

# Advent: Faith

We are now in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Week of Advent, this time of year when we are preparing for our celebration of Jesus' birth and preparing to welcome Jesus into our lives even more this Christmas.

The readings at Mass this Sunday invited us to "Prepare a Way for the Lord" and our reflections this week will help us to think about what this means and about our Advent faith.



*This week's prayers are prepared by Laurel Hill Secondary School FCJ & Laurel Hill Coláiste FCJ*



# Monday 7<sup>th</sup> December

This weekend we lit the second purple candle on our Advent Wreaths. We also remember that yesterday, 6<sup>th</sup> December, was the feast of St. Nicholas. So, we pray...

Loving God,  
May our Advent be a time of preparation.  
Help us to reflect on the power of light  
to dispel darkness in our world and in our lives.  
Touch our hearts with the warmth of your love.

May the increasing light of the candles on our Advent Wreaths  
brighten our minds and hearts to be steadfast in faith,  
joyful in hope and untiring in love,  
so that we are ready again to receive Jesus,  
the Light of the World.

**Amen.**



**How are you preparing for Christmas?  
Take some time out of the busy Christmas preparation to think about Jesus' birth.**



# Monday 7<sup>th</sup> December

Today we are going to read the Gospel from Sunday's Mass. In this Gospel we hear about Jesus' cousin, John the Baptist, who tells people about Jesus just before Jesus begins his public ministry of teaching.



## **A Reading from the Gospel of Mark (1:1-8)**

The beginning of the Good News about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

It is written in the book of the prophet Isaiah:

Look, I am going to send my messenger before you; he will prepare your way.

A voice cries in the wilderness: Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight.

And so it was that John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. All Judaea and all the people of Jerusalem made their way to him, and as they were baptised by him in the river Jordan they confessed their sins. John wore a garment of camel-skin, and he lived on locusts and wild honey. In the course of his preaching he said, 'Someone is following me, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to kneel down and undo the strap of his sandals. I have baptised you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.'



# Monday 7<sup>th</sup> December



One of the things that Gospel tells us is that John the Baptist asked people to 'prepare the way of the Lord', to get ready for meeting Jesus. He asked them to do this by 'repenting', which means by seeking forgiveness for their mistakes and making any changes they needed to make in their lives.

This Advent, we are invited to 'prepare a way for the Lord' in our own lives.

## We pray...

Loving God, we thank you for the gift of this new day.

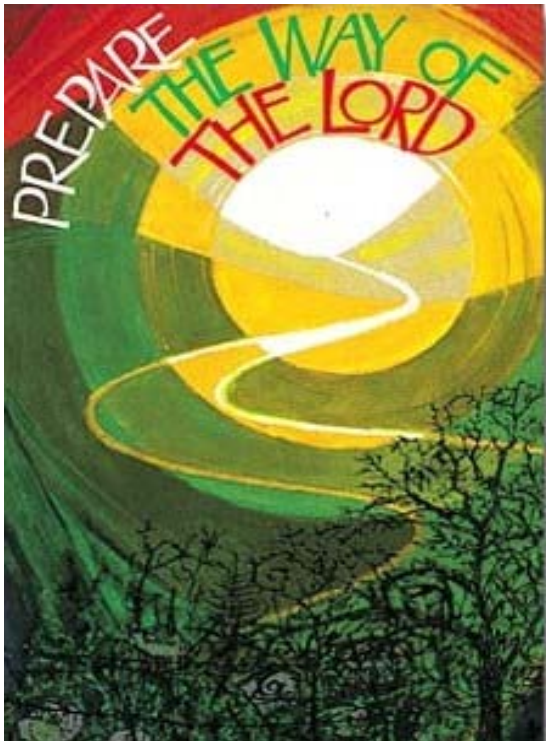
As we continue our Advent journey, we reflect on the life of John the Baptist and on his message to 'prepare the way' for your Son, Jesus.

We are sorry, Lord, for the times when we have hurt other people and have let things get in the way of our relationship with you.

If there is someone we need to say sorry to, give us the courage to do this.  
If there is someone we need to forgive, please give us the courage to do this too.  
Help us to make any changes we need to so that we can see the world through your compassionate eyes.

We make this prayer in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

**Is there anything getting in the way of our relationship with Jesus? Is there anything we need to seek forgiveness for?**



# Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> December

Today is a special feast day of Mary, the Mother of Jesus. It is the Feast of the Immaculate Conception which is the day when we celebrate that God chose Mary from the very first moment of her existence (her conception) to be the Mother of his Son, Jesus. God prepared Mary for the role he was calling her to.

This has always been a very important feast day for the FCJ Sisters and so for FCJ Schools. It is also the School Feast Day for Upton Hall FCJ & Bellerive FCJ.

