



Archdiocese of Dublin
Education Secretariat

Post Primary Diocesan Advisers R.E. News Blog

December 2022

Dear Chaplain and R.E. Teachers,

It has been a very difficult and challenging time for all faith communities and especially in our schools with a shortage of personnel and the unending demands on our time and finances brought about by world events. We thank all who have made Ukrainian Students welcome in their midst this winter season, remembering that Jesus was born in a stable because there was no room for him at the inn in Bethlehem. I know that the Christmas holidays probably can't come soon enough to allow you to refresh and renew your batteries for the year ahead. Thank you for all you do to enhance the faith of the students in your care.

This month there are a few resources that may help in the planning of your Advent ceremonies and Carol Services. If you have any items that you wish to share, or suggestions for support that the Diocese could provide please contact us.

We would like to thank all the School Staffs who made us so welcome on our visits this term and we look forward to meeting RE Teams in the new year. As you are aware, each year the Holy Father, Pope Francis asks for our prayers for a specific intention each month. For December the intention is for all involved in non-profit volunteer organisations. We draw your attention to an invitation from Catholic Education Partnership to participate in a Retreat Day for RE Teachers on 13th December 2022.

As we begin the new Liturgical Year with our preparation for the birth of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ may the peace and joy of His Coming be your gift this Christmas. We wish you, your families, and your school communities many blessings.

May God bless and keep you safe,

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As we begin the Liturgical Year may we ask the Holy Spirit to guide us in our preparation for the birth of Jesus.

Traditions at Advent include advent calendars or crowns counting down the days or weeks until Christmas Day. Advent ushers in a season of grace in preparation for the coming of Christ, His second coming and His coming in our lives, through grace and the sacraments. God is coming to us because He loves us. We are called to respond in love to God by letting go of all that is unworthy of his children. To be grace filled, one should be aware of how empty one is and how much of Jesus one needs.



Space for Grace

Join The Loreto Education Trust, Spiritan Education Trust, Le Chéile Schools Trust, Marino Institute of Education, CEIST & Dublin Diocese Communities for online reflections during Advent

"Waiting in Hope" *"Ag Trúth le Dóchas"*

Monday 28th Nov, 5th Dec, 12th Dec at 1:20pm. The online link has been emailed to communities



Join us on zoom at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87309700919>

November 27th First Sunday of Advent.

A Reflection ADVENT HOPE

Emmanuel, A new dawn breaks in the sky;
God with us, Give us wings of freedom,
Long awaited, To begin a new journey;
Come. Shine into our hearts,
Like the rising sun.

Come, in Divine simplicity;
Come, with renewed dreams and hopes; Christ our Advent Hope,
Come, with compassion and consolation; Come and be at one with us.
Come, and companion us, You see our longing;
Lift us out of our pain and struggles. We entrust our world into Your hands;
Our concerns into Your love;
Come, be a beacon of light in our midst; Our words into Your silence;
Come, show us how to journey. Our activity into Your stillness.
Come, as love;
Come, as peace; God in Jesus, with us,
Come, as joy; Come,
Come, as light. We are waiting,
Come, awaken us from our fears. Emmanuel.
Make radiant the darkness
Of our waiting world;
Draw all the broken fragments of our lives,
Into the bright mosaic of Your love.
Come, where our lives are empty, our spirits low;
Come, hold us in the crash of falling worlds;
Come, revive, redeem, restore.
Come, enlarge our hearts.

O Emanuel, Jesus Christ, desire of every nation, Saviour of all peoples, come and dwell among us.

December 4th Second Sunday of Advent

Today we wonder as we listen to the evening news, is peace possible? We all need two kinds of peace in our lives. We need inner peace, but we also need peace with others. God addresses both. He tells us what to do to find that peace.

Inner peace begins with a relationship with God, and it continues as we focus on his strength and trust him to fill us. We can exchange our weakness for his strength in any area of life. God's Word says, *"You will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is focused on you because he trusts in you"* (Isaiah 26:3).



