

at a glance 

Today's Readings

Jer 33:14-16
1 Thess 3:12-4:2
Lk 21:25-28,34-36

The promised Saviour
Increase in love
Christ the liberator

Next Week

Salvation dawns
Bar 5:1-9; Ps 125
Phil 1:3-6,8-11; Lk 3:1-6



First Sunday of Advent Year C

30 November 2003

in a nutshell

Our preparation for the coming of Christ is a life lived in him. Jesus is not a judge we wait for with anxiety, but the liberator to be welcomed. To those who 'live the life that God wants' Jesus says 'hold your heads high because your liberation is near at hand.' To a world 'coarsened with debauchery and drunkenness and the cares of life' their lives have brought beauty.

See your liberation

One day I was in my office, when the front door bell rang, and in came two cops with a young bloke. The sergeant was a man in his forties, and the constable looked to be in his early twenties. Craig, who was only seventeen, had done something that concerned them. They felt that he was troubled, so instead of charging him, they brought him along to the presbytery to see me.

All four of us sat in my office. I began by asking Craig: 'Tell me about yourself.' It turned out that he was in despair because 'Nobody cares about me.' After listening to his story, I talked with Craig while the cops listened. I started with the observation that far from 'nobody caring', several people cared about him: 'This sergeant here is probably about your Dad's age, and the constable is about the same age as your brother. They care about you. They were kind enough to bring you here to me when they could have charged you. Your parents seem to care about what happens to you. And I do too, that's why we're spending time with you now, trying to work out how we can help. Sometimes we just don't see that others care about us.'

Craig seemed more hopeful after our chat. Across the road from the church is a row of shops, and I arranged with one of the shopkeepers for Craig to get a job there. There is more to this story. But things began to change when unrecognised love and care were recognised. It made me wonder how things would be if I really knew God's love for me. (JH)



Welcoming salvation

A young man came to the Cathedral and said to me, 'Father, I'm a goner!' He was full on drink, drugs and sex. 'What do you want?' I asked him. 'I want a bit of hope,' he replied. We worked together with his problems for some time. Then he joined Alcoholics Anonymous. Twelve years later – just recently, in fact – we met again and he said, 'Father, I'm really happy, and I've had no drink, no drugs and no women! God is LOVE, God is merciful, and I'm very happy!' (Terry)

*Father in heaven,
our hearts desire the warmth of your
love and our minds are searching for
the light of your Word.
Increase our longing for Christ our
Saviour, and give us the strength
to grow in love, that the dawn of his
coming may find us rejoicing in his
presence and welcoming the light of his
truth.*

(Opening Prayer)



The world is waiting

The world is waiting
For new saints, ecstatic men and women
Who are so deeply rooted in the love of God
That they are free to imagine a new international order...
Most people despair that it is possible.
They cling to old ways and prefer the security
Of their misery to the insecurity of their joy.
But the few who dare to sing a new song of peace
Offer a glimpse of a new order
That is being born out of the ruin of the old.

Henri Nouwen (1932-1996)



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Readers' contributions welcome.

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Phil 1:3-6,8-11

Lk 3:1-6

God's desire

Paul's prayer

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Next Week

Good News?

Zeph 3:14-18; Ps:Is 12:2-6

Phil 4:4-7; Lk 3:10-18

Repent! Prepare a way for the Lord



Second Sunday of Advent Year C

7 December 2003

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The One foretold by Isaiah is about to emerge in the here and now. God will remove the obstacles to his being seen and heard. Whether we choose to look and listen depends upon us, so John calls us to repent so that the obstacles to clear vision will be removed. God's purpose is that everyone may see salvation.

Salvation dawns

This poignant story illustrates the power of St Paul's words in today's second reading: 'My prayer is that your love for each other may increase more and more, and never stop improving your knowledge and deepening your perception so that you can always recognise what is best.' Ruth's loving listening awakened Jason to the possibility of new life.

Jason, a young man of nineteen, came to see me because, he said, he could not stop crying. As he spoke, tears cascaded down his face.

'I can't stop,' he said, profoundly distressed. 'Everybody tells me to stop, but the harder I try, the more I cry. I've lost my job and my girlfriend. I can't do anything.' He took one tissue after another as the tears continued to flow.

Not a counsellor, I just listened. Then I said, 'You must have a reason for crying. Do you want to tell me about it?'

Animatedly, Jason began to describe a home situation that was so horrendous, my hair stood on end. 'Jason,' I said, 'You have every reason to grieve over what you are suffering. I think you'll just have to keep crying until you are finished.'

Then and there, Jason stopped crying!

He then proceeded to formulate a course of action by which he could take control of the circumstances that had been governing his life. Over time, he succeeded in doing so. (Ruth)



Reflect
on the
word

Joy is mentioned six times in today's liturgy. What does this tell us about God and about our Christian life?

Remove the things that hinder us from receiving Christ with joy
(Opening prayer)

May the lure of greed not impede us from the joy which moves the hearts of those who seek your Son
(Alternative opening prayer)

God will guide Israel in joy by the light of his glory (Bar 5:9)

The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy
(Responsorial psalm)

Every time I pray for all of you, I pray with joy (Phil 1:3)

See the joy that is coming to you from God
(Communion antiphon)



Raise your voices

Entrance antiphon: People of Zion, the Lord will come to save all nations, and your hearts will exult to hear his majestic voice.

Response to the psalm: The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.

Gospel acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths: all people shall see the salvation of God. Alleluia!

Communion antiphon: Rise up, Jerusalem, stand on the heights, and see the joy that is coming to you from God.

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church below the rooftops

LANDSCAPEwith Mass R

peoplespeak

gospel voices then and now

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Increase our longing for Christ our Saviour, and give us the strength to grow in love, that the dawn of his coming may find us rejoicing in his presence and welcoming the light of his truth.*
(Opening Prayer)

Join Us In Prayer

Entrance antiphon

To you, my God, I lift my soul, I trust in you; let me never come to shame. Do not let my enemies laugh at me. No one who waits for you is ever put to shame.

Response to the psalm

To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.

Gospel acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia! Lord, show us your mercy and love, and grant us your salvation. Alleluia!

Communion antiphon

The Lord will shower his gifts, and our land will yield its fruit.



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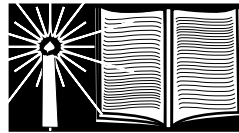


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church below the rooftops

Recognising what is best

My 15-year-old daughter Kate attended a birthday party at the local shopping complex at night. She rang me to come to pick her up from the bus stop there. On my arrival she informed me that her friend hadn't been collected yet, and could we please wait till her friend's father came so she would not be waiting alone.

I was proud of Kate for her thoughtfulness and care for her friend's welfare. (JA)

Sample issues

peoplespeak

gospel voices then and now

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