



Silence

Prayer

Faith

Love

Service

Peace

A SIMPLE PATH FOR ADVENT

*Prayer and reflection programme
by the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton*

Introduction

Welcome to this programme of reflections for Advent 2016. This year each week will focus on the First Readings of the four Sundays of Advent, this will be followed by a reflection inspired by St Teresa of Calcutta.

We suggest that the programme be used ahead of the given Sunday of Advent, but it would be equally possible to use the booklet to “follow up” on the Sunday celebration.

The booklet is written primarily for group use, but there is no reason why these should not be used for private reflection. The format followed each week is:

- A. Opening Prayer** - Suggested Prayer
- B. Lectio Divina** - Using the 1st Reading
- C. A Simple Path** - Reflection inspired by St Teresa
- D. Closing Prayer** - Intercessions followed by Prayer

Please feel free to adapt the material to your own needs.

Feedback from previous years shows that groups usually profit by adapting the booklet to suit their own situation. This can be done in a variety of ways, for example, by including a hymn, or additional prayers, or if time allows, reflecting on additional readings of the Sunday etc.

For advice on how best to use the material, contact David Wills.

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A Simple Path

The fruit of Silence is Prayer.

The fruit of Prayer is Faith.

The fruit of Faith is Love.

The fruit of Love is Service.

The fruit of Service is Peace.

St Teresa of Calcutta

This message adorned a business card that St Teresa would give to visitors and she also frequently shared this wisdom in her talks and addresses that she gave around the world.

This Simple Path inspires not only the front cover but the overall content of this year's Advent Prayer and Reflection programme. Our opening prayer will use St Teresa's words, then the first element is a time of Lectio Divina which connects with the principle that the fruit of silence is prayer. Finally each of the four weeks will have a particular focus on the other fruits of Faith, Love, Service and Peace as inspired by St Teresa and her Missionaries of Charity. This will include both a quote from St Teresa and a reflection written by a diocesan priest, Fr Gerard Hatton.

Fr Gerard Hatton on Mother Teresa's Simple Path

I have never met Mother Teresa, but I have always felt that I have a had a connection with her, my mum's family where born and brought up in Calcutta, their home is not very far from Mother House and their parish church was the place where Mother Teresa had been brought to lay in front of the Blessed Sacrament before her Funeral. My mum went to Loreto Convent school and my uncle served the newly founded order at Mother House. I first went to Calcutta as a Deacon and did some days of service with her sisters and the many volunteers. it has had a huge effect on my spiritual and priestly life.

Lectio Divina Guidelines

Lectio Divina is about an encounter with God through Scripture. It is prayer. It is not about studying of scripture for knowledge or information. It is centred on the heart rather than the head.

In the practice of Lectio Divina there are four 'steps': Reading (Lectio), Meditation (Meditatio), Prayer (Oratio) and Contemplation (Contemplatio).

Though all forms of Lectio Divina have a similar pattern there is great variety in specific guidelines, in particular whether you using this practice individually or in a group. We suggest that you use the following guidelines for this programme.

First Reading: Read the passage aloud, slowly.

Second Reading: Pause a few seconds, and then read the passage aloud a second time. After two minutes of silence, invite participants to share word, phrase, or image only. (Meanings and interpretations will come later.)

Third Reading: read the passage aloud, slowly. After two or three minutes, invite participants to share 1-2 sentences in response to the question - What might God be saying to you?

Fourth Reading: read the passage aloud, slowly. After three minutes of silence, invite participants to a time of prayer (about two minutes). Ask them to lift to God the thanksgiving, concerns, and intercessions that meditation on the text has called forth.

Reflecting on the experience. Invite participants to discuss what did they receive?

