

# ParishMonthly

Our Lady & All Saints Catholic Church, Otley

[www.olasotley.org](http://www.olasotley.org)

December 2016



In the Simon & Garfunkel song *The Sound of Silence* one line refers to 'people hearing without listening' – a phrase which maybe describes a feature of our post-modern lives. We are surrounded by noise, by sounds, by voices, by engines, by music; our ears are constantly bombarded but when do we actually listen? When do we appreciate silence as full of communication? When do we listen to our dreams? When do we contemplate how God is speaking to us?

In the Advent scripture stories we notice the importance of listening for the major characters. Joseph must have found himself in a very difficult situation: the young woman to whom he was engaged, but not married, tells him she is pregnant and how this happened! Joseph wishes to divorce her secretly and save her from shame and possible stoning. God communicates with Joseph by sending his angel in a series of dreams.

*While he was trying to make up his mind about this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, descendent of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. She has conceived by the Holy Spirit, and will bear a son, whom you are to call 'Jesus' for he will free his people from their sins".....When Joseph woke up, he did*

*what the angel of the Lord had told him to do and he took his wife with him. (Matt 1:20-22, 24)* Later the same angel appears in Joseph's dreams to tell him to escape from Herod's soldiers and to go to Egypt (Matt 2:13-14) and then when it is safe to do so to return to Israel and settle in Nazareth, in Galilee. Joseph listens to the angel of the Lord and does what God asks of him.

Mary was surely a good listener too! She listened carefully to the angel Gabriel and questioned him before giving her reply: *Mary listened and was troubled at these words, wondering what this greeting could mean..... Then Mary said, "I am the servant of the Lord, let it be done to me as you have said."* (Luke 1:29, 38)

After hearing from Gabriel that her elderly cousin Elizabeth is also pregnant Mary hurries to visit her. As Elizabeth welcomes Mary to her home the baby John greets the baby Jesus: *"When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leapt in her womb..."* *"The moment your greeting sounded in my ears, the baby within me suddenly leapt for joy. Blessed are you who believed that the Lord's word would come true"* (Luke 1:41, 44-45)

Elizabeth acknowledges and blesses

Mary for listening, believing and responding to God's word. Elizabeth and Zechariah's son John is called by God to prepare for the coming of the Messiah and we are called to listen and to respond as the beginning of Mark's gospel announces: *'This is the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The beginning had been foretold in the book of Isaiah, the prophet, "I am sending my messenger ahead of you to prepare your way. Let the people hear the voice calling in the desert: Prepare the way of the Lord, level his paths."* So John the Baptist appeared in the desert, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.' (Mark 1:1-4)

As the Advent stories in the gospels bring us to the birth of Jesus and the visit of the shepherds there is a beautiful image of Mary continuing to listen, to notice and to discover what God is asking of her: *'As for Mary, she treasured all these messages and continually pondered over them'.* (Luke 2: 19)

So during this coming Advent we can maybe take time to pray quietly, to listen in the silence, to discern God's message for us and to treasure and ponder the message.

**Linda Pennington**

# Prophets in the Old Testament

It is almost an impossible task to compress one of the longest books in the Old Testament into a few words. We are in the season of Advent approaching the Nativity and Isaiah is particularly associated with this time in the Church's liturgical year. All the four Old Testament readings for the Sunday Masses of Advent and the Nativity are from Isaiah so I'll look at him from this perspective.

He was born about 765 B.C. and received his call to prophecy in the Temple in 749 B.C. in dramatic fashion as told in Chap.6 where you can read the full account. It is generally thought he was martyred sometime after the year 700. His work was continued by his followers and scholars think that there were at least 3

authors involved in the final written book. It contains some of the finest, most lyrical prose ever written.

The word Advent means 'coming' and the season is one of expectant hope and joy. On the first Sunday we are given the vision of Isaiah for Jerusalem and it contains much of what we wish for our world of today.

On Sunday two the vision is of peaceful co-existence and the animal kingdom is used in a passage of powerful symbolism. We can all see this as the type of world we would like to inhabit.

Sunday three encourages the weary and faint hearted, the sick and the fearful, to take heart in a joyful vision of the future

overseen by the Lord. Sunday four brings Advent to a climax by prophesying a sign from the Lord in the figure of a child born of a virgin and given the name of Emmanuel – 'God with us'.

These readings give us one facet of the mission of a Prophet, consolation for the downtrodden and a vision of encouragement for the future. It is what we all need to prepare us for the coming of our Saviour at Christmas when we shall see light overcoming the darkness and the Prince of Peace, Emmanuel, in our midst.

