

Changing direction

J Shannon based on a Peter Millar talk

In this second week of Advent we are invited to look again at the priorities in our lives and to experience anew the wide-ranging forgiveness of God.

We have already noticed that some things that were important to us before COVID are not so urgent now. Advent is a time to look around in our lives, take stock, clean up and get rid of what we don't need.

We are preparing a bed for the Lord both in our homes and in our hearts. Spring clean your life! As you are changing the sheets and getting ready for visitors – clean up inside too.

It is also a time within the Christian year to reflect on what it means to say that we allow the Holy Spirit to direct and inform our daily actions. It means we have to decide how we will respond to other people's comments, beliefs and even, on occasions, their anger or hostility.

We are called to share in the light which illumines the world. To experience what I would call 'that quiet knowledge' which makes us, 'fully human'.

Housekeeping our souls comes with some anxiety – just as watching and waiting for a birth is fraught with uncertainties. And this has been a year of uncertainties.

If I am willing to prepare a way – am I willing to change?

In the face of our many inner and outer contradictions, it may be that the importance of the Advent message lies in the utter simplicity of the basic invitation to take stock and look into ourselves.

In these weeks before Christmas we are given an opportunity to become aware of healings of a deeper kind.

From time to time, we still need to ask of ourselves what is going on day by day with our emotions, with our feelings, with our inner lives. Last week we were honest enough to talk about anger...and grief. All of us have fears, inner contradictions and longings. Are we able to discard our illusions which cleverly mask much of who we really are and experience these God-given moments of creative vulnerability? Clear the air, open the windows, wipe the dust from the last 12 months off our souls. Today we change direction and head toward Christmas with a clean heart.

Prayer:

Lord, there are many parts in me
which need to change direction.

Not tomorrow, but today.

In stillness help me to listen to the Lord's voice
and to realise that new transforming journeys lie ahead,
pathways rich in surprise,
blessing and truth.

Make me a changeling.