

7. Closing Prayer

Lord God,
In Jesus, you came in the body;
flesh of our flesh, bone of our bone,
one with us in searing pain and delirious
laughter.

By your love
change our ideas,
especially our religious ideas
into living signs of your worth and dreams.

We believe that your power to heal
is still present.

We call on your help, remembering
those whose minds are menaced by
thoughts which worry or wound them,
those whose hearts are broken
because love has gone,
those whose feet walk in circles
stopping only when they are tired
resting only to walk in circles again,
those who feel discarded or disposable.

O Jesus, put your hands where our prayers
beckon.



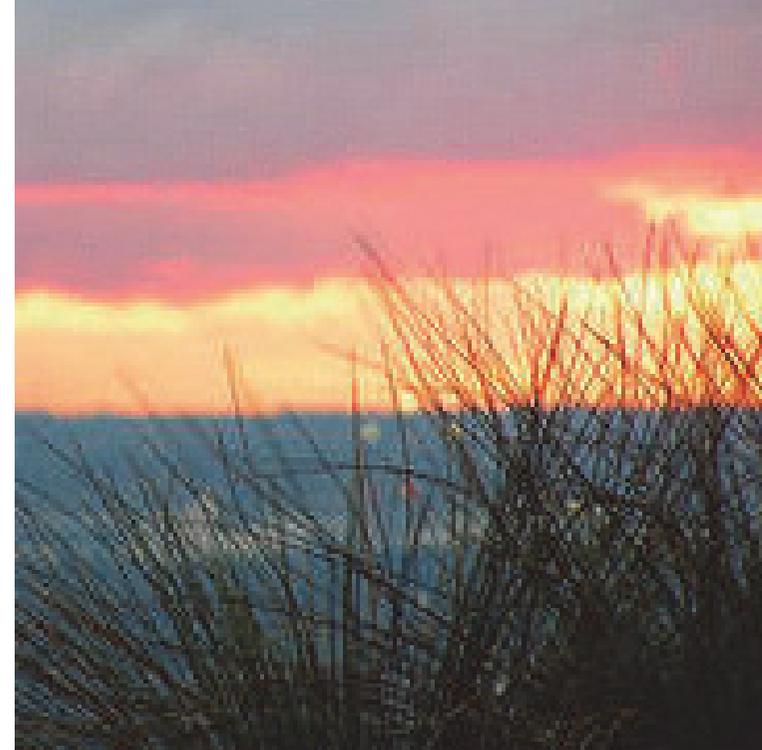
*See, I am doing a new deed,
even now it comes to light;
can you not see it?*

Isaiah 43:18



Partners in Faith

C/o Sophia Housing Association,
25 Cork Street, Dublin 8.
Tel: 453 5348
Email: info@partnersinfaith.ie
Website: www.partnersinfaith.ie



Making Space for Grace
Third Sunday of Advent 2018



Partners in Faith

C/o Sophia Housing Association,
25 Cork Street, Dublin 8.
Tel: 453 5348
Email: info@partnersinfaith.ie
Website: www.partnersinfaith.ie

1. Welcome and Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, you are the Daystar
of our lives:
dispel darkness, awaken our
sleeping faith;
turn our jealousies into love;

give us hope when we doubt
that life is a treasure.
Smile on us through the beauty and
wonder of all you have made;
bring justice to those bowed down
with suffering;
refresh us with wisdom, understanding,
new vision, and let us never lose hope in
you.

2 Gospel text: Luke 3:7-18

John said to the crowds coming out to be baptised by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming of wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise children up for Abraham. The axe is already at the root of the trees and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire."

"What should we do then?" the crowd asked.

John answered, "Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same."

Even tax collectors came to be baptised. "Teacher," they said, "what should we do?"

"Don't collect anymore than you are required to," he told them.

Then some soldiers asked him, "And what should we do?"

He replied, "Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely – be content with your pay."

The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Messiah. John answered them all, "I baptise you with water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." And with many other words John exhorted the people and proclaimed the good news to them.

3. Quiet moment

People can read over the text for themselves and pick out words or short phrases that strike them and say them out loud. When everyone has had a chance to say their word or phrase, they can then reflect silently for a moment or two and then briefly say why such a word/phrase struck them – in relation to themselves or their community or the world.

4. Reflection questions for Luke 3:7-17

1. What's the 'chaff' floating around in our air/society?
2. 'Wind can be both destructive and beneficial' – comment.
3. How could our celebration of Christmas be closer to John's advice?

5. Prayers

Mentioning the people and situations we want to pray for.

6. Background notes for Luke 3:7-17

Vipers in the nearby Jordan forest would flee at the first hint of forest fire. People are rushing to John to be cleansed, touched, healed. John warns them that it's useless to depend on 'good roots' from the past. Baptism can be a sign of their willingness to change but what they actually do with what they have will be the real sign of conversion.

John can give advice, mend, patch up, repair, warn, recommend but Luke is very careful to present him as the one preparing the way for Jesus. At the time of the Gospel being written there was confusion about John's role.

Fire in Old Testament imagery often represented the presence of a saving God. The wooden shovel for threshing lifted the heavy grain which fell to the ground; the lighter grain was blown away by the wind.