to what calls for our attention. It is one thing to identify what requires attention, another thing to actually address it.

However, the launching pad is to be open to a change of heart and attitude, to acknowledge that we need conversion. Advent is about asking God for assistance. To begin with, we may need to stop and ask ourselves just how satisfied we are with the life we have built for ourselves, with the world, our common home, to whose degradation we have contributed. Social activists and prophets are effective only to the extent that we respond to their challenges.

What challenges do John and Stephen give to you and me?





A **second reflection** is by Joanna Williams, Executive Director at the [\*Kino Border Initiative\*](#) (KBI), a binational Catholic ministry in Nogales, Arizona and Sonora. They work towards a vision of migration with dignity through humanitarian services, holistic accompaniment, education, and advocacy.

Click [HERE](#) to watch and listen to her homily.



*Magnificient flowering native trees around the presbytery . . .*

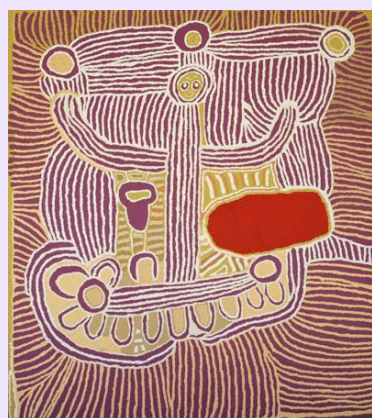
## 2. *Boonah Parish happenings . . .*

from commands to invitations,  
from laws to ideals,  
from threats to persuasion,  
from coercion to conscience,  
from monologue to conversation,  
from ruling to serving,  
from withdrawn to integrated,  
from vertical and top-down to horizontal,  
from exclusion to inclusion,  
from hostility to friendship,  
from static to changing,  
from passive acceptance to active engagement,  
from prescriptive to principled,  
from defined to open-ended,  
from behaviour-modification to conversion of heart,  
from the dictates of law to the dictates of conscience,  
from external conformity to the joyful pursuit of holiness.

When these elements are taken in the aggregate, they indicate a model of spirituality. This, they say, is what good Catholics should look like and this is how they should behave. That means the elements indicate what the Church should look like and how it should behave. This is a significant model-shift. This is a teaching of the Second Vatican Council.

- Fr. John O'Malley SJ, 2006

Our **Sunday eucharist** schedule is:



*Desert Eucharist*

Linda Syddick Napaltjarri  
(b. 1937)

**Saturday**

5.00pm

**Boonah church**

**Sunday**

7.30am

1st and 3rd Sunday: **Harrisville church**

2nd and 4th Sunday: **Peak Crossing church**

9.30am

**Boonah church**

**5th Sunday of the month:**

6pm Sat night Harrisville church &

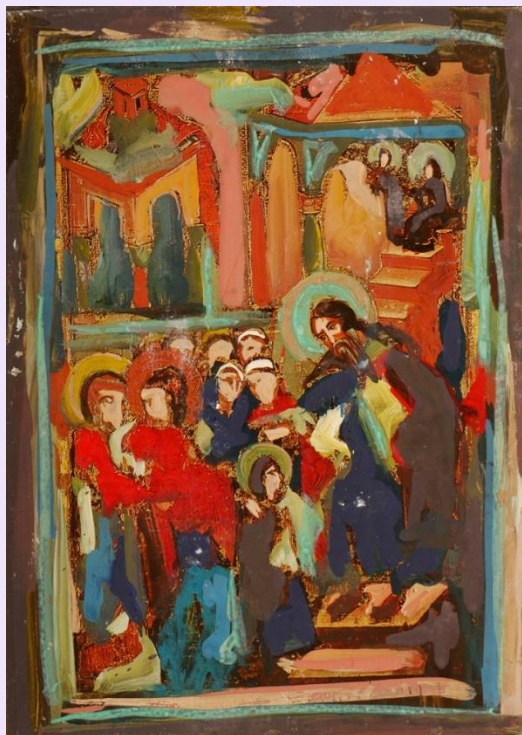
9.30am Sun morning Boonah church.

