NEWSLETTER

for the Churches of St Arvans, St Mary, Penterry, St Deiniol, Itton, & Holy Cross, Kilgwrrwg

forming part of the Severn Wye Ministry Area

IMPORTANT - PLEASE NOTE

St Arvan's Church is open during the day both for worship, private prayer.and a time of stillness.

Our current live-streamed services are as follows:: **Sunday Eucharist at 10. 00** and it can be accessed on the St Arvans Parish Group page on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/vicaragecello1/ and available to watch later

There is a online only reflection, meditation and celebration of Night Prayer (Compline) on Tuesdays at 7 p.m..

The St Arvans Parish website: http://www.starvanschurch.org.uk/

Please help to keep us informed of anyone who is in need or is isolated over the next weeks and months, and anyone in need of our prayer and support

Fr Michael Gollop,
The Vicarage, St Arvans
01291 622064;
Mobile 07867803479
E-mail:
frmichaelgollop1@gmail.com

29th November 2026
The First Sunday of Advent
Year B

The Collect

Almighty God, give us grace
to cast away the works of darkness
and to put on the armour of light,
now in the time of this mortal life,
in which your Son Jesus Christ
came to us in great humility;
that on the last day, when he shall
come again in his glorious majesty
to judge the living and the dead,
we may rise to the life immortal;
through him who is alive and reigns
with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **AMEN**

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

O that you would tear open the heavens
and come down, so that the mountains
would quake at your presence – as when
fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes
water to boil – to make your name known
to your adversaries, so that the nations
might tremble at your presence! When you
did awesome deeds that we did not
expect, you came down, the mountains
quaked at your presence. From ages past
no one has heard, no ear has perceived,
no eye has seen any God besides you,
who works for those who wait for him. You
meet those who gladly do right, those who
remember you in your ways. But you were
angry, and we sinned; because you hid
yourself we transgressed. We have all
become like one who is unclean, and all
our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.
We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities,
like the wind, take us away. There is no
one who calls on your name, or attempts
to take hold of you; for you have hidden
your face from us, and have delivered us
into the hand of our iniquity. Yet, O LORD,
you are our Father; we are the clay, and
you are our potter; we are all the work of
your hand. Do not be exceedingly angry,
O LORD, and do not remember iniquity for
ever. Now consider, we are all your
people.

[**64.** 1 - 9]

Reader / This is the Word of the Lord
Response / **Thanks be to God**

Psalm 80 1 - 7, 17 - 19

R/ **Restore us, O God of hosts;**
Show the light of your countenance
and we shall be saved.

Hear, O Shepherd of Israel,
leading Joseph like a flock;
shine forth, you that are enthroned
upon the cherubim.
In the presence of Ephraim,
Benjamin and Manasseh,
stir up your strength
and come to help us.

R/ **Restore us, O God of hosts;**
Show the light of your countenance
and we shall be saved.

Restore us, O God of hosts;
show the light of your countenance
and we shall be saved.
O Lord God of hosts,
how long will you be angered
despite the prayers of your people?

R/ **Restore us, O God of hosts;**
Show the light of your countenance
and we shall be saved.

You have fed them with the bread of tears;
you have given them
bowls of tears to drink.
You have made us
the derision of our neighbours,
and our enemies laugh us to scorn.

R/ **Restore us, O God of hosts;**
Show the light of your countenance
and we shall be saved.

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians [**1;** 3 - 9]

Grace to you and peace from God our
Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
I give thanks to my God always for you
because of the grace of God that has
been given you in Christ Jesus, for in
every way you have been enriched in him,
in speech and knowledge of every kind –
just as the testimony of Christ has been
strengthened among you – so that you are
not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait
for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ.
He will also strengthen you to the end, so
that you may be blameless on the day of
our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful; by
him you were called into the fellowship of
his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Reader/ This is the Word of the Lord
Response / **Thanks be to God**

Gradual Hymn

Alleluia, alleluia!
Let us see, O Lord, your mercy
and give us your saving help.
Alleluia!

The Lord be with you:
And also with you

Listen to the Gospel of Christ according to St Mark

Glory to you, O Lord.

