

PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE:

in the wilderness!

ADVENT – 'A voice cries

5 / 6 December 2009

Dear Friends

Last Sunday we blessed the Advent Wreath and lit the first candle. This Sunday, we will light two candles, a subtle sign of the growing anticipation of Advent as we prepare for Christmas. While the wreath is quite common in churches today, it is hardly mentioned in the liturgical books. Yet, somehow the custom appeals to us as a form of symbolic communication.

The Advent Wreath is an adaptation of a pagan custom in which candles were placed around a wheel during the northern winter solstice in December, a prayer that the sun might come around again. We can easily see the transition to honouring Christ as the Light of the World. Indeed, Christmas lights are a popular tradition on trees and homes at this time of year.

Advent occurs in two phases. During the first we experience a new beginning – *Stand erect, be alert, keep awake*. The preface for the first two Sundays speaks of us *'watching for the day, hoping that the salvation promised us will be ours, when Christ our Lord will come again in his glory.'* As we watch and wait for Christ, the following reflections for each day may be helpful:

We need no wings to go in search of God. Find a place where you can be alone, look upon God within you.

Christmas rush! Share this stressful time with Mary and Joseph, packing up for Bethlehem.

Awake in God's love. Move in God's love. Sleep in God's love.

Do everything for the love of God. A look, a smile, a friendly word is enough to gladden and uplift a wounded heart.

Feel you're not appreciated? Turn to God in love. He prizes that more than all your services.

How attentive Mary must have been to the Christ within her. He is in you too. Try to be aware of him today.

Let Jesus stay with you today. No need for any beautiful thoughts – speak with Him heart to heart.

Advent is about *keeping awake ... rejoicing always ... having wondering hearts ... praising the Lord ... being ready for the gift that is God's surprise!* May the light of Christ touch our hearts.

Fr Dave