December 11th Third Sunday of Advent

The third week of Advent, also known as "Gaudete Sunday," means we have passed the half-way point and Christmas is drawing near. The word Gaudete means "rejoice," and at this point in our Advent journey our hearts should be filled with joy as we ponder the magnitude of Christ's birth. We mark this joyful time by lighting the one and only pink candle on the wreath.



December 18th Fourth Sunday of Advent

The Angel Gabriel said to Mary, Do not fear, Mary, you shall conceive and bear a son and give him the name Jesus. great will be his dignity and he will be called Son of the Most High... Lk 1

O Jesus, I believe you were born of Mary and are God's Son. Your mysterious coming is beyond understanding. Yet like your Holy Mother, Mary, I wish that you come to me, for you promised you will. Let me serve you in any way I can and know that you are with me day by day as my life goes by.

Like Mary, your mother, though I know you only by faith, may my whole being proclaim your greatness and my spirit rejoice in your favour to me.

The Catholic dogma of the Immaculate Conception holds that from the first instant of its creation the soul of the Virgin Mary was free from Original Sin. This doctrine is not to be confused with that of the Virgin Birth, which holds that Jesus was born of a virgin mother. In 1854, Pope Pius IX issued a solemn decree declaring the Immaculate Conception to be a dogma essential for belief.

<https://www.org/mary>

<https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2021-12-08>

<https://www.catholicbishops.ie/adventcalendar/>

14th St John of the Cross https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=65

25th The Nativity of Jesus

26th St Stephen https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=65

28th The Holy Innocents https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=65

December 3rd



- Of the one billion population of persons with disabilities, 80% live in developing countries.
- An estimated 46% of older people aged 60 years and over are people with disabilities.
- One in every five women is likely to experience disability in her life, while one in every ten children is a child with a disability.
- Persons with disabilities in the world are among the hardest hit by COVID-19.

December 10th Human Rights Day

Human Rights Day is celebrated every year since 1948 when the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Let us stand together for equality, justice, and human dignity.

Perhaps this year you could stress the many volunteers at local, national, or global level who daily stand with and for those in need. Your school or parish may be collecting food items to be distributed in your local area this Christmas or perhaps you could engage students in looking at how Christmas gifts can be purchased through Trocaire or one of the many charities helping people in the third world.

Other Dates / Information

Maynooth 24th November Chaplains Day

It was great to see so many of our School Chaplains at the annual Chaplains Day in Maynooth on Thursday. Thank you to all who travelled and to the School Management Teams for releasing you to attend. Topics covered this year included Scripture, the new cAPTives Programme from APT, Labyrinths as a prayer tool, supporting Ukrainian students, Faith based retreats and retreat resources. Our thanks to the Le Cheile, Spiritan and Loreto Education Trusts who were our partners on the day.

CHAPLAINS: MINISTERS OF HOPE

This publication edited by Alan Hilliard and with a foreword by Bishop Eamonn Walsh presented by Messenger Publications in conjunction with the Blackrock Clinic was launched by Mary Harney and you can hear her engaging, reflective, and thought-provoking address below.

<https://youtu.be/f3TQ7jaoTEc>

The Book is available in all good bookshops or on-line at www.messenger.ie

The Ember Faith Development Programme



The Ember Teams in our Schools have been busy in November leading services for our beloved family members and the wider school communities we belong to. Above are the St Kevin's Community College Ember Team who organised a Mass of Remembrance and following the Mass laid a wreath in their newly refurbished Memorial Garden. All First Years planted daffodil bulbs in memory of their loved ones.

Registration to participate in the Programme in 2023/24 opens in the new year. Residential Training will take place in September in Ovoca Manor in Wicklow.



Emmanuel Concerts 2023

The music books for Emmanuel 2023 have been distributed to the second level schools and copies can be ordered by emailing emmanuelconcert@gmail.com. Auditions for solo parts will begin shortly building up the momentum for Helix Concerts on February 27/28 and March 1/2. You can listen recordings of the music of Emmanuel 2023 on Spotify, Apple Music or wherever you get your online digital material.