Today, let us reflect on the example Mary gives to us:

- A woman of great **faith**; she trusted in God's promise to her
- A woman of **hope**
- A woman **open to the call of God** in her life; she said 'yes' to being the mother of God's Son, Jesus
- A woman of **service**; she visited her cousin Elizabeth when she learned that she too was expecting a baby

*What else might you say about Mary?*



Happy Feast Day to everyone on this special day and especially to the Upton & Bellerive communities as they celebrate their school feast during the week.

*Continue on the next slide...*

# Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> December

Mindful of Mary's example to us, **we pray...**

Lord, in the person of Mary you teach us how to be open to your Holy Spirit.

**Lord, may we be willing to learn.**

Lord, in the person of Mary you teach us how to place our trust in you.

**Lord, may we be willing to learn.**

Lord, in the person of Mary you teach us how to give thanks.

**Lord, may we be willing to learn.**

Lord, in the person of Mary you teach us how to be faithful to your Son.

**Lord, may we be willing to learn.**

*From the Le Chéile Book of Prayers & Reflections*



# Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> December



*Our Lady of  
Advent*

On this special feast, let us ask Mary to pray for us, for our world, and for all FCJ Schools as we say...

Hail Mary, full of grace,  
the Lord is with you.

Blessed are you among women,  
and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our  
death.

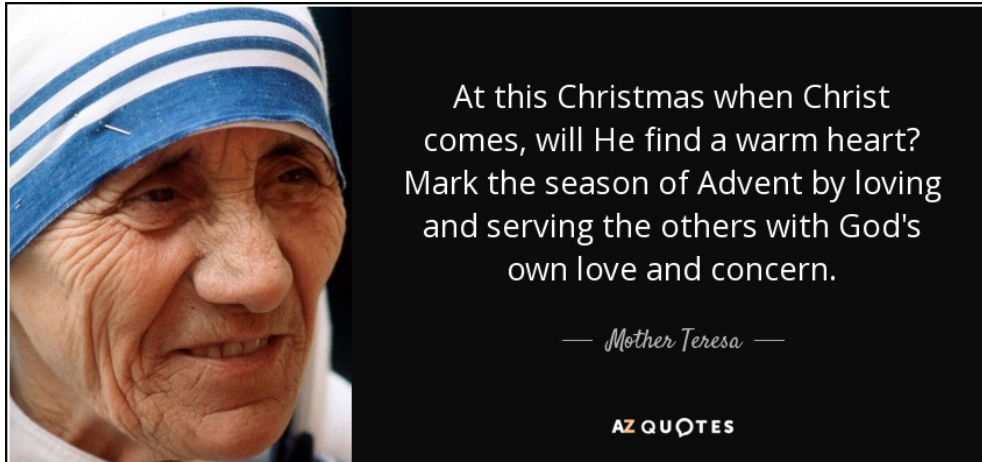
**Amen.**



**Do something nice for your mother or carer.**

# Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> December

One way we can prepare to welcome Jesus into our lives more fully again this Christmas, is by reaching out to help other people. This is what Mary, the Mother of Jesus did, when she went to visit her cousin, Elizabeth.



## We pray...

Loving God, we ask for your blessing as we continue our advent journey. May our faith remain strong and everlasting as we walk in the love of Jesus Christ during the weeks of Advent. May our actions be a true reflection of our faith and in times that we stray, remind us of your undivided love as we wait and prepare for your coming. Amen.

(Faye, yr 13, ethos)

