

## ADVENT 2023

My Dear Friends,

As we journey through this season of Advent, we are reminded by the words of Timothy the reality which the world faces today. 2 Timothy 3:1-5: "But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For the people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power."

However, even whilst we tragically witness this reality, Advent brings to us all a message of hope. "Unto you is given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God" – Mark 4.11. This mystery of which Mark writes is the mystery of love at work in human affairs for love when considered with care, a potent force and nobody really knows just what it is.

Repentance, renewal, reengagement are the themes flowing through Advent. We testify to Jesus Christ as the Light of the World, it is He who call each and everyone of us out of darkness, to put on the whole armour of God and become shining beams of Light, shining brightly with the flame of hope and the light of faith.

When in these times of despair and fear for the world in which we live, where we witness hate filled crimes against humanity, where we see attacks against the Church and peoples of faith and the ever growing secularism of society, we turn to Holy Scripture for reassurance as we read in (Romans 13: 11,12) "and that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for our salvation nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armour of light."

The world will never be able to cancel the words of Truth, the world scoffs, we bring belief, we open our hearts and souls in prayers for others, where we find hate and division being preached, we proclaim the word of God in unity and love. The work and witness of the Word and Sacrament, the mission of the Church, the faithful worship and prayers of the faithful, cannot be silenced or cancelled. We are the people of God, proclaiming His Gospel message without fear, the message that brings, Hope, Light and Love into a very darkened world.

I wish you all a Blessed Advent, Holy and Peaceful Christmas and a Joyous New Year.

May God Bless You all.

In His Love

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