For Liturgical resources check out [Litmus – Dublin Diocesan Liturgical Resource Centre \(dublindiocese.ie\)](http://dublindiocese.ie)

RETREAT INVITATION FOR RE TEACHERS “Come away and Pray for a Day”

Catholic Education Partnership are organising a guided day-retreat for RE teachers at the Dominican Ennismore Retreat Centre on Tuesday, 13th December 2022. Details of the event can be found here which can be shared through social media:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/come-away-and-rest-a-guided-day-retreat-for-religious-education-teachers-tickets-468323667697>

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK 2023 January 29th – February 4th

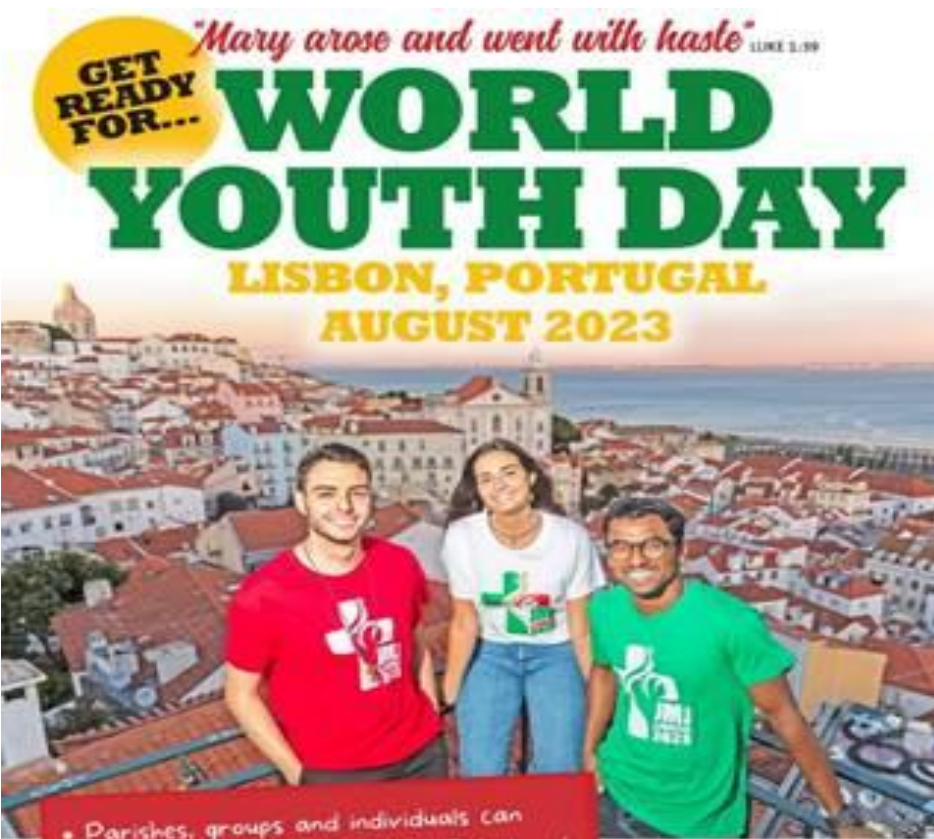
The **theme** this year is “**Catholic Schools: Walking Together in Faith and Love**”.

During Catholic Schools Week families, parishes and schools are invited to participate in a week of celebration reflecting on the work of Catholic Schools, and on their contribution to a Synodal Church based on Communion, Participation and Mission.

Link to all resources for Catholic Schools Week are found in the Catholic Education Partnership Website by following this link [Resources for Catholic Schools Week 2022 | Catholic Education Partnership](#)

World Youth Day

Registrations for **World Youth Day** Lisbon 2023 have opened. The registration process for the Archdiocese of Dublin is currently being finalised and to connect with those who wish to travel, those who are interested in going are invited to fill in the form linked below. Please note, places are limited and are for those 18 years or older. <https://forms.office.com/r/CeLDQsRFiK>



"Mary arose and went with haste" LUKAS 1:39

GET READY FOR...