J*esus said to his disciples:*

In those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see "the Son of Man coming in clouds" with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake – for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.'

*[*St Mark 13.24–37]

This is the Gospel of the Lord
Praise to you, O Christ

For Your Prayers

That we may find Advent quiet and reflection amid the busyness of the season.
The peoples of Ukraine, Palestine and Gaza, Israel, Iran and the wider Middle East and the Persian Gulf. For peace and justice throughout the region.
For world leaders – for wisdom,restraint and respect for human life.
All those without adequate food or shelter
Those who suffer as a result of the climate emergency & for responsible stewardship of our planet
For compassion and responsibility in those elected to govern us.
For migrants & refugees, and all forced to flee from their homelands

For the Church:
For the bishops of the Church: Cherry, Bishop of Monmouth, & Archbishop of Wales; the Episcopal Visitor of the Society of the Holy Cross in Wales, & for all who hold and teach the Catholic faith that comes to us from the Apostles.
All bishops, priests and deacons and all baptised Christians
For the reunion of all Christians: for Pope Leo, for Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew, for the leaders of the Reformed traditions
For the Severn Wye Ministry Area, for its priests, licensed lay ministers and all its people.

For the Sick & those in need:
Ralph Hamilton, Sylvia Jackson; The Revd Helen Rodwell; Elisabeth; Mary; Margaret; Althea; Margi & Bob Osborne; Jenny Sherwood, Diane Parnell, Val Thompson, Liz Hall, Carole, Sue, Barrie Howells

For the Departed:
The recently departed; Bruce Matthews, Arwel Griffith, our own departed loved ones,and those whose anniversaries of death fall this week:
Elizabeth Jane Gollop, Edward Priddis .

A Prayer of Spiritual Communion

My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the Blessed Sacrament.
I love you above all things,
and I long for you in my soul.
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart.
As though you have already come,
I embrace you and unite myself entirely to you; never permit me
to be separated from you. Amen.
(The Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament)

The Jereboam Interview

We continue our series of extracts from the Jerusalem and Galilee Gazette, an imaginary first-century newspaper. Week by week, the correspondent Jereboam interviews people whose lives have been affected in some way by Jesus Christ and his teaching
This week's Jereoboam is based on the readings for the 20th Sunday after Trinity.

Hemor

Jereboam: Isn't that a marvellous sight? Just a moment ago that lamb was fast asleep, or seemed to be anyway. Now it's bounding away over there with the others. You'd think they'd show some fear so close to the precipice, but no, it's almost as if they don't realise it's there. Either that or they're just supremely confident in their own abilities. It's wonderful to behold: such energy, such accomplishment, such simplicity too. It reminds me somehow of that old psalm-text: "Like the deer that yearns for running streams…" I know that refers to a different animal, but there's still the same sense of pure desire. Don't you think?
Hemor: Sorry? Oh, excuse me, Jereboam: I was miles away.
Jereboam: I was just admiring the beauty of those young lambs over there.
Hemor: Yes. Good animals, aren't they?
Jereboam: Excuse me for asking, Hemor, but is everything all right? You don't look quite yourself today.
Hemor: Yes, yes, I'm fine, thank you…just a bit tired, that's all. I'm having problems sleeping at the moment. Ever since we had that burglary the other week, I've been lying awake for hours every night.
Jereboam: How frustrating for you…You know, it was only recently that I heard Jesus telling people to stay awake at all times.

Hemor: Well, the irony of it is that I don't stay awake at all times. I seem to spend half the day unable to concentrate, dozing off, as you saw just now.
Jereboam: You poor chap...Look, I'm sorry if I seemed a bit flippant when I mentioned Jesus.
Hemor: Not at all.
Jereboam: Anyway, I imagine that he's got nothing against people sleeping. It's a perfectly natural process, after all. I know that one can sleep too much, and Jesus wouldn't encourage anyone to be lazy or anything like that, but I imagine that he's really telling people to stay alert -- on their guard, if you like. I suppose, spiritually speaking, he wants people to be like those lambs, full of life, aware, sensitive, fast in the best sense. By the way, have you ever tried doing some gentle exercises before you go to bed? I often find that helps me to sleep more soundly. Hemor? Never mind, we'll talk another time…