Thank you Isaiah for speaking God's word to us through the ages. May we listen to them with greater attention this year.

**Frank Bowe**

## Recommended Reading: **Flawed** by Cecelia Ahern

According to Amazon this book is targeted at the Young Adult market and is Cecelia's debut in this area. But if like me you've been 21 several times don't let that put you off. In fact my daughter (age 22) and I have enjoyed many of her books and I believe they will appeal to people of all ages. Cecelia is not a scriptural or religious writer but her books often explore important moral or life issues in a thought provoking way.

The hero of this book is Celestine a teenager at High School. She lives in a country that has introduced a system to manage people's behaviour so as to avoid the problems that occur if people make mistakes, or exercise poor judgement.

Before Celestine was born there was a great recession in the country; banks collapsed, unemployment soared, and the leaders were blamed. It was said their poor judgement caused all the problems. They were the morally flawed people who had caused everyone's downfall. So a system was introduced managed by the Guild where anyone who had made an error of judgement would be named and shamed. They would be branded as "Flawed," - they were morally flawed people who had brought about society's downfall. They weren't criminals but had made bad decisions. Society demanded leaders who would not make mistakes.

People who are found to be flawed are branded with an "F" for all to see. They are ostracised and must live a restricted

life as a lesson to others not to make mistakes. Celestine is not flawed: she is bright and does well at school. She is pretty and smart. She is a very logical thinker and is good at maths. She knows the difference between right and wrong and the importance of following rules.

Her Father works for Judge "Bosco" Crevan, who is in charge of the Guild, the body that holds court and makes judgements about people to decide if they are flawed. She is friendly with Bosco and girlfriend to his son, Art.

And so the scene is set to explore the concept of being flawed. And on the journey you explore compassion, courage; the dilemma of lying to prove that you are not flawed which would surely be a flaw.

Our young hero is unwillingly involved in the interplay between power, politics and manipulation of the press etc. Celestine is just a young logical teenager caught up in it all. But it makes a very compelling story with a roller coaster of emotions. It makes you think about what is right and wrong –

if you lived in this new society would you be deemed flawed? **Ged O'Shea**

P.S. This slot is generally for scriptural reading...the kind of books you'd find in a Christian bookshop. When I received this one from Ged I was a little unsure. So I went to the library and read chapters from Cecelia Ahern's other books. The daughter of former Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern, she writes with great sensitivity. In one book she deals with the subject of suicide and ends the novel *"Moments are precious: sometimes they linger, and other times they are fleeting, and yet so much could be done in them; you could change a mind, you could save a life, and you could even fall in love"*. In another book she writes *"No matter how stuck we feel, we are always moving and transforming. All difficult moments are transitional times; we are always evolving and becoming the next version of ourselves."* Her book 'P.S. I love you' was made into a film and involves a young man who dies and leaves his young wife messages to help her get through. Cecelia says, *"Life is for living but it always helps if there's an angel watching over you"*.

The Irish Times says of her *"She gives her readers exactly what they want: love, magic, happy endings and most of all, hope"*. That all seems to suggest Ged's recommendation is well worth looking at! **Joe McGuinness**

For a fuller version of last month's Book Review by Miriam Reynolds about Mary's Meals, please see the parish website.





# World Youth Day

In 1984, over 300,000 young people gathered in St Peters Square for an international jubilee of youth, when Pope John Paul 11 entrusted to the young people the World Youth Day Cross to be carried throughout the world as a symbol of the love of Christ for humanity. The following year, His Holiness initiated World Youth Day. The first international World Youth Day was held in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1987 which attracted more than a million young

people. Pope John Paul said at the time, "I imagined a powerful moment in which the young people of the world could meet Christ and could learn from Him how to be bearers of the Gospel to other young people".

In 1989 Santiago de Compostela played host to WYD, followed in 1991 by Czestochowa, and 2 years later by Denver in the USA. In 1995 a record 4 million attended World Youth Day at Manila in the Philippines. Since then the event has been held in Paris, Rome, Toronto, Cologne, Sydney, Madrid and Rio de Janeiro.

At the conclusion of the event in Rio, Pope Francis announced the 2016 World Youth Day would be held in the Polish city of Krakow. Two of our young Parishioners, Rebecca Wilson and Amelia Jessop, were among forty young people from the Leeds Diocese who travelled to Krakow this Summer.

Rebecca recalls: "I had the most unforgettable twelve days of my life where I met amazing people, learned more about the family of the Church, and saw my own faith in a whole new light.

I felt so lucky to be Catholic. When describing the trip to others, I found myself finishing most sentences with "but with Catholics."