WORLD YOUTH DAY

LISBON, PORTUGAL

AUGUST 2023

• Parishes, groups and individuals can register their interest in WYD Lisbon by filling in the form online

• From November 2022, packages, costs & details will be available

• Non-refundable deposits of €100 will be required to secure a place. Places are limited and are for 18 years or older.

Archdiocese of Dublin

WYD LISBON 2023

The poster features a photograph of three young people (two men and one woman) standing on a rooftop overlooking a city with red-tiled roofs and a church spire. The background is a sunset over the ocean. The text is in various colors: green for 'WORLD YOUTH DAY', yellow for 'LISBON, PORTUGAL' and 'AUGUST 2023', and red for the registration details. A logo for 'WYD LISBON 2023' is in the bottom right, featuring a stylized cross and a profile of a person.

PRIORY INSTITUTE

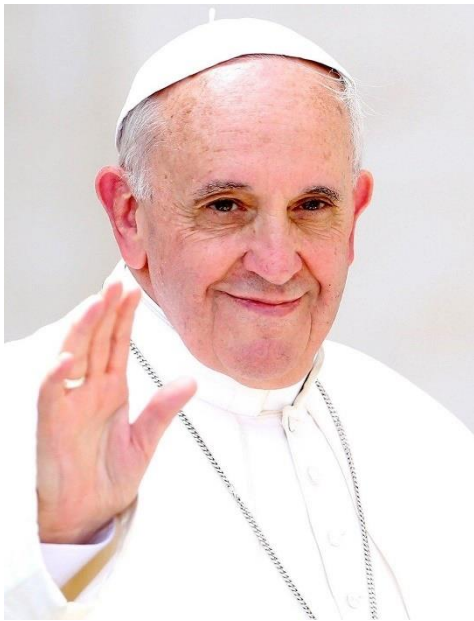
We are delighted to offer an [Online Advent Retreat](#) featuring a series of online reflections given in preparation for Christmas. The Retreat Giver is Donagh O'Shea OP, an Irish Dominican, currently director of the Dominican Retreat Centre in Tallaght. He has given retreats and taught courses on spirituality in many parts of the world. He has authored several books, including the forthcoming *A Hundred Roads to Here: Introductions to Meditation*. The course consists of four recorded presentations that will become available over the four Sundays of Advent, so on the first Sunday there will be access to one recording and on the second Sunday access to two recordings and so on.

Participants can watch the films whenever suits them, and revisit films they have already viewed. Please visit www.prioryinstitute.com.

Pope Francis Prayer Intention for December is for volunteer not-for-profit organisations

We pray that volunteer non-profit organisations committed to human development find people dedicated to the common good and ceaselessly seek out new paths to international cooperation.

In the words of Pope Francis “Peacemakers truly make peace; they build peace and friendship in society. To those who sow peace Jesus makes this magnificent promise: They shall be called children of God”



Are YOU a Peacemaker?

Are You willing to stand up for what is Right?

SENIOR CYCLE SPHE CONSULTATION

A public consultation has now opened on the background paper and review brief for the redevelopment of senior cycle SPHE. It is most important that school communities, educators, parents, and students have a voice in this process and the NCCA’s consultation pathways are set out here: <https://ncca.ie/en/senior-cycle/curriculum-developments/senior-cycle-social-personal-and-health-education-sphe>

Alternatively, schools and individuals can email sphedevelopments@ncca.ie to share their perspectives on questions such as:

- Should senior cycle SPHE be mandatory for all senior cycle students in all schools? Why/why not?
- How much time should be allocated to SPHE in senior cycle?
- In framing a senior cycle curriculum, what's the really important learning that young people need to acquire in SPHE?