**WE HAVE A 5TH SUNDAY ON 29TH JANUARY 2023!**



Our **weekday liturgy and Mass** schedule for this week, the 2nd Week of Advent, is:

Tuesday	6 <sup>th</sup> December	8.00am <b>Boonah</b> church
Wednesday	7 <sup>th</sup> December	6.00pm, <b>Peak Crossing</b> church followed by dinner at the Peak Pub
Thursday	8 <sup>th</sup> December	8.00am <b>Boonah</b> church
Friday	9 <sup>th</sup> December	8.00am <b>Boonah</b> church



We **pray with and for those who are sick in our parish and beyond:** all across the globe infected with COVID-19; all those who are unwell because of the war raging in Ukraine and in other places of the globe; all who are starving; Chris Healy, Paul White, Arthur Devin, Liliana Toohill, Libby Shields, Marko Babic, Max Gardiner, Bernadette Pinchin, Cate Mitten, Bernice Brault, Paula Ebrington, Fletcher Casey, Jill Archer, Louisa, Lynne Nunan, Bea Bedard (USA), Carol Libke, Angela Kearney, Tony Pisani, Lorraine Bakon, Maureen Wilson, Moira Lehmann, Robert Hensen, Wally Velasquez, Hans Mitterlechner, Sandra Skerritt, Dominic Vakaci, Robert Parkes, Kath Seymour and sick members of parish families and those beyond our parish boundaries.

▪ Last Sunday at the 0930 Mass at Boonah, we invited our Year Six students and their families to participate in the Blessing of Year Six Students at the End of their Primary Years.

Each student also received a specially made candle with their name on it to mark the transition from our parish school to their new high schools next year.

Will Zurvas wasn't able to be there last Sunday so at the Sat night Mass on 3 December, we invoked God's blessing upon him and presented him with his candle.

Will heads off to St. Edmund's in Ipswich next year.





### *Commemorative Candles for our Year Six students of 2022*

- On Thursday last week, several parishioners met to explore setting up a small group to extend pastoral care to parishioners who are sick as well as grief support to those who have recently experienced death in their family.

I am grateful to *Kathy Stanford, Maureen Zurvas, Sandra Muggeridge, and Maureen Hancock* for their energy and willingness to explore what is needed and what might be possible in our parish.

We meet soon to undertake liturgical and spiritual formation for this important church ministry.

We envisage the members will **visit** those who can no longer celebrate Mass regularly with the parish, **take communion** to the sick, the frail, the aged and housebound, and follow-up relatives in the parish after a funeral of a loved one.

*Thank you ladies!*



- **Boonah Parish Safeguarding Officer.** Leigh Muller is the Parish Safeguarding Officer. Email: [boonah@bne.catholic.net.au](mailto:boonah@bne.catholic.net.au)

- **Celebrating the sacrament of Reconciliation.** The 1<sup>st</sup> Rite for Reconciliation (formerly known as Confession) may be celebrated anytime. Please phone 5463 1057 to make a suitable time. Alternatively see me before Mass (if there is plenty of time) or after Mass (once the majority of people have left the church).

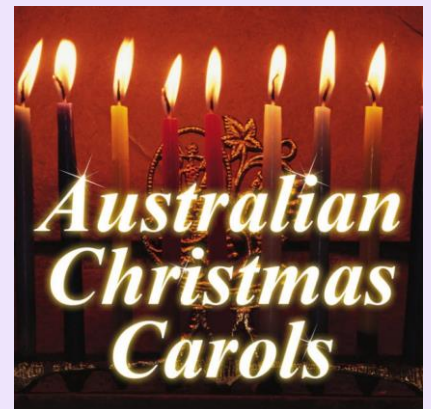


- **Every Sunday** when we gather for the Sunday eucharist, there are baskets (of some kind or another) at the entrances of our churches. We are invited to bring a gift of **non-perishable food or goods** for people seeking help from our local St. Vincent de Paul. *The local conference very much appreciates our weekly support.*

- **Did you miss Christmas by the Lake?** Well, the *Moogerah Passion Play Association* are holding a one-off **Christmas Carols** with a short Nativity Play this Sunday, 3<sup>rd</sup> December from 2pm-3pm at the Church of Christ, Coronation Drive, Boonah.

