



ADVENT WEEK 4: LET US DREAM

“In his freedom, the Holy Spirit knows no borders, nor does He allow Himself to be limited by memberships. If the parish is home to all in the neighbourhood, not an exclusive club, I recommend: leave the doors and windows open...Allow all to enter...” Pope Francis

Opening Prayer¹

Mary, pondering

*What is this seed that God has planted,
unasked, uncompromised, unseen?
Unknown to everyone but angels
this gift has been.*

*What if the baby I embody
should enter life deformed or strange,
unable to be known as normal,
to thrive or change?*

*And who am I to be the mother,
to give my womb at heaven's behest,
to let my body be the hospice
and God the guest?*

*What if the world, for spite, ignores him,
and friends keep back and parents scorn,
and every fear of every woman
in me is born?*

*Oh, what a risk in such a nation,
in such a place, at such a time,
to come to people in transition
and yet in prime.*

*Still, I will want to love and hold him,
his cry attend, his smile applaud.*

I'll mother him as any mortal, and just like God.

Luke 1: 39-45

Mary set out and went as quickly as she could to a town in the hill country of Judah. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. Now as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She gave a loud cry and said, 'Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord? For the moment our greeting reached my ears, the child in my women leaped for joy. Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled.

Acts 2:17

In the days to come - it is the Lord who speaks - I will pour out my spirit on all mankind. Their sons and daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams.

Time for prayer and silent meditation (you may wish to light a candle)

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Reflection

“Jesus in the power of His Spirit wants us to help one another along the road, to find our home in Him, and to find new ways, new models, new pathways which will help us to reach out, to invite others in our world to join us on the road. For the Lord desires so very deeply that they too find their home in Him. May the Holy Spirit help us to encounter one another, to listen deeply to one another, to show us the direction the Spirit wants us to travel, so that we can be more effective witnesses of Jesus to those who do not know Him.” Bishop Mark O’Toole

THEMES FOR REFLECTION

In exploring the themes below participants are invited to:

- Listen actively and without judgment to the Holy Spirit and to others
- Pay attention not only to the words, but also to the tone and feelings of the speaker
- Listen actively to yourself, mindful of your own thoughts and feelings as you speak

What is God’s dream for me?

How am I called to serve?

How might I reach out to serve others and share the Faith?

What is God’s dream for our Parish?

How might our parish ‘walk better together’?

How do we form people, especially those who hold roles of responsibility within the Christian community, to make them more capable of “journeying together,” listening to one another and engaging in dialogue?

How might our pastoral provision look in the future?

What is God’s dream for the church / world?

What fruits can the wider church draw from this “journeying together”?

How can our global church foster a missionary spirit adapted to the constantly changing environment?

Closing question – In the light of the last 18 months living with Covid and your reflections on the four themes, what are you most looking for from the Church/Diocese moving forward?



The next step will be for the facilitator/scribe to share the group’s reflections with the Synodal working group. But this process doesn’t end there. This listening process will become part of a longer-term shift in the way we walk together as Christians and helps us grow in faith as individuals and as a Church.