The consultation closes at 5.00pm on 6th December next.

Graduate Diploma in SPHE and RSE 2023

The Department has issued Circular 0073/2022 setting out its provision of a postgraduate upskilling programme for teachers who aspire to further develop their skills in relation to the delivery of SPHE/RSE in post-primary schools. This programme, offered by Dublin City University, will be offered to teachers initially in early 2023. The initial intake will be 30 places and, depending on demand for the programme, further in-takes may be offered in the future. Participating teachers must be Teaching Council registered and be currently teaching SPHE/RSE. Successful completion of the programme will lead to a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Level 9 award of Graduate Diploma in SPHE/RSE. The programme is of one academic year in duration, and funding is provided by the Department's Teacher Education Section.

Applications must be submitted by 7th December 2022 via the online application form available at:

<https://www.dcu.ie/courses/postgraduate/school-human-development/graduate-diploma-social-personal-and-health>

ADVENT RESOURCES

As we prepare for the celebration of Christ's Birth, we reflect on how we are living our lives today.

Thought Cards for Advent: Your class may decide to create their own cards or use some of the following to show an act of kindness this Advent



Be kind to others in your thoughts, words and actions.



Remember that Christ is the reason for the season. Make time for prayer and reflection.



Make peace at home and in school. Think of the ability you have in you to do good.



Make time for humour in your life. Well-deserved play makes work easier.



Don't waste the gifts of hearing and speech on gossip. Speak and listen wisely.



Remember those less fortunate. Give a little of what you can in whatever way you can.



Don't forget to smile and be pleasant to others. **WARNING:** This behaviour can be highly contagious.



Say a prayer, light a candle and think quietly for a few moments about Gods great plan for you.



Speak to someone you have never spoken to before. Reach out!



Don't forget to thank those who care for us and enrich our lives; our parents, our guardians, our school community and our families.



SOMETHING DIFFERENT FOR ADVENT 2022

My Advent Pause



#SDFA2022

*Trust again that God is Emmanuel
God with us, in us, and all around us!*

A collection of short prayers, reflections and exercises based on the Gospel of each
Sunday for **BUSY PEOPLE**
to help you pause on your Journey through Advent

May God's blessings this season, light your way!

https://spiritaneducationireland-my.sharepoint.com/:f/g/personal/frank_brown_spiritaneducation_ie/Ep0Jj03xs-ZIm1oltOuVJ6oBUZBG6tbdH3pgct2jHYuMiw?e=KV1gLe

Gathering to remember and pray the Christmas Story has often been the highlight of Advent in Schools. The following was shared with us for your use



CAROL SERVICE 2022

Christmas is more than the feast of Christ's birth – it's the feast of the birth of every child of God, in every part of the world. It's the feast of human dignity – that every person born on this earth is loved and cherished by God, and enters the human family where love and care are sought and given.

Christmas can bring out the best in people – roll away clouds of hatred and bitterness and let the song of the angels be heard. The tree in the sitting room, the tiny robin, the holly and the ivy are all parts of the story that God is close to his people and that we desire relationships of equality and justice and love.

O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL

What if the Christmas story happened in our day.

Mary and Joseph might well have been on the motorway.

Instead of a bright and guiding star,

Lights from car, after car, after car.

The night was foggy, wet and cold.

The bus in which they travelled was rickety and old.

Joseph was a worried man full of fear

For Mary his beloved wife's time was near.

He consulted the driver, a very kindly man,

Don't worry Mate he said I'll do what I can

He left at the next exit and set them down

At the hospital in a very busy town,

The lady at the desk sadly shook her head,

Due to hospital cutbacks I regret I have no bed

Perhaps you could go private at the nursing home

Joseph and Mary then began to roam

Searching for shelter from door to door

Just when time was running out and they could walk no more

They came upon the shelter of a homeless group

Who smiled at them and offered to share their soup.

The story is different, there's no ass or ox,

This time the Son of Man lies in a cardboard box.