*All are welcome. Refreshments available. Gold coin donation to the church.*

Contact Chris Young on 0422 878 744 for further information.



3. **In the latest Tablet from the UK (the weekly Catholic newspaper), there is a piece by Mary Dejevsky: "The war of the Churches and the struggle for the soul of Ukraine".**

*Before Russian troops invaded, with the blessing of Russian Orthodox leaders, believers in Ukraine were split between those keeping historic links and those belonging to a new independent Orthodox Church of Ukraine. But now the faithful have swung decisively against the Russian Church.*

As Kyiv steeled itself for more missile strikes and more power cuts, the Ukrainian authorities did something they had never done before. Armed officers from the national security service, the SBU, raided one of the country's most celebrated ecclesiastical centres. They searched the premises and interrogated monks and priests, and in so doing opened a new front in the nine-month-old war.

The Monastery of the Caves on the south-eastern edge of central Kyiv is one of the glories of the Ukrainian capital. Its whitewashed buildings seem to cascade down the high bank to the Dnieper River below. The golden domes of its churches can be seen from afar. In better times, steady streams of pilgrims would be making their way along the forbidding wall to the central gate. This ecclesiastical complex is one of the earliest Christian foundations in Kyiv, dating back to the mid-eleventh century. An obligatory stop for any first-time visitor to the city, it is now part-monastery, part-museum and a protected Unesco World Heritage site.



*Ukrainian security service personnel at the entrance to the Monastery of the Caves.*

But the tranquil splendour that reigned before President Vladimir Putin ordered the invasion of Ukraine belied a chequered past. The central Cathedral of the Dormition, now rebuilt, had been destroyed during the Second World War in a shocking act – among many – for which the German and Soviet armies blamed each other. The monastery always had its dark side, too: from the labyrinthine catacombs beneath, where the mummified remains of Orthodox saints lie in glass cases in the musty gloom, to a long legacy of plots and intrigue. It was suspicion of plots and intrigue that appears to have precipitated the raid on 22 November, which was just one – albeit by far the most extensive – of a number of raids on Orthodox Church premises that day.



In a statement, the SBU said it was investigating claims that church property was being used “to hide sabotage and intelligence groups, foreign citizens, storing weapons”. By “foreign citizens”, it appeared to mean Russians. At the end of what was clearly a major operation, the SBU said that 350 church properties across three separate sites were searched and more than 800 people had had their identities checked, 50 of whom were subjected to what were described demurely as “in-depth counter-intelligence interviews”, backed up with lie-detectors. It said that quantities of cash had been found, including \$100,000, and smaller, but still considerable, sums in Ukrainian and Russian currency, as well as “pro-Russian” literature.

It is not known whether anyone was detained. As to why the Ukrainian authorities decided to make their move exactly then, several reasons have been advanced, from the seemingly trivial to the much bigger picture. A priest, it is said, shared a video purportedly of worshippers at a chapel in the Caves Monastery singing a Russian patriotic song; there were reports of churches elsewhere in Ukraine distributing Russian war propaganda; and by last month, more than 30 Orthodox priests had been charged with gathering intelligence and passing it to Russian forces.

What the SBU raids also suggest, however, is that the Ukrainian authorities now feel much more confident than they did even at the start of the war, specifically about violating what many see as the sanctity of church premises, and more generally about definitively splitting Ukraine from Russia in the ecclesiastical domain, too. Before the raids, parts of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine – and that would include the Monastery of the Caves – might have been described as a last repository of direct Ukraine-Russia ties. Ukraine’s desire to bring an end to what has been a highly complex situation for the best part of 10 years can be understood.