Bishop Richard has frequently expressed his hope that Lectio Divina will be a major feature in the life of our Diocesan family

Lectio Divina – Holy Reading – enables us to listen to God’s Word in a way that is simple and refreshing...It is truly wonderful to realise that God wishes to say something to you and to me, as individuals whom he has formed and whom he loves. Through this short time of meditation on the Word of God, we are – over time – formed by the Word. God speaks to us and we are transformed.

We can be formed, too, in the many groups in which we gather. There are many means of formation in the life of the Church, of course, but through opening the mind and heart to the Word of God our formation will be rooted in the love and mercy of the Father. This will have the most profound effect on the Mission to which the Lord has called us.

***Taken from the Pastoral Letter for Trinity Sunday,
22nd May 2016***

“The first requirement for prayer is silence.
People of prayer are people of silence.”
St Teresa of Calcutta

Week One

Readings for the First Sunday of Advent Year A
Isaiah 2: 1-5; Psalm 122 (121); Romans 13: 11-14; Matthew 24: 37-44

A. Welcome and Opening Prayer:

Begin with the Sign of Cross, then ask the Holy Spirit to guide your meeting, allow for a period of silence and then use the following prayer.

Leader: The fruit of Silence is Prayer.

All: Lord, teach us to Pray

Leader: The fruit of Prayer is Faith.

All: Lord, give us the gift of Faith

Leader: The fruit of Faith is Love.

All: Lord, help us to choose Love

Leader: The fruit of Love is Service.

All: Lord, grant us a heart for Service

Leader: The fruit of Service is Peace.

All: Lord, may our souls be at Peace.

B. Lectio Divina with First Reading

<p>“Silence will teach us a lot. It will teach us to speak with Christ and to speak joyfully to our brothers and sisters.” <i>St Teresa</i></p>

Follow guidelines from front of booklet.

A Reading from the Prophet Isaiah (2: 1-5)

The vision of Isaiah son of Amoz, concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

In the days to come
the mountain of the Temple of the Lord
shall tower above the mountains
and be lifted higher than the hills.
All the nations will stream to it,
peoples without number will come to it; and they will say:

'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
to the Temple of the God of Jacob
that he may teach us his ways
so that we may walk in his paths;
since the Law will go out from Zion,
and the oracle of the Lord from Jerusalem.'

He will wield authority over the nations
and adjudicate between many peoples;
these will hammer their swords into ploughshares,
their spears into sickles.
Nation will not lift sword against nation,
there will be no more training for war. '
O House of Jacob, come,
let us walk in the light of the Lord.

C. A Simple Path

Ask a group member to read the quote below aloud. Take a moment to reflect and perhaps underline any word or phrase that particularly spoke to you. Continue with reflection and discuss the question.

St Teresa on Faith

“An important public official of my country once asked me “Mother Teresa, you say you pray for me. Tell me the truth: don’t you want me to become a Christian?” I answered him, “If anyone has something they value a great deal, that person is very likely to want

his or her friends to share it. I am convinced that faith in Christ is the best thing to have in the world. I would like for all to know and love Christ at least as much as I love him. Obviously, I would also like for you to know and love him. But faith is a gift from God, and he gives it to whomever he chooses”

Further Reflection on Faith

Volunteering with the Missionaries of Charity is not a simple exercise in do-gooding, people from all over the world come to help; there is a range of ages, backgrounds, cultural and spiritual traditions and many who do not believe in God. But the sisters ask that those who serve will also pray with them, to experience with them Christ. In this day and age you would wonder how they get away with it, but they do

St Teresa's work with the poor and needy of Calcutta came secondary to her call to be in perfect union with Christ, the call to serve the poor was what she explained as her 'call within the Call', the need to be with him as her spouse was the most important thing, her faith in Christ even when she did not experience his presence for many years fuelled everything she did.

I recently heard how she would repose the Blessed Sacrament after the sisters evening Adoration with the receptacle that holds the Eucharistic Host pressed close to her. A wonderful example of the trust and love she had in Him even as she spent many years in desolation and darkness not able to feel His presence.

