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**Meditation for
2nd Sunday in Advent
6th December 2020**

A Season of Waiting Advent 2



O come, O come, Emmanuel.
Come, Lord Jesus

If you have an Advent wreath or Advent candle at home, light it now – otherwise use another candle.

We come to light a light of promise,
to remember we are not alone,
not abandoned, not lost,
but held in the promise of God's love.

In a world that sometimes forgets God-with-us,
we cling to your promise.
With the prophets of every age,
we cling to your promise.
We light a candle in the darkness,
We cling to your promise.

O come, O come, Emmanuel.
Come, Lord Jesus.

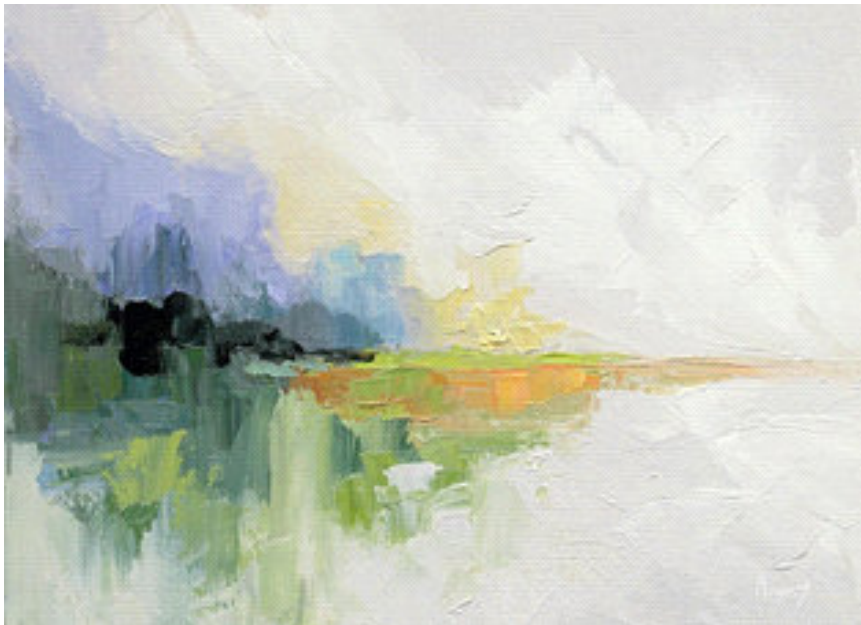
Chris Thorpe 'Dreamers and Stargazers' © Chris Thorpe 2017 (Canterbury Press)

Listen to: [Comfort ye \(Handel\)](#)

Comfort, O comfort my people,
says your God.
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her
that she has served her term,
that her penalty is paid,
that she has received from the Lord's hand
double for all her sins.

A voice cries out:
'In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.
Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.'

A voice says, 'Cry out!'
And I said, 'What shall I cry?'
All people are grass,
their constancy is like the flower of the field.
The grass withers, the flower fades,
when the breath of the LORD blows upon it;
surely the people are grass.
The grass withers, the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand for ever.
Get you up to a high mountain,
O Zion, herald of good tidings;
lift up your voice with strength,
O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,
lift it up, do not fear;
say to the cities of Judah,
'Here is your God!'
See, the Lord GOD comes with might,
and his arm rules for him;
his reward is with him,
and his recompense before him.
He will feed his flock like a shepherd;
he will gather the lambs in his arms,
and carry them in his bosom,
and gently lead the mother sheep.



Think about:

I was introduced to this passage by Teilhard de Chardin at a Quiet Morning at the start of this week. It came as an antidote to the messages I was reading elsewhere somehow wanting to make sense of these past few months; to see God's hand not only in them but leading us out into something new. Just as we're saying 'Where is the vaccine? When will we get back to normal', so we also are already being asked to answer 'what will the church, what will mission, what will we look like in the next 20 years.' Teilhard de Chardin was a Jesuit priest and philosopher – and also a palaeontologist and geologist.

**Trust in the Slow Work of God
Patient Trust: by Teilhard de Chardin**

Above all, trust in the slow work of God
We are quite naturally impatient in everything to reach the end without delay.
We should like to skip the intermediate stages.
We are impatient of being on the way to something unknown, something new.