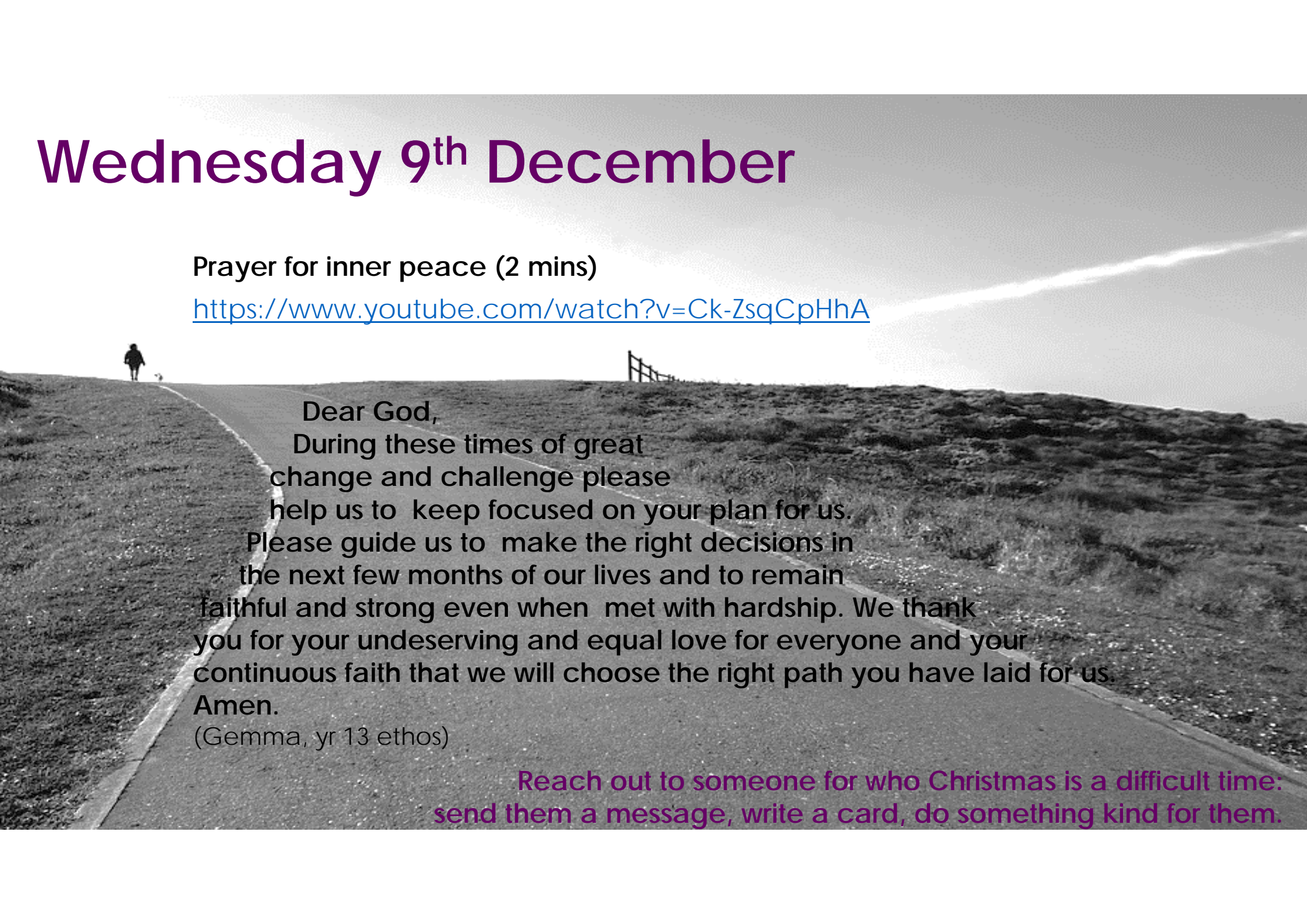
**What can you do to reach out to others?**



# Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> December

Prayer for inner peace (2 mins)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ck-ZsqCpHhA>



Dear God,  
During these times of great  
change and challenge please  
help us to keep focused on your plan for us.  
Please guide us to make the right decisions in  
the next few months of our lives and to remain  
faithful and strong even when met with hardship. We thank  
you for your undeserving and equal love for everyone and your  
continuous faith that we will choose the right path you have laid for us.  
Amen.

(Gemma, yr 13 ethos)

Reach out to someone for who Christmas is a difficult time:  
send them a message, write a card, do something kind for them.

# Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> December

As we turn to God in prayer today we remember that today is also International Human Rights Day. It was in this day in 1948 that the UN adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. **We pray...**



Loving God,

We thank you for the people who have inspired us because of the way they live out their faith in you.

We thank you too that you guide us throughout our days, and most especially when things are difficult.

We call to mind now all the people we would like to pray for today...

We ask your blessing on them, Lord, in whatever way they need most.

We pray for our world at this time; for your healing, your hope and your peace.

We pray for people around the world whose rights are not respected or upheld, and we pray that individuals and Governments will have the courage to change this situation.

**Amen.**

# Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> December



“Faith is not a light that scatters all our darkness but a lamp that guides our steps in the night.”

POPE FRANCIS



LOYOLAPRESS.  
A JESUIT MINISTRY

The readings at Mass during Advent & Christmas give us lots of examples of people showing great faith – this week we have thought about Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and about his cousin, John the Baptist. There are many others too such as Elizabeth & Zechariah, Joseph, Simeon and Anna.

Read the quote on the left from Pope Francis...

Is that how you think about faith? As a light to guide our steps at night.

Can you think of other people whose faith has inspired you?

# Friday 11<sup>th</sup> December

Lord, this Advent,  
may we learn to make time for prayer  
and to discover just how close you are to us.

**Lord, help us to listen.**

Lord, in our preparation for Christmas  
remind us about what is really important.

**Lord, help us to listen.**

Lord, in our searching for you may we look for you in  
places where we might not expect to find you.

**Lord, help us to listen.**

Lord, may our love be sincere  
and not just for those who love us.

**Lord, help us to listen.**

**Amen.**

*From the Le Chéille Book of Prayers and Reflections*



# Friday 11<sup>th</sup> December

## Examen

Be silent and place yourself in God's loving presence.  
In the quiet of your heart, tell God about your experiences this week.

Think about the good things that have happened.  
Who have you left a good memory with this week?

Give thanks for who you are & for the blessings of this week.

Ask God to help you with anything that has been challenging.  
As you look ahead to the weekend, what would you like to ask of God?