This can give us hope as Advent reminds us to look to Jesus the light of the world, knowing that His dawn will break upon us again. Teresa's experience can help us in our doubt, in our darkness, in our lack of feeling his Presence; or help us in our need to Love Him so we can serve him in the poor and needy that we meet.

Like St Mother Teresa how can we respond to be His light?

D. Intercessions and Closing Prayer

Spend a few minutes praying for the intentions of the group and the world, and conclude with the prayer.

**Jesus Prayer - by Cardinal John Henry Newman (1901-1990)
(Recited daily after Communion, by Missionary Sisters of Charity)**

Dear Jesus,
help me to spread your fragrance wherever I go.
Flood my soul with your spirit and life.
Penetrate and possess my whole being so utterly
that my life may only be a radiance of yours.
Shine through me and be so in me
that every soul I come in contact with
may feel your presence in my soul.

Let them look up and see no longer me, but only Jesus!
Stay with me and then I will begin to shine as you shine,
so to shine as to be a light to others.

The light, O Jesus, will be all from you; none of it will be mine.
It will be you, shining on others through me.
Let me thus praise you in the way which you love best,
by shining on those around me.

Let me preach you without preaching,
not by words but by example,
by the catching force, the sympathetic influence of what I do,
the evident fullness of the love my heart bears for you.
Amen.

Week Two

Readings for the Second Sunday of Advent Year A
Isaiah 11: 1-10; Psalm 71(72); Romans 15: 4-9; Matthew 3: 1-12

A. Welcome and Opening Prayer:

Begin with the Sign of Cross, then ask the Holy Spirit to guide your meeting, allow for a period of silence and then use the following prayer.

Leader: The fruit of Silence is Prayer.

All: Lord, teach us to Pray

Leader: The fruit of Prayer is Faith.

All: Lord, give us the gift of Faith

Leader: The fruit of Faith is Love.

All: Lord, help us to choose Love

Leader: The fruit of Love is Service.

All: Lord, grant us a heart for Service

Leader: The fruit of Service is Peace.

All: Lord, may our souls be at Peace.

B. Lectio Divina with First Reading

“Silence will teach us a lot. It will teach us to speak with Christ and to speak joyfully to our brothers and sisters.” *St Teresa*

Follow guidelines from front of booklet.

A Reading from the Prophet Isaiah (11: 1-10)

A shoot springs from the stock of Jesse,
a scion thrusts from his roots:
on him the spirit of the Lord rests,
a spirit of wisdom and insight,
a spirit of counsel and power,

a spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.
(The fear of the Lord is his breath.)
He does not judge by appearances,
he gives no verdict on hearsay,
but judges the wretched with integrity,
and with equity gives a verdict for the poor of the land.
His word is a rod that strikes the ruthless:
his sentences bring death to the wicked.

Integrity is the loincloth round his waist,
faithfulness the belt about his hips.

The wolf lives with the lamb,
the panther lies down with the kid,
calf and lion cub feed together
with a little boy to lead them.
The cow and the bear make friends,
their young lie down together.
The lion eats straw like the ox.
The infant plays over the cobra's hole;
into the viper's lair
the young child puts his hand.
They do no hurt, no harm,
on all my holy mountain,
for the country is filled with the knowledge of the Lord
as the waters swell the sea.

That day, the root of Jesse
shall stand as a signal to the peoples.
It will be sought out by the nations
and its home will be glorious.

C. A Simple Path

Ask a group member to read the quotes below aloud. Take a moment to reflect and perhaps underline any word or phrase that particularly spoke to you. Continue with reflection and discuss the question.

St Teresa on Love

“All sicknesses have cures. The only one that cannot be cured is the sickness of feeling unloved. I invite all those who appreciate our work to look around them and be willing to love those who have no love and to offer them their services. Are we not, by definition, messengers of love?”