And yet it is the law of all progress
that it is made by passing through some stages of instability
and that it may take a very long time.

And so I think it is with you.
your ideas mature gradually – let them grow,
let them shape themselves, without undue haste.
Don't try to force them on,
as though you could be today what time
(that is to say, grace and circumstances acting on your own good will)
will make of you tomorrow.

Only God could say what this new spirit
gradually forming within you will be.
Give Our Lord the benefit of believing
that his hand is leading you,
and accept the anxiety of feeling yourself
in suspense and incomplete.

From 'Hearts on Fire'
Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J. (1881-1955)

Listen to: [Spiegel im Spiegel](#)

As you think about those words, let the music slow your breathing down; offer your cares into God's hands, and let God hold you.

**To think about:**

God's people had hundreds of years to wait between the words of Isaiah and the coming of Jesus. Then came

“the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
“Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight,””

Mark 1: 1-8

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way;
the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
“Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.”’

John the baptiser appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, ‘The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.’

Prepare the way of the Lord – make his paths straight – but where, and how, and why?

We’re still searching the answers.

The fact that God purposely chooses John, and positions him outside the traditional religious and civic institutions, warns us that we must prepare for something different.

But what?

I barely had time to eat lunch after the Quiet Morning, before I was in the midst of an international Christian conference, as, for 8 hours in that and the following day, Christians from around the world told their stories of the effects of COVID 19, of being marginalised because of the colour of your skin, of climate change.

How do you trust in the slow work of God when the world is crying – and a particular part of the world – the poor, the downtrodden, the forgotten – the ones to whom God promised through his prophets (and later through Mary’s song) to bring hope and peace?

To think about:

Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;
righteousness and peace will kiss each other.
Faithfulness will spring up from the ground,
and righteousness will look down from the sky

Psalm 85: 10-11

Waiting in Darkness

The darkness will never totally go away. I’ve worked long enough in ministry to know that darkness isn’t going to disappear, but that, as John’s Gospel says, ‘the light shines on inside the darkness, and the darkness will not overcome it.’

Such is the Christian form of yin-yang, our own belief in paradox and mystery.

We must all hope and work to eliminate darkness, especially in many of the great social issues of our time....but at a certain point, we have to surrender to the fact that the darkness has always been here, and the only real question is how to receive the light and spread the light. That is not capitulation any more than the cross was capitulation. It is the real transformation in to the absolutely unique character and programme of the Risen Christ.

What we need to do is recognise what is, in fact, darkness and then learn how to live in creative and courageous relationship to it ... our Christian wisdom is to name the darkness as darkness, and the Light as light and to learn how to live and work in the Light so that the darkness does not overcome us ...

We must wait and work with hope inside of the darkness – while never doubting the light that God always is – and that we are too. That is the narrow birth canal of God into the world – through the darkness and into an ever-greater Light.’

Richard Rohr Preparing for Christmas. Monday of the Second Week of Advent.



Prayer:

You may like to sit in darkness, with just your candle burning.

Bring to God the darkness that touches you – it might be something very personal, or the way the world is weighed down by COVID 19;

think too of people in different positions and places to you – what is the darkness in their lives?

Look at the light of the candle. Trust in the promise of God

Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;
righteousness and peace will kiss each other.
Faithfulness will spring up from the ground,
and righteousness will look down from the sky

Pray for God to show you how to receive the light and spread the light.

Listen to: [On God Alone, I Wait Silently](#)

Ending

(I've had these words above my desk for more years than I can remember.

It's part of a longer prayer of people waiting, found in 'Cloth for the Cradle' © 1997 Wild Goose Resource Group)

I am the Lord your God.

I have waited on you.

And have heard your prayer.

Now is the appropriate time

For me to come among you.

So prepare a way in the desert
 a cradle in the hay
 a meeting place in the market place
 a table in an upstairs room
 a cross on a hill
 a grave in a garden
 a throne in your heart as in heaven.

For now I will bend down
 and remember you
 and hear your prayer
 and your waiting will end in joy.



Listen to: 'People Look East'

either

[a folky, slower version](#)

or

[a more lively arrangement](#), sung by the boy choristers of Ely Cathedral.