THIS WEEK

Advent Sunday is the beginning of the new liturgical year. The first reading is from the prophet Isaiah as the people repent before God: "Would that you might meet us doing right, that we were mindful of you in our ways!"
St Mark's gospel offers the image of the master who leaves his servants in charge while he is away. Be watchful! Be alert!
Wednesday is the feast day of the Saints, martyrs and missionaries of Asia, including the reat Jesuit priest, Saint Francis Xavier.
At the Eucharist during the first part of Advent - until December 17 - we focus on the first readings. This week it is from the Prophet Isaiah. These readings are about promises. Isaiah is consoling, building up and preparing his people to have hope. "In the days to come," he says over and over. When the day of promise comes, "They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; One nation shall not raise the sword against another, nor shall they train for war again." Even though King David's line, and that of his father, Jesse, are almost wiped out, Isaiah proclaims hope: "On that day, a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom." Who would believe even a peace in nature - lion lying down with the lamb? "There shall be no harm or ruin on all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be filled with knowledge of the LORD, as water covers the sea." God's unique ways of favouring the poor, which Mary comes to know and proclaims in her Magnificat, are seen when Isaiah says, "He humbles those in high places, and the lofty city he brings down; He tumbles it to the ground, levels it with the dust." Even Jesus' own statement about his mission is seen in the powerful images Isaiah uses to give us courage and hope: "On that day the deaf shall hear … the eyes of the blind shall see … the lowly will ever find joy in the LORD … " "On the day the LORD binds up the wounds of his people."
The gospels for this first part of Advent are chosen from several of the evangelisits. They are meant to match the first readings and to show that the promises are fulfilled in Jesus. Jesus brings healing. He raises up the childlike. And Jesus calls and sends the twelve apostles to continue his ministry.
Next Sunday: On the Second Sunday of Advent we hear Isaiah write of a voice that cries out in the wilderness, "Prepare the way of the LORD! Make straight in the wasteland a highway for our God!" These lines from the prophet are repeated in the Mark's Gospel as we are introduced to John the Baptist who prepares the way for Jesus. John says, "One mightier than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals. I have baptised you with water; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit."

SERVICES IN OUR CHURCHES

TODAY
The First Sunday of Advent
29th November *2026*

10 a.m. Sung Eucharist at St Arvan's

NEXT SUNDAY
The Second Sunday of Advent
6th December *2026*

10 a.m. Sung Eucharist at St Arvan's
11.30 Holy Eucharist at St Mary's, Penterry

Isaiah 40.1-11
Psalm 85. [1, 2,] 8-13
2 Peter 3.8-15a
St Mark 1.1-8

For all services in the wider Ministry Area please see www.severnwyema.co.uk

Please note: this week the Eucharist will only be celebrated at St Arvans on Tuesday at 9.00, Wednesday & Thursday at 10.00

There will be a live-streamed only Reflection, meditation and celebration of Night Prayer on Tuesday (1st) at 19.00

Fr Michael's day off this week is Friday

A Homily for the First Sunday of Advent

+ Advent is a celebration of hope. For us, in the northern hemisphere, it begins a few weeks before the shortest day, before the natural light begins to increase. It's about lighting a candle in the darkness and waiting … hope is always about something which hasn't happened yet. That's why in the liturgies of Advent we hear so much of the later prophets of the Old