“Let us not be satisfied just by giving money. Money is not everything. Money is something you can get. The poor need the work of our hands, the love of our hearts. Love, an abundant love, is the expression of our Christian religion.”

Further Reflection on Love

With the Sisters there are no mod cons, St Mother Teresa neither wanted nor sought to build the most expensive hospitals and clinics that money could buy; which many criticised her for. For her love fuelled everything, the poor and needy knew they were loved when they were in her presence. She reminds the Church of the important theological virtue of love, the greatest command from Jesus to love your neighbour. She has brought out an important dimension which can easily get misunderstood about the suffering of Christ. On the cross Christ reveals why He has come, because He thirsts for all humanity, He is dying to be in union with us and through the Glory of the Resurrection shows our restoration and that of the whole world. Being a people of love is the clearest way to show this.

So charity in its true form communicates His love and has the ability to change us. Our notions of charity have got stuck at giving, in the West we throw money at things, it's not a criticism it's just a fact, we find it easier to give to all sorts of different charities because we can, because we have the means to do so, because we don't have the time and it's harder to find the really poor in our areas, they are harder to spot than the people on the streets of my

beloved Calcutta but they are there. Jesus is hurting in the poor and needy He wants us to rediscover Him there.

How can we love the things that challenge us?

D. Intercessions and Closing Prayer

Spend a few minutes praying for the intentions of the group and the world, and conclude with the following prayer.

**Jesus Prayer - by Cardinal John Henry Newman (1901-1990)
(Recited daily after Communion, by Missionary Sisters of Charity)**

Dear Jesus,
help me to spread your fragrance wherever I go.
Flood my soul with your spirit and life.
Penetrate and possess my whole being so utterly
that my life may only be a radiance of yours.
Shine through me and be so in me
that every soul I come in contact with
may feel your presence in my soul.

Let them look up and see no longer me, but only Jesus!
Stay with me and then I will begin to shine as you shine,
so to shine as to be a light to others.

The light, O Jesus, will be all from you; none of it will be mine.
It will be you, shining on others through me.
Let me thus praise you in the way which you love best,
by shining on those around me.

Let me preach you without preaching,
not by words but by example,
by the catching force, the sympathetic influence of what I do,
the evident fullness of the love my heart bears for you.
Amen.

Week Three

Readings for the Third Sunday of Advent Year A
Isaiah 35: 1-6, 10; Psalm 146 (145); James 5: 7-10; Matthew 11: 2-11

A. Welcome and Opening Prayer:

Begin with the Sign of Cross, then ask the Holy Spirit to guide your meeting, allow for a period of silence and then use the following prayer.

Leader: The fruit of Silence is Prayer.

All: Lord, teach us to Pray

Leader: The fruit of Prayer is Faith.

All: Lord, give us the gift of Faith

Leader: The fruit of Faith is Love.

All: Lord, help us to choose Love

Leader: The fruit of Love is Service.

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Leader: The fruit of Service is Peace.

All: Lord, may our souls be at Peace.

B. Lectio Divina with First Reading

<p>“Silence will teach us a lot. It will teach us to speak with Christ and to speak joyfully to our brothers and sisters.” <i>St Teresa</i></p>

Follow guidelines from front of booklet.

A Reading from the Prophet Isaiah (35:1-6, 10)

Let the wilderness and the dry-lands exult,
let the wasteland rejoice and bloom,
let it bring forth flowers like the jonquil,
let it rejoice and sing for joy.

The glory of Lebanon is bestowed on it,
the splendour of Carmel and Sharon;
they shall see the glory of the Lord,
the splendour of our God.

Strengthen all weary hands,
steady all trembling knees
and say to all faint hearts,
'Courage! Do not be afraid.

'Look your God is coming,
vengeance is coming,
the retribution of God;
he is coming to save you.'

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
the ears of the deaf unsealed,
then the lame shall leap like a deer
and the tongues of the dumb sing for joy,
for those the Lord has ransomed shall return.