Calls to separate the Ukrainian Church from the authority of the Moscow Patriarchate have been a set-piece of practically every Ukrainian national independence movement over more than three centuries, and those calls were heard again as the Soviet Union was collapsing and as Ukraine became independent. But it was only in 2014, after Russia snatched the Crimean Peninsula and started backing separatists fighting in eastern Ukraine, that the battle began in earnest. As the leader of Ukraine’s Orthodox Church, Metropolitan Filaret, initiated a demand for autocephaly from the Ecumenical Patriarch in Istanbul, in 2018 the then-President, Petro Poroshenko, gave his formal support. Ukraine’s Orthodox Church was formally granted the autocephaly it sought on the eve of Eastern Orthodox Christmas at the start of 2019.

But not all Ukrainian Orthodox priests and congregations followed their leaders in splitting from Moscow. Some, especially in mainly Russian-speaking areas, stayed loyal to the Moscow Patriarchate, which had expressed its fury with Kyiv. As a result, Ukrainian congregations were divided between the autocephalous Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU), and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC), which is still subordinate to Moscow. Russia’s all-out invasion of Ukraine in February prompted a new exodus of congregations from the UOC – a process that was only accelerated by the very public support for President Putin and for the invasion given by the Patriarch of Moscow, Kirill. In May, the UOC convened to renounce its ties with Moscow and join the now autocephalous Orthodox Church of Ukraine. But there were exceptions. Some of the most ancient foundations, chief among them Kyiv’s Monastery of the Caves, stayed with Moscow.



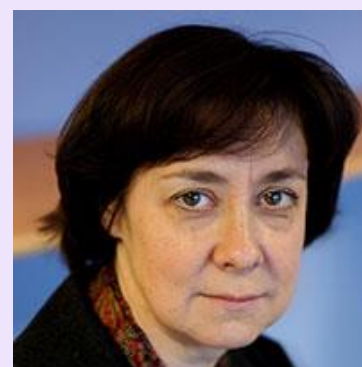
With the schism largely at an end, both sacred and secular authorities became bolder. In early November, Ukraine's Orthodox Church leaders signalled a highly symbolic move away from Moscow by announcing that parishes could celebrate Christmas this year on 25 December if they wished, rather than on 7 January, in the Julian Calendar observed in Russia and other Orthodox Churches. Then, on the same day as the SBU raids, former President Poroshenko, now a prominent MP, introduced a bill into Ukraine's parliament that brands all activities of the Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine a threat to national security.

There can be little doubt either that the bill will pass, or that it represents a direct threat to the long-time guardians of the Monastery of the Caves and a number of other historic religious sites in Ukraine. Russia's Church and state have denounced Kyiv's actions. Patriarch Kirill condemned the SBU raids as an "act of intimidation". The Kremlin described them as "another link in the chain of military actions against Russian Orthodoxy". Some more thoughtful Russian voices noted that any loyalty to Moscow shown by monks and priests in Ukraine might reflect long-standing religious and doctrinal, rather than political, allegiance, and a belief that the Church should keep a distance from politics. Even if so, war has made any distance, however desirable, nigh impossible to maintain.

More than three years ago, then Metropolitan Filaret was petitioning the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul to rescind the 1686 order that had subordinated the Ukrainian Church to Moscow. At that time, there were dire warnings, not just from Russia, that this could escalate into a fight over property between the Orthodox Churches of Russia and Ukraine, which in turn could spark a full-blown war. Then Moscow said it would work using diplomatic and political means, and the worst did not happen. The war started later, and in another way, with the split in the Church an element in the wider conflict. Now, this particular strand of the war looks to be at, or near, its end. That the Ukrainian authorities felt confident enough to raid so emblematic a complex as the Monastery of the Caves, without apparent fear of resistance or reprisals, shows how far they believe national sentiment, in the ecclesiastical domain, as elsewhere, is now in their favour. That shrinking part of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine that remained loyal to Moscow constituted the last stand of an internal opposition left over from pre-war Ukraine.

The SBU raids, a legal ban on Church ties with Moscow and a Western date for Christmas have all exposed its powerlessness. Whatever transpires on the temporal battlefield, where the advantage still shifts brutally to and fro, it looks very much as if the spiritual battle is over, and Ukraine has won.

