

Prayers of Intercession

Advent 4, 2011

On the Fourth Sunday of Advent this year, we worshipped simply with nine readings and by singing several Advent and Christmas carols. There was no sermon, other than the prayer petitions which, we hope, gathered our thoughts and intentions. These prayers acknowledged the end of our Advent journey and our proximity to Christmas. They also recognized how Mary's Song and the interpretation of Christ's birth in John 1 provide the co-ordinates for our theological appreciation of Christmas. For the sake of privacy, we have omitted the names of people on our pastoral care lists.

God of grace, pour out your Spirit on all who are called by your love in Christ Jesus. May we never tire of bearing your living Word of hope, peace, joy, and love in a world where sin succeeds so often in spreading despair, causing turmoil, preventing happiness, and causing suffering.

Inspire us, we pray, to enjoy our kinship with nature, the community of all creatures great and small. Lead us away from notions of having lordship over creation. Lead us toward humility and using our powers for good, restoring, replacing, and renewing what we have used.

Form us, we pray, by the gospel justice proclaimed by Mary when she was able to see your saving and redeeming hand preparing the world for the birth of your living Word in Christ Jesus. May Mary's song inform our ministry of scattering the proud, lifting up the lowly, and filling the hungry with good things. We remember especially the great need of the people of Attawapiskat and other First Nations communities struggling to survive innumerable hardships. We give thanks for the recent withdrawal of western forces from Iraq and Libya. We pray for peace and justice among all peoples and nations throughout our world.

We ask your nearer presence for the many who suffer in body, mind, and spirit. May our prayers for their comfort, strength, and peace gather us all into the embrace of deep blessing, thanksgiving, and trust in your eternal goodness.

As we enter into the Christmas spirit, anticipate the gathering of loved ones and friends, and delight especially in the excitement of our children and youth, distill our sentiments, we pray, into a quiet joy and deep peace that will continue through all the seasons of the coming year. May we become a Christmas people, filled with the expectation of Advent, looking in faith and hope for the coming reign of Christ in every heart.

And as we give thanks for all the saints who have responded to your steadfast love, O God, number us also among your faithful ones. Give us the grace to glimpse eternity in each moment; give us faith in your loving purposes for people of all times and places.