Testament, with their longing for the coming of the Messiah, the one who would save the people of Israel and the whole world and reconcile the human race to God.
The important thing Advent is that it is this time of quiet waiting on God. The meaning is in the waiting, as the poet R.S. Thomas reminds us. Advent is a journey, but it's saying to us that we don't have to travel to find Christ – unless we are prepared to find him in the travelling. No, we find him where we are. And that's the point about Advent – being watchful and having the eyes of our hearts opened to see Christ working in the world and in our own lives and relationships with others.
So today's Gospel ends with an exhortation by Jesus to his disciples to stay awake so that they don't miss the signs of his coming. What he's not doing, of course, is making an imminent prediction of the end of the world – he's using a typical exaggeration of the preaching of the day to make them sit up and take notice, but he admits he doesn't know when the world will end, only the Father knows. What he is saying to us is about now -not at some indefinite point in the future.
So much of what we do – what we're forced to do, maybe - at this time of year runs counter to the spirit of expectation and longing.. Believe it or not, Shami my dog, has been given an Advent calendar again– she wasn't that well during the Summer, so she deserves it. But the point about Advent calendars, whether you're a dog or a human being, is that they teach us s degree of patience, we open a door each day and it leads us on a journey. We don't open them all at once and get left with a tremendous sense of let-down.
There's a difference between being asleep and quietly waiting. The one is the complete opposite of the other, It's more its opposite than a kind of frenzied activity – which *is* a kind of sleep because it insulates us – deadens us – from the reality of God trying to break through into our lives – or better, from seeing that he is always breaking through, even if we don't perceive it.
We're at the very end of November – it's dark, it's cold: the weather is grim , but it is what it is. It's a bit counter-intuitive, though, at this time of year to be jumping up and racing around when our body clocks are telling us, if not actually to hibernate, then at least to hunker down for the winter. It's not an energetic time of year – it's not where we are physically or emotionally. So, the frenzied Advent we are all encouraged to take part in in our present culture– let's face it, in some ways *compelled* to take part in - is poor human psychology, even if it's good retail management. *That* should tell us something.
It's a natural human instinct to want to brighten things up, to have something to look forward to – to shut the darkness and the cold out. And that's spiritually what Advent does. We light candles in the darkness – the darkness of the year, certainly, but also in the darkness and despair of what is going on in the world. Like the prophets of the Old Testament, we dare to hope. But in Advent our hope is gradual, it grows slowly like the light of the pre-dawn. We're preparing ourselves for the coming among us of God's Kingdom
Advent is about waking up to Christ's active presence in our lives now, and not only in the past, or in the future. We are being asked to be alert and on the lookout for the signs that he is with us now and in the life of the world. Life is only too short and sometimes tragically unpredictable - we obviously don't need to be reminded of that at the moment.
This is the advent of the Lord which is taking place now. Our main task this Advent and every Advent, although perhaps particularly *this* Advent, is to ask the Lord to open our hearts and minds to his presence, to see him at work in our lives, to draw us more and more into the circle of his love and life. We are meant to ask ourselves where do we see
And experience it
In these few short weeks ironically when there's so much going on – so much jumping of the celebratory gun - we ask to be aware of our own inner spiritual poverty which is only made rich by Christ's coming among us. Our Advent task isn't to prepare for the end of all things, but for a new beginning for us. And that new beginning is offered constantly to us in the person of the child of Mary, whose birth we will celebrate at the end of Advent, but whose life surrounds us here and now if we have the eyes to see it and the faith to reach out and grasp it, and share his love – his mercy, his kindness - with those around us. +

Daily Prayer this week

Despite all of the distractions at this time of year, we really can focus on Advent during these weeks. We seem to get very busy, and at times have to go to a number of social events or wrestle with budgets and shopping, but the heart of this season is all about expectant hope. So, we begin our Advent journey by giving ourselves some time - just a few minutes each day - to reflect on how much God promises us.

Each morning this week, while we are first waking up, we can name a wish, name an emptiness or feeling of anxiety or worry that we can feel. It is into the raw places in our lives such as these, that our Lord came to be with us. So, this week, we can begin to invite our Lord to be Incarnate in our lives, in the places we need him the most.

Our goal this week is to let ourselves feel like those to whom the promises of our God are made. We want to get in touch with ourselves, especially those parts of ourselves that are in need of a Savior. We do this by keeping our focus on the places that feel like a desert, the places that feel like we've been through a war, the places that feel like a lifeless stump. When we have a hard time seeing, we ask for the grace to be able to believe the promise that we shall see. When we seem deaf,

we place our trust in the One who assures us that we will hear. And when we feel beaten down and awfully lowly, we turn to the One who promises that we will "find joy in the Lord." And, who among us doesn't have days on which we are aware of various kinds of wounds? On the day of promise, "the Lord binds up the wounds of his people."

