

# PRAYER & VISION, ABOLITION OF SLAVERY & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

*Second Sunday of Advent – 4 December 2022*



## WELCOMING THE DAY

As we begin each day, we know that we rely on God's love and mercy.  
We greet God and thank God for the gift of life.  
We wait on God in prayer.  
We are sinners. We need the help of God throughout the day.  
Perhaps some memory or answer to a question has come in our sleep.  
We turn it over to God and pray about it.  
God will challenge us, uplift us, surprise us and draw us into communion.  
None of us know all the answers to everything.  
We are called to love God and our neighbour.  
We are called to respect the dignity of each person.  
We might pray for all the people we will meet this day.  
We pray for God's gentle guidance.

## CLOSING THE DAY

In the evening, we look back over the day.  
We examine our conscience before God.  
We thank God for the blessings we received.

We are sinners. We reflect on what wrong we might have done.  
And of the need to apologise.  
We reflect on what we could have done better.  
As sinners, we might not have given others the support that they needed.  
Or we might have not listened as attentively as we should have.  
As sinners, we might have clung to our gifts and not shared them.  
With busy lives, we stop in prayer to reflect on the day's priorities.  
We reflect on mistakes, whether made intentionally or unintentionally.

We reflect on the priorities we made, and whether we need to change a priority.  
We pray for the people we met.  
We thank God for the support, direction, challenges and inspiration  
that God has given us throughout the day.

We thank God for the mercy shown to us.  
Spending time with God, we express our gratitude.  
We thank God and praise God.  
We sit in communion with God.

In our prayer, we have the opportunity to be open to God,  
and to trust in the infinite mercy and patience of God.

#### ISAIAH 11: 1-10 – A VISION OF PEACE AND JUSTICE

In today's First Reading, the gifts of the Spirit are listed.  
Isaiah explained that these gifts would rest on a future descendant of David  
who would be from the stock of Jesse.

*"A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse,  
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.  
The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him,  
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the spirit of counsel and might,  
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.  
His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord."*

Isaiah revealed a vision of the future, a vision of peace.

*"The wolf shall live with the lamb,  
the leopard shall lie down with the kid,  
the calf and the lion and the fatling together,  
and a little child shall lead them.  
The cow and the bear shall graze,  
their young shall lie down together;  
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.  
The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,  
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.  
They will not hurt or destroy  
on all my holy mountain;  
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord  
as the waters cover the sea."*

In this vision, enemies and rivals become friends.  
The wolf and lamb live together peacefully,  
As do the panther and kid, also the calf and lion.  
Despite all the challenges we face today with greed and self-interest,  
there are occasional glimpses of the vision of Isaiah in reality.

*But where does justice fit in?*

*"He shall not judge by what his eyes see,  
or decide by what his ears hear;  
but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,  
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth"*

Righteousness and equity are key.  
Isaiah went on to explain that this Davidic descendant would be clothed with righteousness and faithfulness.

Righteousness speaks of our relationship  
– with God and each other, in justice and integrity.

## ABOLITION OF SLAVERY

As we continue to seek and search, we note that last Friday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, was International Day for the Abolition of Slavery.

The [Australian Catholic Anti-Slavery Network \(ACAN\)](#) is a leader in our Catholic response in Australia to slavery. It says:

*“Modern slavery destroys personal freedom and violates the human dignity and inherent worth of every person. Forced and child labour, human trafficking, debt bondage, deceptive recruitment and other forms of modern slavery impact millions of people worldwide with the majority of those affected living in the Asia-Pacific region. Poverty, displacement, violence against women, the refugee crisis and a changing climate are some of the factors contributing to modern slavery risks both in Australia and abroad... “*

We acknowledge the efforts of many Catholic religious congregations around the world, in their efforts to abolish slavery, and in their practical support for the victims of slavery.

Let us pray in solidarity for all who lead us in working to abolish slavery. **[pause]**

## How do we do our part in the abolition of slavery?

Over the week ahead, we might find our own response to this question.

## MATTHEW 3:1-12

John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus, the one Isaiah spoke of in his vision.

