



Advent Five

Breaking Silences: Christmas Day

Quote

The opposite of love is not hate, it's indifference. (Elie Wiesel)

Indifference, to me, is the epitome of evil. (Elie Wiesel)

Lament and Confession

Worship leader stands in front of a nativity scene

Today we hear the good news - 'unto us a child is born'
and we celebrate the child in a manger, Emmanuel: God with us.

This is a time of joy, we see the expectant, happy faces of children around us,
we tell them the nativity story of God's great gift of love and how God welcomes all of us into God's family.
With their enthusiasm and sense of delight, they return joy to us and surround us with love.

This is a story of deep joy, deep love, not a light-weight fairytale;
for this child we celebrate was born into poverty,
in an insignificant town,
in a place under the rule of a brutal military regime,
who had to flee from home as a refugee -
this is the child who frees us from our wrongdoing and restores our relationship with God.

God, we believe you see all children as an offering of salvation and the promise of a future; all children as
a sign of hope in things that are yet to come, a beacon of light cutting through any darkness. We know all
children are loved by you, and precious to you.

So God, we remember all your beloved children who live in circumstances that look like those into which
your son was born –

As each of the following prayers are spoken, add the figure of a child into the nativity scene.

We pray for

- children living in war zones,
- and those displaced and living in refugee camps or detention centres.

We pray for

- children living in poverty,
- those who are forced to work in factories and farms for a pittance,
- or taken from their homes and trafficked into slavery,
- or groomed into prostitution.

We pray for

- children living in violent situations

We pray for

- children who have lost hope and for whom there seems to be little they can hope for.

God, it takes a church to end violence against children: we will be that church. It takes faith to believe that
violence against children can end: we will believe for our children.

You may like to end with a song

Song: Star Child

Artist: Shirley Murray

Silent Prayers of Intercession

In silence we bring before God our reluctance to welcome the stranger with hospitality, and offer ourself for transformation.

In silence we remember children who today will not find any welcome, or any place to lay their heads, and we offer them to God for saving.

Followed by singing or listening to

Song: O Tender God Have Mercy (A kyrie with Psalm 51)

Artist: Richard Bruxvoort Colligan

Seated silent response

Jesus' coming to this earth was God intervening on behalf of the oppressed and marginalised. As a baby Jesus was subject to a long journey to another country with his parents to escape being killed.

As you sit silently think about a child you are aware of who needs to get to another place in order to be safe. Pray for God to intervene in their situation.

Blessing (based on Isaiah 9:2-7)

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;

+Of those to whom much light is given, much light is required.

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.

+To those whom much is given, much is required.

The spread of his influence and of his peace will never end.

+Unless we do nothing about the injustices we encounter.

Therefore, go out into the world with great courage and hope,

+ Called by the refugee God to welcome the stranger.

and may the grace of Bethlehem's matchless child,

+be the source of our grace toward others

the love of the God who never ceases to amaze,

+be our selfless love that amazes the world,

and the indwelling presence of the Spirit who never grows weary,

+ be the untiring and sustaining companion with us this holy night and evermore.

Amen

(Note: + denotes congregation saying together)