LUKE 1:44. FOR
INDEED, AS SOON AS
THE VOICE OF YOUR
GREETING SOUNDED
IN MY EARS, THE
BABE LEAPED IN MY
WOMB FOR JOY.



THE VISITATION

Now Mary having accepted the Lord's call, finds herself in a lonely situation. Only she knows what has happened to her. The magnitude of this news is enough to cause her to doubt even her own sense. Yet God in his goodness left her a word of comfort. Her cousin Elizabeth has also been blessed by God's grace; she has conceived a child in her old age. Mary sets off to see this miracle, so similar yet so different from her own. On her arrival, Mary is rewarded with the reassurance that God has indeed called her

God in heaven, may I never lose heart. I know that if I but do your will, you will give me strength and means to carry it out. And should I waver in my faith, may I be strengthened by the signs and miracles, large and small, you provide along the way.

MARY DID YOU KNOW

JOSEPH'S VISION

An angel comes to Joseph in a dream to reassure him that what has happened is the work of God. Joseph makes his own faith decision and takes Mary as his wife.

Lord many times we are alone in our decision to accept your will. Even and friends may turn away. Remind us that we are never alone, and give us faith that we are never alone, and give us faith that you will always help us to carry out your will.

RING CHRISTMAS BELLS



THE JOURNEY

Rome had ordered a census. Joseph must travel to register his new family. Mary, heavy with child, must go with him. They spend their nights outside in the cold desert air, yet they know nothing can happen to this special child. God's presence will guide them along the way. With loving patience, they set out for Bethlehem, the city long prophesied as the birthplace of the Messiah.

Father, at times we are surprised by the twists and turns of life. Give us the patience of the Holy Family to realize that no matter where our lives lead, you will be waiting at the end of our journey

ARRIVAL IN BETHLEHEM

At last Mary and Joseph arrive in Bethlehem, now bustling with travellers. Tired and dusty from the trip, they search for lodging. Mary says they must hurry, for their baby will be born this night. But no one has room to take them in.

Lord, disappointments are so hard. We cannot understand why we must endure hardship, even when we try to do your will, or why favour seems to go to those less deserving. Help us to remember that even our disappointments can serve to give you glory

NIGHT OF SILENCE

THE NATIVITY

As despair closed in on the Holy Family, the innkeeper tells them of the stable where they are welcome to stay. Here Mary can find a warm, private place to deliver her baby. They make their way to the stable, where horses, cattle and other animals become their lodging companions. Mary may rest from the journey.

The Son of God is born in a stable. As the animals look on, God performs his greatest miracle. The promise of salvation, dreamed of for thousands of years, is accomplished by a loving God and a poor girl in a stable

DO YOU HEAR WHAT I HEAR?

A PRAYER TO MARY

O Mary, Mother of the life within,

All life we entrust to you.

The life of every expectant mother

And the child within her womb:

The life of every human body,

The life of every human soul;

The life of every new-born child

And the life of all grown old.

You held the Lord to your own heart and drew him so close in.

So draw us now in all our needs,

O Mother of the Life Within. Amen

SILENT NIGHT

THE STAR

In the East, men search the night sky as they have done so many nights before, searching for a sign. Why, we cannot know. They see a new star rise. Researching ancient writings, they learn of a king to be born to the Jews. They pack their belongings and prepare gifts for the new king. On their journey, they pay their respects to King Herod. The wicked Herod slyly asks the Magi to return news to him of the child's whereabouts. The Magi set off again to follow the star.

Lord of all, the star of Bethlehem teaches us that your Word and your Love have no limits. As the Magi searched the night sky for a sign they did not fully understand, so I search patiently for those times you come into my life and give me direction.

THE EPIPHANY

More visitors arrive at the stable. These are in fine dress and speak in a foreign tongue. They explain who they are and why they have come, and Joseph allows them to enter. They fall to their knees at the sight of Jesus. How ironic to see these visitors, so different from the shepherds, react in such a similar fashion. The Magi offer gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Then they are gone. Before they return to Herod, God warns them to return by another route.

