

**NEWSLETTER
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**Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful
committed citizens can change the world:
indeed it's the only thing that ever does.
(Margaret Mead)**



In this edition of the newsletter members of the Community have each chosen a reading for Advent to share with you in the hope that you too will find some inspiration for prayerful reflection.

**S. Angela has chosen this sonnet
by Malcolm Guite**

Christmas sets the centre on the edge;
The edge of town, the outhouse of the inn,
The fringe of empire, far from privilege
And power, on the edge and outer spin
Of turning worlds, a margin of small stars
That edge a galaxy itself light years
From some unguessed at cosmic origin.
Christmas sets the centre at the edge.

And from this day our world is re-aligned
A tiny seed unfolding in the womb
Becomes the source from which we all unfold
And flower into being. We are healed,
The end begins, the tomb becomes a womb,
For now in him all things are re-aligned.



**S. Stephanie's choice is 'Courtesy' by H. Belloc.
As the whole poem is rather long, she has highlighted just these lines:**

'He was so small you could not see
His large intent of courtesy.'

But do have a look at the whole poem!!



S.M. Gabriel has chosen these extracts from
'The White Witch' by Elizabeth Goudge



Beautiful things can do more than help you forget. Animals, trees, flowers if you respond to them, look at them in a certain sort of way, forgetting yourself and loving the thing you look at as though it was the only thing alive in the world, something also comes alive, something between you and it, making you and it one with itself, not three any more but one. I don't know what it is, except that to me, it's the most important thing there is. Once you've found it you don't feel so lonely.

Jenny had discovered when Will first left her long ago the essential loveliness of human beings but she had discovered also the comfort in loneliness that companionship can give. All human beings have their otherness and it is that which cries out to the heart.

May the Angels in their beauty bless you.
May they turn toward you streams of blessing.
May the Angel of Awakening stir your heart
to come alive to the eternal within you,
to all the invitations that quietly surround you.
May the Angel of Healing turn your wounds
into sources of refreshment.
May the Angel of the Imagination enable you
to stand on the true thresholds,
at ease with your ambivalence
and drawn in new direction
through the glow of your contradictions.
May the Angel of Compassion open your eyes
to the unseen suffering around you.
May the Angel of Wildness disturb the places
where your life is domesticated and safe,
take you to the territories of true otherness
where all that is awkward in you
can fall into its own rhythm.
May the Angel of Eros introduce you
to the beauty of your senses
to celebrate your inheritance
as a temple of the Holy Spirit.
May the Angel of Justice disturb you
to take the side of the poor and the wronged.
May the Angel of Encouragement confirm you
in worth and self-respect,
that you may live with the dignity
that presides in your soul.
May the Angel of Death arrive only
when your life is complete
and you have brought every given gift
to the threshold where its infinity can shine.
May all the Angels be your sheltering
and joyful Guardians.

S. Teresa Ann has chosen
this Advent blessing
by John O'Donohue



S. Teresa has chosen this reflection from
'Bread of tomorrow:
Praying with the World's Poor'
Edited by Janet Morley

O God from whom we flee,
Whose stillness is more terrible
than earthquake Wind and Fire,
Speak to our loneliness
And challenge our despair
That in your very absence
We may recognize your voice
And wrapped in your presence
We may go forth to encounter the world
In the name of Christ.



S. Margaret Mary chose the
prayer for the 2nd Sunday
after Christmas

May the simple beauty of Jesus' birth
summon us always to love what is most
deeply human, and to see your Word made
flesh reflected in those whose lives we
touch.



S. Moira's choice is from
Daniel O'Leary

Where can the real presence and promise of
the divine be physically and mentally
experienced if not in the dark labyrinth of
human hearts? ... And where else can there
be the slightest evidence that God is an
effective, invincible power healing humanity
at its most desperate, most diabolic and
most despairing, other than in the raw
reality of our complicated, ambiguous and
beautiful lives?

There are many reasons why our splintered
world, with its broken dreams, sorely needs
the life-giving good news revealed in the
faces of a baby.



S. Christina has chosen 'In the bleak midwinter'
by Christina Rossetti

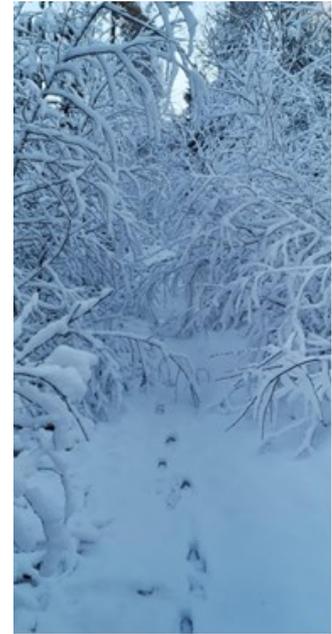
In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
In the bleak midwinter, long ago.

Our God, Heaven cannot hold Him, nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away when He comes to reign.
In the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ.

Enough for Him, whom cherubim, worship night and day,
Breastful of milk, and a mangerful of hay;
Enough for Him, whom angels fall before,
The ox and ass and camel which adore.

Angels and archangels may have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim thronged the air;
But His mother only, in her maiden bliss,
Worshipped the beloved with a kiss.

What can I give Him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a Wise Man, I would do my part;
Yet what I can I give Him: give my heart.



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