

Advent

MOMENTS



If the Christian story is to live again in ways that will truly bless the world, we need to access the world of the unconscious, the unus mundus, where we and all things are one. Then we can allow the story of Christ's birth to be born anew and to point to the birth of every child... If our story is living, we will release it in ways that we have not yet imagined, to serve the essential sacredness of every child who is born (Newell, 2014, p.101).

This Advent we are invited to celebrate the gift of life – in every person, in every birth – the potential, the blessing, the gift, the love of our God shining through every human soul. The Christmas star shines a light on this fundamental truth - every life is sacred, every human birth is a sacrament of love, every moment is gift. This Advent may we ‘...see the Light that is within all life the way a child views the brightness of a new day with open-eyed wonder’ (Newell, 2014, p. 122).

The Advent Gift of Life

Pause for Reflection

How are you called to celebrate the gift of life?

Listen to the song the angels sang the day you were born ...

(Anthony de Mello)

COMPASSION JUSTICE RESPECT HOPE

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The shepherds were unusual heralds of the birth of the Christ child. They were not wealthy, influential or politically important. They lived simple, often lonely lives. But their presence at the manger is a sign of hope – that we can all experience moments of spiritual joy and awakening. The shepherds went away ‘glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen...’ (Luke 2:20). We too are called to celebrate the moments of hope in our own lives: times of unexpected kindness from others; moments of inspiration and insight; experiences of solitude and contentment; times of excitement and wonder.

As Leunig reminds us in his Christmas reflection:
Love is born
With a dark and troubled face
When hope is dead
And in the most unlikely place
Love is born
Love is always born
(Leunig, 1991, The Prayer Tree)

The Advent Gift of Hope

*Pause for
Reflection*

*When have you
received the gift of
hope?*

*A real Christmas gift, for which Advent is the process,
is learning to hum hope, learning to dance the divine...*

(Chittister, 2018, joanchittister.org Nov 27)

COMPASSION JUSTICE RESPECT HOPE

Though the human body is born complete in one moment, the human heart is never completely born. It is being birthed in every experience of your life. Everything that happens to you has the potential to deepen you. It brings to birth within you new territories of the heart.

(O'Donohue, 1997, p. 26)

The Magi came to Bethlehem armed with knowledge. They possessed great understanding of astrology and prophecy and this led them to the manger and the Christ child. Their gifts were symbolic and underscored their conviction that they were in the presence of a great king. It was their hearts, however, which were challenged by this experience. The biblical story tells us that they worshipped and then went home a different way to avoid Herod's murderous plans. They were changed by the journey and their encounter with Jesus.

The Advent Gift of Wisdom

*Pause for
Reflection*

*What events in your
life have nourished
your heart with the
gift of wisdom?*



We need to open the treasures of wisdom in traditions other than our own. Not only do they have much to teach us, but they also hold the key to unlocking depths within our own religious inheritance that we know nothing of as yet.

(Newell, 2014, p.122)

COMPASSION JUSTICE RESPECT HOPE

St Francis first introduced the tradition of the nativity scene. It brought into focus for him the Light that he saw in the earth and in every creature, the light of 'Brother Sun' and 'Sister Moon' as he called them in his Canticle of the Sun... (Newell, 2014, p. 37).

In contemplating the nativity scenes which appear in churches, homes and sometimes public places during Advent, do we see what St Francis saw – the sacredness of every created being? And if we see this then we need to work for a '...rebirthing of the sacred within us as nations, as religious traditions, as communities and families, we need to move into relationship with those who are considered unlike us. From this new birth emerges' (Newell, 2014, p.98).

The Advent Challenge

*Pause for
Reflection*

*How can you work
for a more peaceful
and inclusive
world?*



*Like the artist who looks at the marble and sees the hidden angel.
Like the farmer who looks at his winter fields
and sees the waving harvest...
You are, thus, the revealers, the midwives of the presence of God
already hidden in ... (the world)*

(O'Leary, 2017, p.144)