

PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE:

ADVENT –

'Keeping awake, our hearts filled with wonder and praise!'

12 / 13 December 2009

Dear Friends

This weekend, thousands here in Australia and elsewhere are taking to the streets in a *'Walk Against Warming'* as world leaders gather in Copenhagen to set limits on carbon emissions globally as far ahead as 10 years in an effort to restore balance to the earth's climate. Will there be a good outcome? Is this movement an 'unstoppable force'? At which point does any movement become unstoppable? Perhaps it happens when our hearts are softened and we embrace new insights. There's really no other way for great things to happen, is there!

Jesus' dream for us and for our world is that the Christian way become 'unstoppable', focusing as it does on the simple realities of human living – love, respect, forgiveness, justice, reconciliation, and peace. Christmas puts us in fresh touch with the great word God has spoken to us in Jesus. Today we continue our Advent journey and light the third candle on the wreath.

Usually, the Advent Wreath has three violet candles and one rose candle. The violet or purple colour of three of the candles symbolises our call to repent as we prepare to remember the coming of Christ. The rose candle lit on this Third Sunday of Advent is associated with the theme of joy. 'Gaudete Sunday' takes its theme from the first Latin word of the entrance antiphon, *Gaudete!* which means *Rejoice!* The green circle of the wreath symbolises the constant love of God that surrounds us and our hope of eternal life in Christ.

Our challenge to *'Keep awake!'* is balanced by the comforting *'Rejoice always!'* From 17 December onwards in the Gospel readings, we encounter the prophecy of John the Baptist announcing the Good News and Mary's visit to her cousin Elizabeth, events that, in the words of the preface for this time, bid us greet the Lord, *'our hearts filled with wonder and praise.'* The following reflections may help our preparation:

Before receiving the Eucharist today, let the words, *'Come, Lord Jesus!'* penetrate into your deepest self;
Where there is no love, put love, and you will draw out love... our challenge for today;
Watching the news? Jesus is part of it. He broke into our planet's history 2000 years ago;
In how many places can you find the Beauty of God today? ...a flower? ... a face?
Think of Mary during this time and pray for expectant mothers;
Welcome Jesus in each person you meet today. Speak with calm and peace;
Prepare for Christmas by taking time to think of those we are parted from and pray for them with joy.

Fr Dave