

Here's a text if you've only a minute - - -

"I am the handmaid of the Lord," said Mary
"let what you have said be done to me."
(The Gospel: Luke 1: 38)

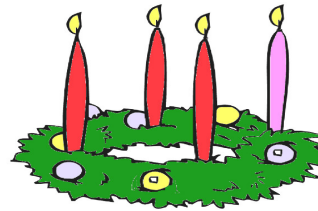


Open our minds to receive the Spirit who prepares us for his coming. (Old Opening Prayer, 2nd version)

I will sing forever of your love, O Lord.(Ps.88)

O EMMANUEL, God with us,.....the Expected of the Nations and their Saviour: Come to save us, O Lord our God. (from 'O' Antiphons)

SAINT BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM



4th Sunday of Advent - Yr B
18th December 2011

Let the clouds rain down the Just One,
and the earth bring forth a Saviour.
(Entrance Antiphon)

Focusing on my Advent candle, I take time to become still, aware of God's presence, aware of the hopes and expectations in my heart as we enter the last week of Advent.

I recall some of the images of longing and waiting so beautifully expressed in the O Antiphons of these final Advent days: Root of Jesse, Key of David, the Expected of the Nations, Emmanuel, Come! As I ponder each image I notice my thoughts and feelings and I speak to Jesus from my heart .

I spend time with Mary, hearing about the thoughts of her heart during her waiting time and asking for what I need, perhaps a deeper faith and openness to God in my life.
When ready I read the opening prayer, noticing what draws me.

Opening Prayer:

Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord, Your grace into our hearts, that we, to whom the incarnation of Christ your Son was made known by the message of an angel, may by his passion and cross be brought to the glory of his resurrection.

I pray for the grace to remain watchful and ready to welcome the coming of Jesus , or I simply pray:

Come Lord Jesus.

Second Reading—Romans 16: 25—27

Glory to him who is able to give you the strength to live according to the Good News I preach, and in which I proclaim Jesus Christ, the revelation of a mystery kept secret for endless ages, but now so clear that it must be broadcast to pagans everywhere to bring them to the obedience of faith. This is only what scripture has predicted, and it is all part of the way the eternal God wants things to be. He alone is wisdom; give glory therefore to him through Jesus Christ for ever and ever.
Amen.

I centre myself into stillness and read the passage slowly, noticing words or phrases that stand out for me, staying with them and letting them find a home in my mind and heart.

This is one of St. Paul's hymns to God's glory, which I now read aloud, listening with the ears of my heart until I catch its inner music. What inspires and energises me? I speak to God as I am moved.

I may want to express praise and thanksgiving or to speak with Jesus about how I receive "strength to live according to the Good News" in the ups and downs of my life.

I may also want to pray this hymn in union with all those in my world who are longing and waiting for the Good News of Salvation this Christmas, remembering especially those who are living in situations of darkness, despair, grief or loss.

I bring my prayer time to a close with the Glory be to the Father.

Gospel—Luke 1: 26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. He went in and said to her, "Rejoice, so highly favoured! The Lord is with you." She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, but the angel said to her, "Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favour. Listen! You are to conceive and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David; he will rule over the House of Jacob for ever and his reign will have no end." Mary said to the angel, "But how can this come about, since I am a virgin?" "The Holy Spirit will come upon you" the angel answered "and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God. Know this too: your kinswoman Elizabeth has, in her old age, herself conceived a son, and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month, for nothing is impossible to God." "I am the handmaid of the Lord," said Mary "let what you have said be done to me." And the angel left her.

During my time of prayer, I may wish to sit before an icon or painting of this gospel scene or simply read the text slowly, entering into the scene, noticing what is happening and noticing my own reactions.

I speak with Mary about her response to God. Perhaps I am reminded of moments when I felt touched by God and how I responded. How do I want to respond to what God may be asking of me now at this time in my life?

I end with the Our Father or Hail Mary