*Mary Dejevsky is a writer and broadcaster. She is a former foreign correspondent in Moscow, Paris and Washington and a special correspondent in China and Europe.*





**4. The weekly British Catholic newspaper THE TABLET is carrying an Advent reflection each week. The second one is titled, “The melodies of Advent, quietly hopeful, are in a minor key, their tempo adagio” and is by Teresa White.**

*In a troubled and noisy world, we should take the time to slow our pace, pause to reflect, be still and hear the voice of God in a moment of silence.*

O God, amid the clamour of our violence, your Word of truth resounds. Over nations enshrouded in despair, your justice dawns. Keep your household watchful and alert, mindful of the hour in which we live. Hasten the advent of that day when the sounds of war will be forever stilled, the darkness of evil scattered, and all your people gathered into one. Amen. In the midst of the pre-Christmas hubbub, Advent reminds us that there’s more to life than continual movement, noise and clamour. Advent is an invitation to enter the quiet zone, where we can give ourselves permission to be, for a time at least, contemplative in non-action. And there we can bring before God some of the unspoken pleas, dreams and longings struggling for expression in our troubled, divided and wounded world.

In the stillness, our innate capacity to hear God’s Word can be sharpened, our hearing aids recharged. To take that Word into our minds and hearts, and to allow ourselves to be transformed by it, is the work of Advent. Of course, many of us will be reluctant to get off the treadmill of

busyness and enter the quiet zone. We want action, speed and movement, not calm meditation. As for silence, it makes us uncomfortable, so we tune it out and step up the volume.

We're preoccupied, too, by our countless problems, and we want answers immediately. After all, with algorithms to do our calculations, deal with glitches and make complicated decisions for us, we're not used to waiting long for anything these days. And we feel impatient and irritated when people tell us to slow down and just wait – we don't want to wait, we want instant gratification for all our desires. We want music in a major key, its tempo allegro; but the melodies of Advent, quietly hopeful, are in a minor key, their tempo adagio: "Wait for the Lord, whose day is near ..."

Nonetheless, the Advent invitation remains, echoing the words of Jesus to his disciples when, with so many people coming and going, they were run off their feet and had no time to think and reflect. "Come apart and rest for a while," (Mark 6: 31) he said to them. It is in quiet moments that God's Word may be heard.

Advent is the time of great desiring. We long for God to tear open the heavens and come to save us. Restless and troubled, we long for peace; in the darkness and confusion that surrounds us, we long for light; fearful and anxious, we long for courage; weighed down by sorrow, we long for joy; faced with the bleakness of life in today's world – poverty, injustice, wars, pandemics – we beg for comfort. For our lack of compassion for people in need, for our failure to acknowledge the damage we are doing to the earth, we seek mercy. If moments of quietness are woven through the weeks of Advent, we will hear the voice of God, speaking gently, leading us out of the darkness, and when Christmas comes, we will see that the Kingdom of God is in our midst.

**Sister Teresa White belongs to the Faithful Companions of Jesus.**

*A former teacher, she spent many years in the ministry of spirituality at Katherine House, a retreat and conference centre run by her congregation in Salford.*

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**A PRAYER FOR ALL THOSE CAUGHT UP  
IN CONFLICT**

*God of peace,*  
Show us how to put away the weapons of war  
and help us destroy the tools of destruction.  
**God of peace, may your kingdom come.**

*God of peace,*  
Teach us to follow the ways of justice  
and walk with us the paths of truth.  
**God of peace, may your kingdom come.**

*God of peace,*  
Challenge the weapons of war,  
and banish hatred and division,  
so that all your children may sleep secure.  
**God of peace, may your kingdom come.**  
**Amen.**

*Linda Jones/CAFOD*





5. Our Year Six children celebrated an End of Primary Years *Liturgy of the Word* last Tuesday evening with their families and school staff in the parish church. At the conclusion of the liturgy, everyone processed to the School Hall to celebrate the 2022 Year Six graduation.

The following day, the entire school celebrated a Thanksgiving Liturgy in the parish church followed by a Handover of School Leadership to the students who will be senior leaders in 2023.



*Handover of leadership ceremony*



*Service awards to Year Six 2022*





*Year Six 2022 graduation rituals*





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