

# ADVENT NEWSLETTER 2013

15 December 2013

*How long  
the path  
which  
leads to  
you!  
Lord, come  
to meet  
us,  
be our way.*



## BRING FORTH YOUR DEEP LONGINGS

Whenever the conversation moves toward deeply felt issues we try to deflect the talk in a more secure direction. We have a wonderful everyday expression that is very descriptive: 'We won't go there!' Now, let us talk about something else!

Our religious prayer and discussion has the same limitations. We often will not recognize what is heavy

on our hearts. Advent is space to bring to God what troubles us. It gives us space to lay bare the facts, the tears and the struggles of our lives.

Advent is not about only telling the pain and the sufferings, the longing for deliverance from the past. It is very much telling God our own pain, the deep longings in our heart

and our hopes for God's deliverance within our lives.

On this third Sunday of Advent be brave. Name and share with the Holy Spirit the deep longings within your own life and the life of your Church.

# *We Long for a Much Better Life*

Try to imagine what is happening when you shared in the Sunday Mass this week.

Perhaps in the third bench there is a woman, in her mid-fifties, sharply dressed and seemingly having it all together. But you do not know that this is a very heavy time of the year for her. Fifteen years ago her twenty-two year old took his own life. It appeared he could not cope with the heavy gambling debts he had raked up. How many nights does this mother cry herself to sleep?

Then there is the Filipino couple who are stretched to the limit. Both their families lost their house in the typhoon in November. They are trying to scrap together all the money they can gather to send to their own parents to help them rebuild. Who can understand the tension they have trying to balance their slim resources?

There is your parishioner who sits two benches down from you. She is very involved with work through the food bank. When you talk with her she asks the very uncomfortable question: Why do we have poor people in a country of so much wealth? You know this does not sit comfortably with her. Just her presence brings the question to the fore.

We look back at the last century (only thirteen years ago) to realize that this has been the bloodiest century in the entire history of mankind. We have destroyed more people and their livelihood than all our ancestors did. War is big business and we are not about to stop preparing for war. Will war ever cease?

This autumn you have lived through endless government scandals. Does anyone tell the truth? Is anyone accountable?

*Let the day  
come, Lord,  
when  
our tears  
will find  
your smile.*





**Rend the heavens and come down, O  
God of all the ages!  
Rouse us from sleep, deliver us from  
our heedless ways, and form us into a  
watchful people, that, at the advent of  
your Son, he may find us doing what is  
right, mindful of all you command.  
Grant 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.**



There are many more difficult situations that we are hesitant to bring forward but this calls us to be honest with God, ourselves and one another. There is so much in this life that calls for transformation and salvation.

Advent is clearly the time we want to bring forth to God the longings in our heart. We pray that warring parties lay down their arms and grow corn and rice together. We pray that our families experience healing and that we come back together. We pray that there be more compassion and understanding in our world.

Bring in your prayer, in your hymns, all the brutality, the duplicity, the incompleteness that mars our life with God. Pray in hope that the resurrected Jesus will give us strength to own up to the black side of reality and the courage to always walk forward to do good and practice justice.

Evil and blackness will not have the last word. Live and pray in hope that Christ will conquer all. Live and walk in the hope that only Christ gives us.



## PRAY WITH JOHN THE BAPTIST

O Jesus, in an empty  
desert your prophet John  
proclaimed:

God is here, at your side.

God has come to bring  
about a kingdom where  
injustice and suffering will be  
no more,

where tears will be wiped  
away,

and where those who turn  
to God will feast at a  
banquet.

"Turn now, your God is  
standing at your side.

Reform your lives, God's  
kingdom is at hand."

In an empty desert John said  
these things.

Give me faith like John's,  
O Lord, strong enough to  
believe even in a desert  
that you and your kingdom  
are no farther

from me than my hand.

Make my heart strong like his,  
not swayed by trials or snared  
by false pleasures.



Give me courage to be  
faithful until your promises  
are fulfilled.



*The days are coming,  
says the Lord, when  
I will fulfill the  
promise.*

*In these days and in  
this time  
the road is twisted  
and the hills are high.*

*We know what you  
say but we cannot  
hear you well.*

*Loud are the moans  
of people oppressed,  
of children hungering,  
distressed,  
and the din of our  
wars.*

*We look ahead always  
for your coming with  
justice, nourishment,  
peace,  
with all goodness and  
promises fulfilled.*

*"Keep us safe,  
O Lord, for you are  
our hope."*