I felt so proud to be a Catholic, and especially proud to be a young Catholic when I heard that Pope Francis wanted to recruit one million young Catholics to do the work of the Church. I immediately thought "Me, I'll do it. I want to be part of this."

I just felt so hopeful for the future- the future of my own faith and the future of the Church. Even when I was feeling discouraged I kept this hope with me. The walks to and from the field for the Pope's vigil were tough, and they reminded me that we all have a cross to carry.

When I wasn't caught up in my own joy I would think about friends and family I had left behind: who would I be when I came home and the festival atmosphere had gone? I prayed about it a lot, but what really helped me was the people that surrounded me: speaking together and listening to each other I knew that with any issue I might encounter, God would be there for me. Another thing I took away from my pilgrimage to Krakow was the desire to do it all over again. I've met with God in fields and arenas, celebrated mass with millions of others, and hopped over a fence I wasn't supposed to in order to get closer to the Pope. If I can experience even a fraction of the joy I felt in Poland when we go to Panama in 2019, where the next World Youth Day will be held, I'll feel like the luckiest person in the world.

Meanwhile, Amelia and I are so grateful to the Parish for every prayer and pound donated that helped us to get to Krakow, and to Helen Kington and Father Lawrie for their support. We would recommend World Youth Day to anyone that wants to get involved and hope we can inspire other young people to do just that."

Amelia too spoke of the "unforgettable experience" and of the "incredible sense of a growing closeness to God, His very real presence, and the sheer overwhelming feeling of being among a million friends from all over the world". After Amelia and Rebecca spoke at Mass recently, I overheard a Parishioner say "The future of the Church is in good hands". I for one wouldn't argue with that! **Joe Mc Guinness**

*For a fuller account of their visit to Krakow and WYD 2016, with additional photographs, please see the parish website [www.olasotley.org](http://www.olasotley.org)*



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# Join the SVP ..

**This Christmas  
give something  
that really matters.**



**A little of your time.**  
As you plan your Christmas, spare a thought for those who dread theirs. For many it's a time of profound loneliness while for others it means not being able to afford presents or delicious foods for the family. But giving a little of your time could help change that. It could be the best gift you've ever given.



*Join the SVP.  
It's time well spent.*

This new poster has appeared in the outer porch, on the Saint Vincent de Paul (SVP) notice board. The Parish has a long and proud history of supporting the SVP generously. What we desperately need now is a little of your time.

If the SVP is to survive here in Otley for much longer, we need new members of all ages. "Good King Wenceslas didn't just send a cheque" as they say! He got involved with those in need and did something to help. Could that be you too?

For more information, e-mail [otleysvp@gmail.com](mailto:otleysvp@gmail.com) or speak to Steve O'Neill, Ann Bowe or Eddie Vaughan.

## ***Baptisms***

**Charlie William Bacon  
Stephen John Holmes  
William David Hayden  
Ella Rae Wilkinson  
Samual Terence Monks  
Rose Alice Riley  
Reuben Jack Holmes  
Noah Martin Holmes  
Janine Louise Holmes**

## ***Recently Deceased***

**Nellie Moore  
Mary Draper  
Jim Kierans**

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen

## Eliza running for the Philippines

Eliza wrote:

On 6th of Nov, I did the Junior Abbeydash. It was a good experience but I think I've had better! The weather was rainy & cold but I'm sure that it would be more enjoyable if it was sunny, always check the forecast first! I was raising as much money as I could for the disabled orphans in the Philippines, many I met last year (Donations are still accepted!) Overall it was well worth it & good. A special thank you to all who read this & sponsored me!



## 'Apparition Hill' – a film about Medjugore

One showing only on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> January, 7.30pm,  
at the Odeon Cinema, Harrogate.



## About the film

Seven strangers investigate a place of miracles – the small town of Medjugorje in Bosnia – Herzegovina, where 6 people claim to have witnessed apparitions since 1981 (3 of the 6 continue to have apparitions to this day). Millions of pilgrims have journeyed to Medjugorje to see for themselves, and many describe a sense of peace they have never felt before.

Could it be real? These seven strangers go to investigate: a young mother with advanced cancer: an atheist from England: a man suffering from ALS (a condition similar to Motor Neurone Disease): a heroin addict: an atheist police officer: a father of nine who lost his wife to cancer: and a woman questioning her faith. Where will their climb up Apparition Hill lead them? All profits from this film night will go to Mary's Meals, which provides a good meal every day to over 1, 200,000 of the world's poorest children.

Tickets cost £10 and are very limited. Please contact Joe McGuinness as soon as possible. (email: [joemcguinness@btinternet.com](mailto:joemcguinness@btinternet.com))