

ADVENT SERVICE 2022
MONASTERY OF SAINT ALPHONSUS, DRUMCONDRA
‘Enlarge the space of your tent’ Is.54:2

Introduction

- Advent calls us back to our core, our centre and re-connects us to who we really are – people of hope, peace, joy and love.
- Advent is about slowing down, taking a step back and seeking a quiet time away from the frenzy and the unrealistically high expectations of a material Christmas.
- Advent offers time for introspection, for listening, for resetting and rebooting our lives in preparation for what is about to happen.

Song **Listen V. 1 (Aniceto Nazareth)**

The latest document preparing for the 2023 Continental Synod inspires us to ‘*Enlarge the space of our tent*’ (Isaiah 54:2) so that room can be made for all without exclusion. This process of widening begins with listening and with an openness to welcome:

‘This starts from a desire for radical inclusion to be understood in a perspective of communion with sisters and brothers and with our common Father; listening appears here not as an instrumental action, but as the assumption of the basic attitude of a God who listens to his People, as the following of a Lord whom the Gospels constantly present to us in the act of listening to the people who come to him along the roads of the Holy Land; in this sense listening is already mission and proclamation.’ (11:1)

Let us begin that journey of hope, peace, joy, love and inclusion together this Advent.

Song **Joy Was In My Heart (Robert Réboud)**
All sing: Joy was in my heart, Alleluia,
when I heard them say let us go to God’s house.

Reading **Isaiah 2:1-5**
In the days to come
the mountain of the Temple of the Lord
shall tower above the mountains
and be lifted higher than the hills.

And now our feet are standing, Alleluia,
within your gates, O Jerusalem.
All sing: Joy was in my heart, Alleluia,
when I heard them say let us go to God’s house.

All nations shall stream to it,
peoples without number will come to it;
and they will say:
“Come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
to the Temple of the God of Jacob
that he may teach us his ways
so that we may walk in his paths;
since the Law will go out from Zion,
and the oracle of the Lord from Jerusalem.”

Jerusalem, most beautiful city so strongly compact, Alleluia,
on you converge all the tribes of the Lord.

All sing: Joy was in my heart, Alleluia,
when I heard them say let us go to God’s house.

He will wield authority over the nations
and adjudicate between many peoples;
these will hammer their swords into ploughshares,
their spears into sickles.
Nation will not lift sword against nation,
there will be no more training for war.

May peace reign in your walls,
happiness and love in all your homes, Alleluia,
for you are the house of the Lord, our God.

All sing: Joy was in my heart, Alleluia,
When I heard them say let us go to God’s house.

O house of Jacob, come,
Let us walk in the light of the Lord.

Reflection Hope

Advent is dotted with figures of hope – Isaiah, John the Baptist, Mary. For all of us the experience of goodness gives rise to hope. Those in tune with their own hearts are aware of God’s presence shaping and reshaping them and their world. Their hope knows where their staying power lies, namely in God. It overflows into taking responsibility for the world around them.

Song Listen V. 2 (Aniceto Nazareth)

Isaiah 54:2-3 Widen the space of your tent,
Stretch out your hangings freely,
Lengthen your ropes, make your pegs firm;

For you will burst out to right and left.

Reflection 'It is the beautiful task of Advent to awaken in all of us memories of goodness and thus to open doors of hope.'
(Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI)

Song **Dona Nobis Pacem**

Reflection **Prince of Peace (Joyce Rupp)**

Peace. The seed of it in every heart, every nation
The possibility of a life and a world of
nonviolence
But peace cannot be forced on anyone,
not even by you who reign with ultimate authority.
Peace evolves as individual minds and hearts change,
willing to lay aside what causes dissension,
open to discuss differences and divisive difficulties,
ready to listen generously to another point of view.
Prince of peace, may you reign in our hearts.

Song **Rejoice in the Lord Always**

Reading **Isaiah 25:10**

They will come to Zion shouting for joy,
Everlasting joy on their faces;
Joy and gladness will go with them
And sorrow and lament be ended.

Reflection **Joy (©Sacred Space)**

Psychiatrists say they are their busiest in the weeks leading up to Christmas. The feast stirs up anxieties linked to memories of childhood and connections with family. It pushes us to difficult decisions about sending invitations, cards or gifts. No wonder people talk about 'getting over Christmas'. But our real friends do not judge us by those decisions. They like us to be calm and contented in ourselves.

Song **Ubi Caritas (Taizé)**

Reflection **Love (St. Catherine of Siena)**

If you have received my love sincerely without self-interest, you will drink your neighbour's love sincerely. It is just like a vessel that you fill at the fountain. If you take it out of the fountain to drink, the vessel is soon empty. But if you hold your vessel in the fountain while you drink, it will not get empty: it will always be full. So the love of your neighbour is meant to be drunk in me, without any self-interest.

Song **Come To Us, O Emmanuel (Marty Haugen)**

Reflection Giving without strings (Adapted Thomas Merton OSCO)

Light of the world, shine on us today and banish our fears and our fickleness. As you are a gift freely given, remind us that as your children, our generosity should be untarnished by the expectations of rewards. Keep us from counting – our losses, our gains, our goods, our bads, our costs, our profits. Let each gift this season be unadulterated by the need for reciprocity.

Instrumental

Reflection Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179)

Your Creator has given you great treasures.

But with his gifts
comes the condition
that you apply his gifts to good works,
that you grow in virtue.

Your task then
is to make your gift valuable to others
through works of justice,
so that your life and deeds
will mirror their giver.

Trócaire Gifts of Love

This year's Gifts of Love collection includes two new gifts – the Gift of Winter Essentials (€25) to support Syrian families forced to flee their homes to refugee camps in neighbouring Lebanon and the Family Food Basket €35 which provides basic food essentials and high nutrient food for malnourished children facing catastrophic hunger in the Horn of Africa due to the ongoing drought. There are 23 Trócaire gifts to choose from ranging in price from €5 to €1000, each gift will support critical work across the developing world on behalf of the Catholic Church in Ireland.

Reading Matthew 1:25

The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son
and they will call him Emmanuel,
A name which means 'God is with us'.

Song Behold a Virgin (Ronan McDonagh)

Reflection Lady Mary (Thomas Merton)

Lady Mary, you whose “yes” opened the door to our salvation, show us how we can say “yes” without reservations. Teach us to wait, as we hang in the balance of the past and the possible. Let us make loving choices as you did, agreeing freely to God’s plan for us. Mother us as we make our way to your Son. Amen.

Song **Come To Us, O Emmanuel (Marty Haugen)**

Pastoral Letter Archbishop Dermot Farrell

‘As we prepare to celebrate Christmas we open our hearts again to Jesus Christ, God-with-us, a light for all the world to see. Even in the darkest and loneliest of places he brings salvation. His message of justice, peace and love sets us out again on a journey, this year and every year, focused on love of God and love of neighbour. ‘Let us walk in the light of the Lord’ (Isaiah 2:5), ‘that he may teach us his ways so that we may walk in his paths’ (Isaiah 2:3). Let us turn our hearts towards Christ, who is the light that will show us the way forward, a light for our footsteps into the future God is preparing with us.’

Prayer **Let us pray,**
God of inspiration and hope.
You challenge us to open wide our tent,
to welcome the stranger and nourish the hungry,
to work for justice and truth.
Be with all who are in need today.
We ask this in the Spirit, through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Song **O Come Emmanuel (French Tune)**