As we let these deep realities of our daily, busy lives come into focus and interact with the readings, something wonderful happens. We become more and more aware of our need for God. Very naturally and quite spontaneously, a prayer comes forth from deep within us, which we can say in the smallest moments of our busiest days. "Come, Lord." "Come and save me." "Come and be with me in all of these messy, empty, dry and disordered places in my life." "Come, Lord. I feel my longing for you grow. I feel my hope grow. And, as I place my hope in your promises, Advent begins to come alive in me."

All of this preparation can happen in the simplest way, before the first Christmas decoration goes up. And, for each moment of each day that we encounter a place that we desire, that we long for our Lord's coming, we can express our thanksgiving. Each night we might pray:

The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom should I fear?
The LORD is my life's refuge; of whom should I be afraid?" (Ps. 27)

With thanks to Creighton University's Online Ministries (adapted)

The Ministry Area Prayer Group

Thursdays at 7.00
Please join us, everyone is welcome and no experience is necessary!
Please contact David on 07887 853479 (david-carne@outlook.com) for any prayers that you would like us to include or for any questions that you have.

St Arvans Tea and Chat

2.30 – 4. 30 p.m.
Saturday December 12th
and usually every second Saturday of the month Childrens activity table

This is a Christmas Special.
Entry is £6 and will include a raffle ticket and a gift in addition to thr usual refreshments. There will also be carol singing. Everyone is welcome!

Aging Well

As we get older some things in life become more of a challenge, physically, legally and often from advances in technology.

We are running a set of talks by people who may be able to help in some of these on **the first Monday of the month from 1.00 till 2.00 at St. Christophers Church, Bulwark, CHEPSTOW**

We have been able to secure people who can help lead us through some if these matters and we have a number of other organisations in the wings for future dates in the New Year.

Monday December 7th
Police and Monmouthshire Building Society staff helping on cyber security and scams
Monday January 4th
A local solicitor talking about wills, power of attorney etc.
Monday February 8th
MIND 5 ways to wellbeing
(Due to holidays this will be on the 2nd Monday)
This is open to all the churches within the Ministry Area

2027 St James, Devauden Calendars are now on sale

ADVENT GROUPS

Mondays at 7 p.m. at St Christopher's, Bulwark
Reflecting on Bl Mary, Mother of Jesus

Tuesdays at 3.30 p.m.
'Advent: A Season of Surprises'
Contact Carol 07380 992494
For further details

Walk with Me
Advent Booklets
are available free at the back of St Arvan's Church. Please take one as we begin our Advent journey to Christmas

Advent for Busy People

The challenge of entering Advent, or of entering into any religious experience, these days is that we are often very busy. We may feel bad that we don't have time, but it is true, we just don't have time. The result is that our experience of Advent is four Sunday Masses, which begin with lighting a new candle in the Advent wreath and the rest of it just passes around us, without any real effect.

A Proposal for a New Way to experience Advent This Year
If we can't squeeze any more time out of our schedule to use the resources on this site, including the daily prayer and the reflections, then there are two things that are critical for a new way to experience Advent: desire and focus.

Desire
The powerful advantage of Advent is that it offers us light in the midst of darkness, hope in the midst of despair, liberty in the midst of captivity, and peace in the midst of war or conflict. The key to a grace-filled Advent is to begin by identifying where I am experiencing darkness, despair, captivity and war. Recognizing our own unique version of these struggles is the first grace of Advent. We can't say "Come, Lord Jesus" with any real meaning unless we have a felt experience of what it is we need. Once we experience our need, then the desire can formulate in our heart to

ask for what we need.

Focus
How do we do this first step, if we don't have time? We do it by focusing our attention whenever we can, especially during the "background" times of our day. These are the in between times – in the shower, getting dressed, walking down stairs, getting coffee, driving to work, walking down the hall, doing laundry, shopping, walking to the bathroom, preparing a meal, walking from one meeting to another, heading home from work, getting ready for bed. In these very brief times, there is something in our minds. Sometimes, we are "day dreaming" or our minds are wandering. At other times, we are thinking about what we have to do, or we are full of anxiety about something coming up, or perhaps we are "replaying" a memory or imagining a future conversation. Whatever is going on in our minds and hearts during those "background" times can easily be refocused. It takes a little practice and some discipline, but it works.

