

# Third Sunday in Advent

Use some or all of this reflection to help guide your personal journey through this week of Advent

## Reflect

### **Prepare to see differently.**

Advent has many nuances depending on your culture, background and traditions.

It depends also on what life is like for you right now. Advent can be influenced by past experiences, plus the anticipation of what might be coming next.

Also, for so many around the world, anticipating Christmas is coloured by their immediate (or past) experiences of war, famine, natural disaster, as well as current life circumstances -unemployment, family violence, illness and grief.

HOW COMPLEX, and how hard! This isn't quite the story that we might want to be told, but its honest, and within it we find Grace.

## Read

### Isaiah 35 1-10

**1** The desert and the parched land will be glad;  
the wilderness will rejoice and blossom.  
Like the crocus, <sup>2</sup>it will burst into bloom;  
it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy.  
The glory of Lebanon will be given to it,  
the splendour of Carmel and Sharon;  
they will see the glory of the Lord,  
the splendour of our God.

<sup>3</sup>Strengthen the feeble hands,  
steady the knees that give way;  
<sup>4</sup>say to those with fearful hearts,  
"Be strong, do not fear;  
your God will come,  
he will come with vengeance;  
with divine retribution  
he will come to save you."

<sup>5</sup>Then will the eyes of the blind be opened  
and the ears of the deaf unstopped.

<sup>6</sup>Then will the lame leap like a deer,  
and the mute tongue shout for joy.  
Water will gush forth in the wilderness  
and streams in the desert.

<sup>7</sup> The burning sand will become a pool,  
the thirsty ground bubbling springs.  
In the haunts where jackals once lay,  
grass and reeds and papyrus will grow.

<sup>8</sup> And a highway will be there;  
it will be called the Way of Holiness;  
it will be for those who walk on that Way.  
The unclean will not journey on it;  
wicked fools will not go about on it.

<sup>9</sup> No lion will be there,  
nor any ravenous beast;  
they will not be found there.  
But only the redeemed will walk there,  
<sup>10</sup> and those the Lord has rescued will return.

They will enter Zion with singing;  
everlasting joy will crown their heads.  
Gladness and joy will overtake them,  
and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

## Ponder

For this third week can we, who live in places that are relatively peaceful, safe and in circumstances that are relatively comfortable; be with those for whom this time is not safe, comfortable or easy. Can we be present to the complexities within our world, communities, families and within ourselves?

## Do

Can you put yourself somewhere different this week? Or can you be where you are...in all its complexity and need, suffering and hope? Allow time this week to simply be there.

However, you are drawn, let this week be one where you sit with the deep needs of the world, those close to you -and yourself, and simply be there; knowing that advent actually contains those many spaces, feelings and difficulties. And Advent is preparing us all.

## Prayer

Creator God

We come to this time and want to be honest about the brokenness of the planet, global and personal relationships, systems and indeed our own selves. But we also want to hold the deep, joyful expectation of your presence, your love, your promises in the world, so differently offered by a baby born in a manger. Help us to stay present to what is happening but also to keep our eyes upon you.  
Amen

*Helen Keller, "Prayer for Peace," delivered April 5, 1936, at the "East of Suez" bazaar at the New History Society's Caravan Hall, New York City*

O Lord, in whose countenance is the morning of all things made new, shine upon us that we may illumine with peace the world-home thou hast given us. Remove from us pride of might and arrogance of possession. Stretch our thoughts, O Divine Mind, that we may see the whole earth as

our country, and the inhabitants thereof as our neighbors. Fill our hearts with love that changes discord to trust.

Temper to our good the weariness and the broken hopes we cannot escape. Pour into us the strength of all valiant spirits. Put into our hands constructive tasks of peace. Let not our striving end with condemnation of folly and stupidity in high places.

Quicken in us the will to resist the hysteria that they who take the sword raise to turn us aside from thy commandments. Give us power to the depth, breadth, and height of our souls to prevent the destructions we have lived to weep. Out of the embers of fires that have scorched and blackened thy kingdom on earth, help us create a new order in which we will no more become savages through fear. Unite us, millions strong, against the darkness of hate, as unnumbered sunbeams streaming one way sweeten the sod unto green ecstasy and fruitfulness.

## Listen

**Audrey Assad** *Your peace will make us one.*

<https://youtu.be/0jiaggdxnh0?si=dX13oAA8cJfcxol0>

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of  
the Lord  
You are speaking truth to power,  
you are laying down our swords  
Replanting every vineyard  
til a brand new wine is poured  
Your peace will make us one

In the beauty of the lilies you were born across  
the sea  
With a glory in your bosom that is still  
transfiguring  
Dismantling our empires til each one of us is  
free  
Your peace will make us one

I've seen you in our home fires burning with a  
quiet light  
You are mothering and feeding in the wee  
hours of the night  
Your gentle love is patient, you will never fade  
or tire  
Your peace will make us one

Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!  
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!  
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Your peace will make us one

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Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!  
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!  
Your peace will make us one

### **Trio Mandili – Galoba (The Prayer)**

[https://youtu.be/88kJd9PwVwY?si=TnqW7qz93\\_aArlsc](https://youtu.be/88kJd9PwVwY?si=TnqW7qz93_aArlsc)

Our Father, Who art in heaven,  
*Mamao ch'veno, romelits'a khar ts'at'a shina,*

With tenderness I stand before thee on my knees;  
*mukhlmodrekili, Imobieri vdgevar shen tsina:*

I ask for neither wealth nor glory;  
*arts'a simdidris, arts' didebis t'khovna ar minda,*

I won't debase my holy prayer with earthly matters.  
*ar minda, amit' sheurats'kh-vhqo me lots'va tsminda...*

I would wish for my soul to rest in heaven,  
*aramed mtsqurs me ganminat'ldes ts'it' ch'emi suli,*

My heart to be radiant with love heralded by thee,  
*shengan namts'nebis siqvarulit' aghment'os guli,*

Even if they pierce me in the heart:  
*rom mtert'at'visats', romelt' t'unda guls lakhvari mkran,*

Forgive them: "Lord, for they know not what they do!"  
*gt'khovde: "sheunde, - ar its'ian, ghmert'o, ras ik'man!"*

Even if they pierce me in the heart:  
*rom mtert'at'visats', romelt' t'unda guls lakhvari mkran,*

Forgive them: "Lord, for they know not what they do!"  
*gt'khovde: "sheunde, - ar its'ian, ghmert'o, ras ik'man!"*