They will come to Zion shouting for joy,
everlasting joy on their faces;
joy and gladness will go with them
and sorrow and lament be ended.

C. A Simple Path

Ask a group member to read the excerpt below aloud. Take a moment to reflect and perhaps underline any word or phrase that particularly spoke to you. Continue with reflection and discuss the question.

St Teresa on Service

“It is very possible that you will find human beings, surely very near you, needing affection and love. Do not deny them these. Show them, above all, that you sincerely recognise that they are human beings, that they are important to you. Who is that someone? That person is Jesus himself: Jesus who is hidden under the guise of suffering!”

“To those who say they admire my courage I have to tell them that I would not have any if I were not convinced that each time I touch the body of a leper, a body that reeks with a foul stench, I touch Christ’s body, the same Christ I receive in the Eucharist.”

Service

In January of this year I spent four days doing some service with the missionary sisters of Charity fondly known as the Mother Teresa sisters in Calcutta. It was the feast of the Epiphany and I was attached to Kalighat the Home for the dying. That day there was a Bishop from Canada offering the Mass, every Sunday the nuns, volunteers, men and women who are there gather for the Mass, those who are in bed can hear the Mass being offered. It does not matter what religion you are, spiritual things are highly prized in India.

During this Mass, which was centred on Jesus who is the light of the whole world and that personal and corporate call to worship him, as we gazed at the crib, the decorations and sang joyfully and noisily 'We Three Kings' there was an emergency - the street volunteers brought in a man who was dying, he was dehydrated, full of sores and open wounds, he was in a very bad way. They brought him past the Altar and took him into the bathroom, it's not like any bathroom we know, one large stone top, hoses and buckets and powered soap, painted on the wall of this wash room is the words The Body of Christ, we could not leave the Altar to help, so the Mass carried on.

As the nuns, doctor and some volunteers rushed to the aid of this man, they scrubbed him very hard, shaved his head and face, they put him on a drip, dressed his sores, gave him fresh pyjamas and put him into a bed, it must have been years since he had experienced freshly washed clothes and a clean bed. They made him comfortable and then they all came back to Mass and received our Lord in his Body and Blood. What struck me was that it was the same Christ who was being made truly present on the Altar was the same Christ that they were looking after.

How can we increase our love for our religion and deepen our need to serve not for our sake but for His glory?

D. Intercessions and Closing Prayer

Spend a few minutes praying for the intentions of the group and the world, and conclude with the following prayer.

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(Recited daily after Communion, by Missionary Sisters of Charity)

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Penetrate and possess my whole being so utterly
that my life may only be a radiance of yours.
Shine through me and be so in me
that every soul I come in contact with
may feel your presence in my soul.

Let them look up and see no longer me, but only Jesus!
Stay with me and then I will begin to shine as you shine,
so to shine as to be a light to others.

The light, O Jesus, will be all from you; none of it will be mine.
It will be you, shining on others through me.
Let me thus praise you in the way which you love best,
by shining on those around me.

Let me preach you without preaching,
not by words but by example,
by the catching force, the sympathetic influence of what I do,
the evident fullness of the love my heart bears for you.
Amen.

Week Four

Readings for the Fourth Sunday of Advent Year A
Isaiah 7: 10-14; Psalm 23 (24); Romans 1: 1-7; Matthew 1: 18-25

A. Welcome and Opening Prayer:

Begin with the Sign of Cross, then ask the Holy Spirit to guide your meeting, allow for a period of silence and then use the following prayer.

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Leader: The fruit of Prayer is Faith.

All: Lord, give us the gift of Faith

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B. Lectio Divina with First Reading

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Follow guidelines from front of booklet.

A Reading from the Prophet Isaiah (7: 10-14)

The Lord spoke to Ahaz and said, 'Ask the Lord your God for a sign for yourself coming either from the depths of Sheol or from the heights above.'

'No,' Ahaz answered 'I will not put the Lord to the test.'

