



The Parish of Saint Anthony Glen Huntly

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Homily at Mass 1st Sunday of Advent Year B – 29 November 2020

A cartoon in Friday's paper showed Australian Kylie Moore Gilbert, now released from prison in Iran, walking with Prime Minister Scott Morrison. In the background is all the commotion we've witnessed this year: people with masked faces; a sign saying "border closed"; an ambulance racing to hospital emergency; closed and boarded up businesses; even a rather suspicious looking pizza box. Kylie is asking the Prime Minister: "has anything happened while I've been away?"

As we literally look around at the detritus of this year – even our closed churches – the cry of the prophet Isaiah tears at our heart and cries from our lips: "Oh that you would tear the heavens open and come down! Lord, look our world from Heaven: can you see the mess we are in, the sadness and loneliness of so many in our world, the thousands afflicted by Corona virus each day, grief still felt by many Australians who have been unable to mourn their dead and spend time with sick and elderly parents and relatives in hospital and nursing care. See, Lord, the struggle of many young Australians, our school and uni students; a brake in life that none of us ever expected. "Tear the Heavens open and come down!"

This is the cry of Advent – a cry that God answers in the great events of Christmas which we prepare for over 4 Sundays. Christians prepare for Christmas by the light of the Advent wreath in their homes, the Christmas Tree, and the family Nativity scene. Our parish bulletin will provide prayers of blessing for each of these which we can use at family meals, especially on Sunday. If nothing else, this topsy turvy year has taught us to develop and grow the domestic church – the church at home – praying together, a crucifix, an icon of Our Lady, the Sacred Heart enthroned, Priests are always pleased to see these things in parishioner's homes when they come to visit for the annual house blessing.

The cry "tear the heavens open and come down" is also our sincere prayer as we focus on the other meaning of Advent: the return of Christ at the end of time. That is the meaning of the Lord's warning in today's Gospel. Do you remember the old acclamation for the Eucharistic Prayer? "Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again". We live in the time "AD": Anno Domini – the era of the Lord, present in our world by his birth at Bethlehem and his Gospel of miracles and teaching; present in our world in his Church – alive in our pastors and teachers, the Pope, bishops and priests, the living stones of God's Church – you and me.

No day passes without Our Lord's saving presence, especially in times of prayer, even the smallest acts of charity and sacrifice and penance. We hear enough bad news to fill our newspapers every day. Your eyes and mine are also alive to the many signs of good news that abound, to which God calls us each moment, from when we wake in the morning to when close our eyes at night. Good news that fulfils our daily prayer: "Thy kingdom come".