The First Week of Advent
Our days of the first week of Advent can be transformed if we decide – consciously choose, with a deep desire – to use the background times of each day to explore where I am in spiritual need. We can use the images of Advent to help ourselves explore "darkness," for example. Darkness can include any discouragement, disappointment, frustration and any limits I'm experiencing. It might be struggles in my primary relationships or feelings of self-doubt. It might be struggles at work, that tend to dominate my life and hurt my family relationships. It might be repeated struggles with temptations and sin that have become patterns in my life and embarrass me, while I can't foresee any hope of change.

Don't Rush – First Things First
It is important not to skip this first step. There might be Christmas decorations in the shopping malls or Christmas parties to go to, but the first step we need to experience is to slow down and begin at the beginning. If we are to have a deep religious experience that allows us to celebrate the Incarnation – in the past and its meaning for me today – then we have to first taste the depth of our longing for a Savior. Until we feel our need for a Savior, we are at risk of missing gifts of the Season of Advent altogether.

Step Two – Longing and Anticipation
Once we experience our deep desire for Light and Hope, Liberty and Peace, we can start to pray with deep longing and anticipation. Longing is an expression of how much we want something. Anticipation is an expression of how much we expect it to become a reality. Weeks 2 and 3 of Advent can become days of real faith, full of deep desire and powerful hope. Of course, the prayers and readings of this period are all about offering us these graces. The expression of promise and expectant hope can feed our desires.

Letting It Become Personal
The second part of Advent takes us into the story of Jesus' coming to be our Saviour. This is not the story of a generic god saving us. Jesus is sent to be a human Saviour. God becomes one of us in Jesus. So, in our longing and anticipation, we can begin to get to know him through his relatives who prepare the way for his coming. We can see the hesitation and questioning of Zachary and Elizabeth, then Mary and Joseph. They all make great acts of faith to believe, to trust, that the promises made would be fulfilled. We can use the background times of the third week of Advent to let our faith become personal, as we express our faith, our trust in Jesus' coming to us this year. "Lord, Jesus, I trust that you can bring your Light into my life, that you can give me hope as you free me and fill me with your peace. Thank you for letting me prepare for your coming this year. Come, Lord Jesus, come."

The Final Days of Advent – Getting to the Manger
So often the final days before Christmas become a blur of activity. Hopefully, this year, we have gotten good at using the background time each day to focus our reflection and conversation with God the Father and with Jesus. Now that we come to the hectic days, we can choose to stay focused right up to and including Christmas. One of the special ways to do that is to not lose the manger. It is the central piece of the story and it is loaded with meaning and message, consolation and fruit for us. The richest of the Advent experiences are here – in letting ourselves imagine the Holy Family of Joseph and Mary arriving in Bethlehem for the census, having nowhere to stay. A special transformation begins to happen the day before Christmas when we start to imagine that stable where our Savior was born. It is the deepening antidote to some of the excesses of Christmas preparations – too much drinking, too much glitz, celebrations which are quite a few degrees off center. It is there in the stable, in its humble feeding trough that I will find the fulfillment of my longing and hope. In that poverty my Savior, my Light and Peace, reveals to me the Good News he came to bring. He came into this world as he would leave it – humble and dependent upon God.

Christmas Joy
Christmas will be totally different, after this kind of deep Advent journey. We can't help but experience real joy for having prepared to be renewed in the gift of life that comes to us through Jesus. We will sing, "Oh Come All Ye Faithful, Joyful and Triumphant," with a much deeper meaning for us. When there is more light than darkness, more freedom than addiction, more hope than discouragement, more peace than conflict, we have much reason to rejoice at such a gift. Putting the meaning back into Christmas is reason enough to give Advent a new chance this year, in the midst of our busy lives.

With thanks to Creighton University's Online Ministries (adapted)