

Faith Sharing 3 – Advent 2019

Season of Contrast



**From Sunrise to Sunset
From Sunset to Sunrise
The Orderliness of God**



The Orderliness of God's World

Pray silently and briefly hold: “Be silent. Be still. Alone: empty before your God. Say nothing. Ask nothing. Be silent. Be still. Let your God look upon you. He loves you. That is all.”

Introduction: Whether you are Brother Guy, Pope Francis’ Astronomer (in Dundee last month) or Brian Cox, Professor of Physics (on television regularly), you will wonder at the orderliness of nature. Both scientists would look at our world with a sense of awe. In Brother Guy’s case, we do know he does so from a Catholic standpoint.

Advent (1): We should begin by pausing for a few moments to consider the two well recognised photos on our front page and think only with gratitude and a sense of awe at the beauty and orderliness of God’s world.

Advent (2): We should now ask, “do we, or other people, really consider the awesomeness of Advent?” Is it?...



OR



The shallow or the deep?

The complicated or the simple?

The impetuous or the pondered?

The superficial or the straightforward?

We are on an Advent Journey. What does that really mean?

A Journey of Discipleship

Although in our humanity it is sometimes easy to forget, the Journey of Discipleship is what we are on...constantly and endlessly. The Fourth Gospel takes its readers on that journey. As recounted by John, we read about a number of geographical journeys from place to place, but the real journey is described as the **inward one** to the heart where **life in abundance** can be experienced. It is a journey of choice and direction. Some of the stark choices are:

- To live in the light or in darkness
- To take the path of salvation or the path of unbelief
- To live only in this world or to live for the world to come.

We may well wonder as to the meaning of these choices as well as dwelling on what John writes in his Gospel about ...

Jesus' invitation to discipleship:

Jn 8:31 "If you make my word your home you will indeed be my disciples." (after the prophecy of being lifted up, "you will know that I am he.")

Jn 12:16 "Whoever serves me must follow me; and wherever I am my servant will be there too." (just as the "hour" of the passion has dawned)

Jn 13:35 "It is by your love for one another that everyone will recognise you as my disciple." (in the "farewell" discourse)

Jn 15:8 "It is to the glory of my Father that you should bear much fruit, and then you will be my disciples." (In the farewell discourse, during the teaching on vine and branches)

Discipleship: As we come to an end of our present Advent Faith Sharing, we should return to the very beginning of St John's Gospel; the Prologue (Jn 1:1-18). Here, John is seeking to describe how Jesus is **the Word**, giving us a **Life in Abundance**.

The Prologue

The beginning of John's Gospel (Jn 1: 1-18), the Prologue, is of such importance to our Faith that it should really be pondered verse by verse. However, as time permits, we can only briefly contemplate it. The following brief focus should hopefully emphasise the relevance of his life to appreciating the true value of his Birth. Take some time to ponder the following texts.

Jn 1: 1,2...The Eternal Word refers to Jesus, meaning (1)he was here at the very beginning of Creation, (2)there was the closest connection between the Word and God, (3)the Word was God.

Jn 1: 3...God is responsible for all creation. God did not create out of any evil or flawed matter. Evil came later. That is why Jesus was sent to us.

Jn 1: 4...Jesus was (and is) the life and light. (1) Life here clearly means the opposite of destruction and condemnation and death. (2) What does eternal life mean for us? It cannot mean a life in its present form. That could seem like a curse? When Jesus offers us eternal life that must be the life that God lives. (3) To achieve that life we have to believe in Jesus (Jn 6:47).

Jn 1: 4..(1) Light. Jesus calls himself the light of the world (Jn8:12). He is the light which shines in the darkness (Jn 1:5). Within darkness is chaos, where we are at the mercy of our fears.

The rest of the Prologue is worth private reading when time allows.

Concluding Prayer

A solemn thanksgiving for the abundance of creation

The ends of the earth stand in awe
at the sight of your wonders.

The lands of sunrise and sunset
you fill with your joy.

Psalms 65