

Prophets—Point to New Horizons

Prophets generally have a bad name. If we think of a prophet, we are far more likely to think of a prophet of doom than a prophet of hope. So how should we feel when we remember that we were anointed in baptism to share Christ’s ministry as priest, prophet and king. Priests and kings are hard enough—but to be a prophet? Who wants to make people miserable?

But this is not the only thing prophets do. Think about people we might call prophets in recent times. Sometimes they said hard things that upset a lot of people. But, once we get past the umbrage and the resentment, we often find that they were, actually, just telling us truths we would rather not have faced. It does work the other way too—a prophet is sometimes one who speaks to us in dark times—when we think things just cannot get any worse. They are the voices that remind us that things have been like this before—for us and for others—and have resolved—sometimes in ways we (or they) could not have imagined.

Sometimes, prophets are young—like the young Jeremiah. They may have a particularly difficult time as it is all too easy to dismiss their words and insights. But, as God says to him

‘Do not say, “I am only a boy”;
for you shall go to all to whom I send you,
and you shall speak whatever I command you.
Do not be afraid of them,
for I am with you to deliver you.’

Perhaps, as a young boy, he realised he had to be dependent on God for the words he was to say which, actually, puts him in a stronger position. If he has prayed and argued and tried to get out of it and *still* senses that this is what God wants, then he can be pretty sure that he can trust it. It does not make it easier or more comfortable—but, at least, he can “blame God”!

Prophets are often older people—who draw on long experience. Their challenge is to recognise that *their* experience is not everybody’s. Like the young prophet, they need to check it out with God—pray about it, test it and only then put it out into the open.

Obviously, there are situations in which a quicker response might be needed and this is where lots of practice in reflection and consideration of what we are to say comes in. If we take the time when we can to

ponder and pray, our souls will be more attuned to the voice of God so that, in an emergency, it will hear it more readily and we can be surer of acting on it.

Over Advent, we will hear many beautiful words from the great prophet, Isaiah—speaking of peace—and hope—and joy—and comfort—and strength. As you hear them or read them, give them time to seep into your own soul. Allow them to feed you so that, when God asks you to be his prophet, to go before him you open and ready and able to say, like Isaiah, “Here I am, Lord. Send me”. 



Year of the Word of God — Sunday of the Word of God

One of the factors that led to this Year being designated a Year of the Word was the 1600th anniversary of the death of St Jerome who was the first to translate the Bible into the language of the ordinary people. To mark the anniversary, Pope Francis announced that the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time should become the **Sunday of the Word of God**.

This Sunday is also usually very close to the Feast of the Conversion of St Paul who did so much to spread the Word of God in his own day. It coincides with the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity—celebrating the Scriptures we share with them as well as the period of Holocaust Memorial events when we might recall the deep roots of our Scriptures in those of the Jews.

You can learn more in the document itself. It is called *Aperuit Illis* and a search online will find it. 

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Upcoming Events in the Diocese and Local Centres

Oak Lea Centre

Monday 2 December and Monday 9 December;
The Voices and Cries of Advent
1.30pm

Tuesday 3 December;
The Voices and Cries of Advent
1.30pm

Tuesday 10 December;
Advent Taize
1.30pm



*For further information or to book please contact
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Even though we are just beginning Advent, our Lent resources are already being written and printed as you read this! The Lent resource packs and CD's will be ready for distribution in mid-January. If you would like a copy of our Lent resources, please contact the Department by emailing spirituality@diocesehn.org.uk or by phoning 0191 243 3302

Ushaw College

During Advent, Ushaw will be hosting a number of sessions giving you the opportunity to reflect on how God speaks to us through Scripture. In December we will run three sessions which focus on the Advent readings from the Prophet Isaiah. The theme is "The God who Speaks - Through the Prophets". Each session will be run on a Wednesday morning and will be repeated on the following Saturday morning and sessions will last for approximately 90 minutes.

Preparing for the second Sunday of Advent;
Wednesday 4 December and Saturday 7 December
10.30am

Preparing for the third Sunday of Advent;
Wednesday 11 December and Saturday 14 December
10.30am

Preparing for the fourth Sunday of Advent;
Wednesday 18 December and Saturday 21 December
10.30am

All are welcome to attend our Advent sessions. Refreshments will be provided. There is no charge for these sessions, but please consider making a donation to cover the costs. You can book a place by using the contact details below, or feel free to come along on the day.

*For further information or to book please contact
Ushaw College
0191 334 5119 | meet@ushaw.org*

USHAW
HISTORIC HOUSE, CHAPELS & GARDENS

THE POPE'S PRAYER INTENTIONS
DECEMBER 2019

Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network

THE FUTURE OF THE VERY YOUNG
That every country determine to take the necessary measures to make the future of the very young, especially those who suffer, a priority.