Then Isaiah said:

'Listen now, House of David:

are you not satisfied with trying the patience of men
without trying the patience of my God, too?

The Lord himself, therefore,
will give you a sign.

It is this: the maiden is with child
and will soon give birth to a son
whom she will call Emmanuel,
a name which means "God-is-with-us".'

C. A Simple Path

Ask a group member to read the quotes below aloud. Take a moment to reflect and perhaps underline any word or phrase that particularly spoke to you. Continue with reflection and discuss the question.

St Teresa on Peace

“War is the killing of human beings. Who can even think that it could ever be “just”?”

“To die in peace with God is the culmination of any human life. Of those who have died in our houses, I have never seen anyone die in despair or cursing. They have all died serenely. I took a man I had picked up from the street to our Home for the Dying in Calcutta. When I was leaving he told me “I have lived like an animal on the streets, but I am going to die like an angel. I will die smiling”. He did die smiling, because he felt loved and surrounded by care. That is the greatness of our poor.”

Further Reflection on Peace

Can we get too cosy in Advent? Can all the greenery, candles, shopping and upcoming good will to men lull us into a false sense of security? The world is not at peace and Advent should help us to remember that this is exactly why we need Christ to be born again this Christmas. St Mother Teresa's very existence was to help Christ be in born in the places that needed his peace. She could not rest with Calcutta but went all around the world founding convents in the saddest and most troubled parts of the world.

Earlier this year we heard of the news of those sisters of Mothers who were killed in their home for the Elderly in the Yemen. Their Blood poured out like Christ's shows us that we are called to be that grit in the world, we Christians are in a battle but our weapons should be fruits of love. Our desire like St Teresa's should be to establish that reign of peace that can only come about by His presence.

Where in my life, my family, my parish, my world can I bring the infant Lord to dwell?

D. Intercessions and Closing Prayer

Spend a few minutes praying for the intentions of the group and the world, and conclude with the following prayer.

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Shine through me and be so in me
that every soul I come in contact with
may feel your presence in my soul.

Let them look up and see no longer me, but only Jesus!
Stay with me and then I will begin to shine as you shine,
so to shine as to be a light to others.

The light, O Jesus, will be all from you; none of it will be mine.
It will be you, shining on others through me.
Let me thus praise you in the way which you love best,
by shining on those around me.

Let me preach you without preaching,
not by words but by example,
by the catching force, the sympathetic influence of what I do,
the evident fullness of the love my heart bears for you.
Amen.

Afterword

From www.motherteresainsurrey.org



You have asked how I would see the work of the Missionaries of Charity if I were a priest or sister in Surrey or Sussex. The mission of the Church in your diocese is much more challenging. Our people's problems in India are relatively easy to solve. We see Jesus in each one of the poorest of the poor. We take the needy into our hospices, wash them, dress their wounds, give them a bowl of rice, a cuddle and tell them that they are wanted and that God loves them. Your people's problems lie deep at the bottom of their hearts...they are problems to do with wanting more and more money, problems with regard to sexuality, marriage and family breakdown. These are big problems which will stay at the bottom of their hearts unless and until they see in you something of God. They will not see anything of God in you unless you are a man of compassion and prayer. Go away, be a man of prayer. Then your people's problems will emerge and you will have a real mission in Surrey and Sussex.

Remembered in a conversation
between Mother Teresa and Mgr Barry Wymes.

Acknowledgements:

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1. How did you obtain a copy?
 - a. Purchased booklet from DABCEC/parish
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2. How did you use the material?
 - a. Group_____ (Size of Group)_____
 - b. Private reflection_____
3. How did you rate the material?

Score from 1 (very poor) to 5 (excellent)

a. Structure of sessions	c. A Simple Path
b. Lectio Divina	d. Prayer
4. What did you most appreciate?

5. What needs further development?



6. Any further comments?

(continue overleaf)

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