Like John the Baptist in the Gospel of Matthew, we do not give up.

We are called to repent from sin.

We are called through the grace of God to enable good to overcome evil.

We are called to share the gift of hope.

*“In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming,  
‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.’*

*This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said,*

*‘The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:*

*“Prepare the way of the Lord,*

*make his paths straight.” ’*

John prepared the way for Jesus.

*“I baptize you with water for repentance,*

*but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me;*

*I am not worthy to carry his sandals.*

*He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”*

Matthew's Gospel expanded on this in the Last Judgement Scene 25:31-46. Feeding the hungry, giving something to drink to the thirsty, clothes to the naked, welcoming the stranger, taking care of the sick, visiting the prisons.

- We think of our local St Vincent de Paul Society members distributing hampers to local people in need in our suburbs.
- We think of Blackall/ Tambo and South Sudan.

John the Baptist could not stand by. He was involved. Over the coming year, Matthew's Gospel will show a light to guide us – the light of Jesus.

### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION

We continue on from last week with quotes from the Queensland Churches Together Advent resources about Domestic Family Violence Prevention.

*“During Advent we work towards peace as we await Jesus’ coming to fulfil God’s promises which will blow God’s Spirit throughout the world, bringing God’s judgement on evil and receiving all who are penitent (sorry for their sins). How does God achieve this? By becoming truly human, identifying with us, by taking our place, sharing our penitence, living our lives and eventually dying our death. We shall witness that when Jesus, in solidarity with us, emerges from the waters of baptism filled with the Holy Spirit which is symbolised by the dove of peace. Let us now turn to what God is calling you and me to do today. He is calling us to turn away from the frenetic pace of life, slow down and take sacred time and space to enter the silence and stillness in order to sense God’s presence and listen to him rather than responding with the first thing which comes into our head.*

*Let us take time to pray for those in dire need at this time, especially those experiencing Domestic and Family Violence. Not in my suburb, you may be thinking. Never. Wrong. DFV occurs in one out of four families in all suburbs regardless of status, assets, education and intelligence. Victims tend to suffer silently, unable to share it with others and subsisting in survival mode. The victim walks on eggshells while trying to work at the relationship while s/he cries out to be listened to, affirmed, heard and helped. S/he is often shamed and blamed for everything, His/her self-esteem is eroded. ‘Who am I?’ the victim asks. It is even happening under our very noses wherever we work and socialise. It even happens in most parishes and community groups... “*

*“How can you prepare for the coming of Jesus this year? What baggage do you need to burn? Which path needs straightening within your life? What dead wood in your heart needs felling before the shoot can grow into a branch? Hope. Peace. Joy. Love. As we continue to explore DFV and ways of responding to those who suffer from it, I encourage you to pray this prayer daily this week.*

***Let Us Pray: God of tenderness and compassion, open our hearts to reach out to all who have been created by you, giving us and others the courage to hope for peace. Lead us, loving Father, as we act now peace in the context of Domestic and Family Violence. Amen.”***

*Source: N.T. Wright, Matthew for Everyone Part 1, London: SPCK 2002; Rev’d Carol Palmer, sermon Advent to for Queensland Churches Together member parishes and other agencies.*

We pause and pray the prayer above.

[pause]

#### NEWS FROM OUR SISTER PARISH OF BLACKALL / TAMBO

This weekend at all Masses, after Communion, we hear from the members of our parish who travelled recently to our sister parish of Blackall/Tambo in central Queensland.

#### NEXT WEEK

- For the next two weekends there will be a *retiring collection for Ukraine*. The Australian Catholic Bishops have called for an Advent collection to assist the people of Ukraine during their winter.

Thank you to the Ukrainian Catholic Bishop in Australia for showing how we could help.

- Next weekend, we will once more reflect on *our need for forgiveness* before Christmas. As is our parish tradition in preparing for Christmas and Easter, we undertake an *examination of conscience* during the homily.

Through the grace of God, may we together prepare the way of Jesus.

Let us pray.

Father Gerry

Readings: <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/120422.cfm>