

ADVENT DAY BY DAY

You are invited to what we hope will be a helpful way of living Advent day by day. We hope that each day we can draw inspiration from short Scripture texts provided, and that we can use these to help us prepare for the coming of the Christ Child, once again, in our world and in our lives marked this year by the shadow of COVID-19. There are three easy steps to participating in this initiative. First, decide how you would like to receive the daily Scripture verses, second, decide how to use them and third share what you are doing with other parishioners.

STEP 1: DECIDE HOW YOU WANT TO GET THE DAILY SCRIPTURE VERSES

We have prepared Scripture verses for each day between 1st and 25th December and have grouped these into four weeks, with a different theme for each week taken from the Sunday readings. Each Scripture verse will be short (maximum 280 characters). You and others in your home can participate in a number of ways:

1. You can receive texts daily through Twitter (See instructions below)
2. You can click on a link in your cluster e-Newsletter, to access the Scripture texts for a week at a time, along with suggestions on how to use these
3. You, or someone on your behalf, can pick up from St Augustine's church a printed copy of the document for that week, when the church is open for private prayer (Sundays 12-2 pm)

USING TWITTER

If you don't already have a Twitter account you will need to open one. It is a simple and straightforward process:

Go to <https://twitter.com/home> (or open the twitter app if you have it on your device) and click on the **sign up** button

Fill in your name. When at a later step Twitter asks you again for your name it need not be your real name, it may be whatever name you want to be known by on your Twitter account.

Add your email address, or mobile phone number if you prefer

After you add your data Twitter will send you a code so you can verify that you entered a correct email account or phone number

Finally, create your password. Make sure it is 6 characters or more. Save.

You will need to follow at least one Twitter user for your account to be active. In the search bar enter **St Barnabas Cluster**. Click on the account to open it. Click on the **follow** button. Click on the **bell icon** to get notifications, and select **All Tweets** from the drop-down options that appear. This ensures that you will be notified whenever there is a new entry in this account. We will only make one posting (or one set if we send more than one verse on a particular day) for each day of the Advent calendar. Any additional postings will only come if you or others reply.

STEP 2: SUGGESTIONS FOR USING THE DAILY SCRIPTURE VERSES

You will receive one or sometimes two short Scripture verses for each day.

You may use these Scripture texts on your own, or with other family members or friends.

Before Starting Each Day

Decide on the best time to consider the texts for a given day. It may be on the morning of the day or it may be on the previous evening. Twitter texts will be sent by 5 pm on the previous evening.

Sit comfortably, settle into a few minutes of quiet time, putting aside any distractions and tasks.

Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you.

When you are ready, read the text for that day/the following day.

If you are alone, you may wish to just turn the words over in your mind for a while, let them sink in, ponder them in prayer.

If you are using the texts with other people, allow a few moments for everyone to think about the texts. If children are participating, check that they have heard and understood the text.

Then ask:

What does this verse mean for me/for us today, in this particular Advent?

What key words or message will I/we keep in mind during today/tomorrow?

During the Day

You might want to jot a thought or action that the text prompted or keep a daily diary of this. Children might want to make an Advent calendar card or page for that day, with a key word or message, or draw a picture for the day or once a week for the overall theme of the week. They might choose to make a collage from nature or magazine cuttings, on the theme for the week. If you are out walking you might see something that reminds you of the day's message. Take a photo.

At the end of the Day

Take a few minutes to reflect again on what the verse meant for you. Share with others if applicable or maybe jot in your diary.

Give a short prayer of thanks for the insights gained, and recall any ways in which you might have forgotten the message or acted against it during the day. Ask God to bless this day of your Advent journey. Turn your thoughts to preparing for the next day's journey.

STEP 3: SHARE YOUR ADVENT JOURNEY

It would be great if we can encourage each other in our cluster parishes and share thoughts that struck us. If you or your family have taken any photos you can post them on a Facebook page we have set up for Advent. If children have drawn pictures or written messages or put up Advent calendar cards for each day or prepared a collage, take a photo of these and post it on the Facebook page (bearing in mind the need to safeguard children's own identities). You might also wish to post a thought that has struck you on a particular day or on the theme for the week. We will give the Facebook address in the e-Newsletter each week of Advent.