

Monday 1 December

Advent is the time in the Church's year when we look forward to the coming of the child, Jesus. It inevitably feels like a time of waiting, a time which children feel is long; "I can't wait for Christmas to come," they often say. And what sustains us in our waiting? Perhaps we can recall the story of Jacob in the book of Genesis. He was promised the hand of Rachel in marriage if he worked for his father for seven years. And it tells us that he worked for these seven years "and the time seemed like only a few days for him, because he loved her."

Let us pray:

Lord, fill us with the same spirit of love which Jacob felt, so that we spend Advent in good works, in preparation for the birth of Jesus.

Our Father...

Tuesday 2 December

Mary's cousin, Elizabeth, had waited long and weary to bear a child and was past child-bearing age when the miracle happened. She was to have a son, and he was to be called John. Why the name John? Because the angel had said so. His faith in God's goodness was to be richly rewarded.

Let us pray:

Despite the disappointments of life, her failure to conceive, Elizabeth kept faith in the goodness of God. We, too, may have our own faith tested when we meet with drawbacks and failures. Keep us strong in our trust in your goodness, O Lord.

Hail Mary...

Wednesday 3 December

In the gospel of St John, we are told of the sick man who, for 38 years, had lain beside the pool near the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem. When the waters stirred up, whoever was first into the water was healed of their illness. This man had no one to help him get into the water, but still he waited. This perseverance gave Jesus the opportunity to intervene in his life. Not only did he tell him to get up and walk; he also told him to stop sinning or worse would happen to him.

Let us pray:

Lord, you see how weak we are in faith, needing to be stirred into action by your grace. Keep us open to your love.

Our Father

Thursday 4 December

Mary is the prime example of someone happy to be a handmaid of the Lord, but prepared to accept the challenge offered by God – to be the mother of Jesus. She didn't know what was going to be involved, but had the right mix of flexibility and strength to be true to God's call.

Let us pray:

Lord, often we don't know what the consequences of our choices are going to lead to. Keep us faithful to the values you teach and inspired by the example of your mother.

Hail Mary...

Friday 5 December

"Dare to be as much as you can be," was the guidance offered by St Thomas Aquinas. We are all blessed with a variety of gifts which we are encouraged to use to make us more fully human and to benefit our brothers and sisters. As St Leo the Great said, "The glory of God is (wo)man fully alive."

Let us pray:

Lord, help us to respond to the challenge to be all we can be in the service of all mankind. May Mary and her infant son, Jesus, be our inspiration. Through Christ our Lord.

Hail Mary.....