



ADVENT WITH A
CARMELITE SPIRIT

First Week of Advent

Thoughts from Scripture...

"In the Gospel, Jesus warns his disciples that they are not to be like the people of Noah's generation who were so immersed in the ordinary and everyday that they were unaware of the flood of evil that was gradually encroaching on their lives. But this does not mean that we go into a pious retreat from life's everyday demands. As the Gospel tells us by its own imagery, the fields still have to be plowed, the flour still ground at the mill, but work or leisure or human relationships cannot be so all consuming that we are not alert and committed to the coming of God into our lives.

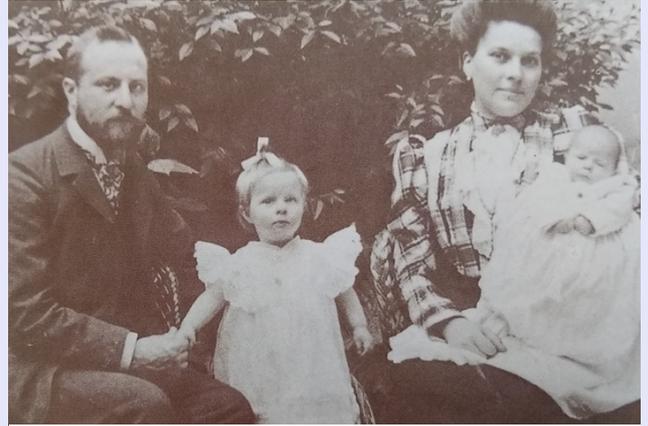


During Advent, we can often be torn as we plow our way through Christmas shopping or grind through the pressures that the end of the work year demands. But can we find a few moments each Advent week when we 'make ready for Christ,' the Son of Man whom the Gospel reminds us 'is coming at an unexpected hour'? A few minutes daily for the reading of Scripture, a short prayer of gratitude to God for the greatest gift of his Son as we see the enticements of Christmas gifts in shops or on TV, the practiced mindfulness that Jesus comes in our flesh in our sisters and brothers, especially those most in need — these will help us to be ready for his advent. Advent is our reminder that Jesus is coming: daily by grace, liturgically at Christmas, at the unknown time of our own death, and at final birth of the new heaven and earth that will be delivered to God by Christ at the time of his Second Coming."

Verna A. Holyhead, *Building on Rock: Welcoming the Word in Year A*, 3-4.

Thoughts from St Elizabeth of the Trinity...

"When we are in our deepest center, we are in God. Isn't that simple, isn't it consoling? Through everything, in the midst of your cares as a mother, while you give yourself to your little angels, you can withdraw into this solitude to surrender yourself to the Holy Spirit so He can transform you in God and imprint in your soul the image of the divine Beauty, so the Father bending over you lovingly, will see only His Christ and say: 'This is my beloved daughter, in whom I am well pleased.'" Letter 239, from Elizabeth to her sister, Guite.



George and Guite Chevignard with their daughters Sabeth and Odette



Patricia Wright, *Gate*, 1993

Thoughts from Sister Wendy Beckett...

"Life seems simpler if we blot out awareness of its mystery, but such a life is an impoverished one. There is a dimension to ourselves, the most essential dimension, which it is folly to ignore. Patricia Wright's *Gate* is a delicate image of this. She shows us the complexities of a normal existence – lines in confusion, with hints of gridded order behind, to which we are not privy. As we move to the centre, the lines grow ever more clotted and chaotic: who can ever understand the meaning of events that make up our conscious experience – in relationships, in business, or whatever?"

But the swirls of events are the context wherein is held the gate. It is a real but shadowy presence, a way through, a possibility. If we allow silence to open up within, we shall see the gate and be free to open it." Sister Wendy Beckett, *Meditations on Silence*, 12.

Thoughts to ponder...

- What specific word or idea has particularly tugged at your heart as you have read these words from Verna Holyhead, St Elizabeth of the Trinity, and Sister Wendy Beckett?
- Why do you think you have been moved by this word or idea? Does it connect with something within your lived experience?
- How do you think you are called to respond to this tug throughout this first week of Advent?



Carmelite Spirit is an outreach of the Discalced Carmelites of the Australia-Oceania region.

www.carmelite.com