Holy God, as the Magi humbled themselves before you, may I always do the same. May I also be willing to spread your Word to people of all lands. For people, great and small, are humbled in your presence.

O HOLY NIGHT

A CHRISTMAS PRAYER FOR LOVED ONES

For those who have an abundance of love, a bounty in heart and home

Keep them mindful of the world's poor,

Lift their voices often to you in gratitude, loving God

For those who carry hurts and anger and other heartaches,

Help them to feel the peace which only you can give

And the grace to let go of long burdening memories

For those who struggle with the lack of this world's riches,
Those who know what unemployment and empty pockets feel like,
gift them with blessings which are often hidden
and far more valuable than earthly treasures.

For those whose faith has grown dim and whose sense of you seems far away
Raise in their hearts a great yearning for you that will not cease
And a desire for the truth that cannot be ignored

For those who are tired, weary worn from a constant giving of their lives in love
Be their energy and enthusiasm.
Be a great deep spark of light and happiness within them.

For those who are grieving and whose hearts are very lonely this time of year,
Touch them with dear memories and give them a sense of peace.

For those whose lives speak of growing old,
Bless them with peace and serenity.

Let them know what gentle witnesses they are to us
Who still ponder the meaning of life and growth

And finally O God for those with young eyes, keep their hearts full of wonder,
And thank you for slipping some of their delight and simplicity
Into our hearts each time we celebrate the Christmas moment.

AMEN

I SAW THREE SHIPS

LIGHTING A CHRISTMAS CANDLE

LORD JESUS

In the lighting of this candle enkindle in my heart a flame of hope and love.

Bring light and warmth to the Famished places of my heart.

Help me to enter into the real experience of Christmas,

To let go of needless anxiety and stress

To feel peace and healing enter my tired spirit

With this candle I pray this Christmas for peace in our family

For children and young adults in broken homes

For couples going through the pain of separation

For those who dread Christmas because they have lost a loved one

For those who cannot come home for Christmas

For families who are fearful of violence because a parent drinks too much.

For those in hospital

For those worried about their children, about binge drinking, drugs or violence on the streets.

For those who find it difficult to come home to God, to faith and to the Church.

Be my light, my guiding star towards the wonder and the peace of Bethlehem

Lead me home to love made flesh in Jesus.

AMEN

AWAY IN A MANGER

A CHRISTMAS BLESSING

May there be harmony in all your relationships.

May sharp words, envious thoughts, and hostile feelings be dissolved.

May you give and receive love generously

May this love echo in your heart like the joy of church bells on a clear December day.

May each person who comes into your life be greeted as another Christ

May the honour given the Babe of Bethlehem be that which you extend to every guest who enters
your presence.

May the hope of this sacred season settle in your soul.

May it be a foundation of courage for you when you are in distress.

May the wonder and awe that fills the eyes of children be awakened within you.

May it lead you to renewed awareness and appreciation of whatever you too easily take for granted.

May the bonds of love for one another be strengthened as you gather with your family

And friends around the table of festivity and nourishment.

May you daily open the gift of your life and be grateful for the hidden treasures it contains.

May the coming year be one of good health.

May you have energy and vitality. May you care well for your body, mind and spirit.

May you keep your eye on the Star within you and trust this luminescent Presence to guide and
direct you each day.

May you go often to the Bethlehem of your heart and visit the One who offers you peace

May you bring this peace into our world.

CLOSING PRAYER

May the light of Christ be bright and warm in your life.

May it touch selfishness and sin and light you with forgiveness.

May it be encouraging and may it be the light of friendship.

May you be filled with the love of the Father,

The friendship of Jesus and the forgiveness of the Holy Spirit.

We make this prayer through Christ our Lord,

AMEN

JOY TO THE WORLD



May we take this opportunity to wish you and your families a joyful, safe, and restful Christmas and a New Year filled with God's enlivening Spirit of Love.