

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT 2024

PILGRIMS OF HOPE

Towards Jubilee 2025

BAPTISM OF REPENTANCE



The Gospel

In the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar's reign, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judaea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Abilene, during the pontificate of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah, in the wilderness. He went through the whole Jordan district proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the sayings of the prophet Isaiah:

A voice cries in the wilderness; Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley will be filled in, every mountain and hill be laid low, winding ways will be straightened and rough roads made smooth. And all people shall see the salvation of God (Luke 3:1-6).

In a desert wilderness, far from centres of power and influence, a new age of God's coming into world history is announced. John the Baptist speaks for God who longs for our change of heart, calling all to repentance and sorrow for sin. It is time to prepare a way for the One who brings forgiveness, reconciliation and salvation. He will fulfil the true hopes and dreams for the human family and all creation.

FOR EVERYDAY PILGRIMS

From Pope Francis' announcement of the Jubilee Year 2025 and meditations offered by Timothy Radcliffe OP to delegates at each of the sessions of the recent Synod Assembly in Rome.

"... uncertainty about the future may at times give rise to conflicting feelings, ranging from confident trust to apprehensiveness, from serenity to anxiety, from firm conviction to hesitation and doubt. Often we come across people who are discouraged, pessimistic and cynical about the future, as if nothing could possibly bring them happiness. For all of us, may the Jubilee be an opportunity to be renewed in hope. God's word helps us find reasons for that hope" (Pope Francis, *Spes Non Confundit*, #1).

We need to recognise the immense goodness present in our world, lest we be tempted to think ourselves overwhelmed by evil and violence.

The signs of the times, which include the yearning of human hearts in need of God's saving presence, ought to become signs of hope

(Pope Francis, *Spes Non Confundit*, #7).

We ... gather in hope for humanity. The future looks grim. Ecological catastrophe threatens the destruction of our home. Wildfires and floods have devoured the world this summer. Small islands begin to disappear under the sea. Millions of people are on the road fleeing from poverty and violence. Hundreds have drowned in the Mediterranean not far from here ... I don't know how many parents we have at the Synod, but thank you for cherishing our future ... Parents and teachers are ministers of hope

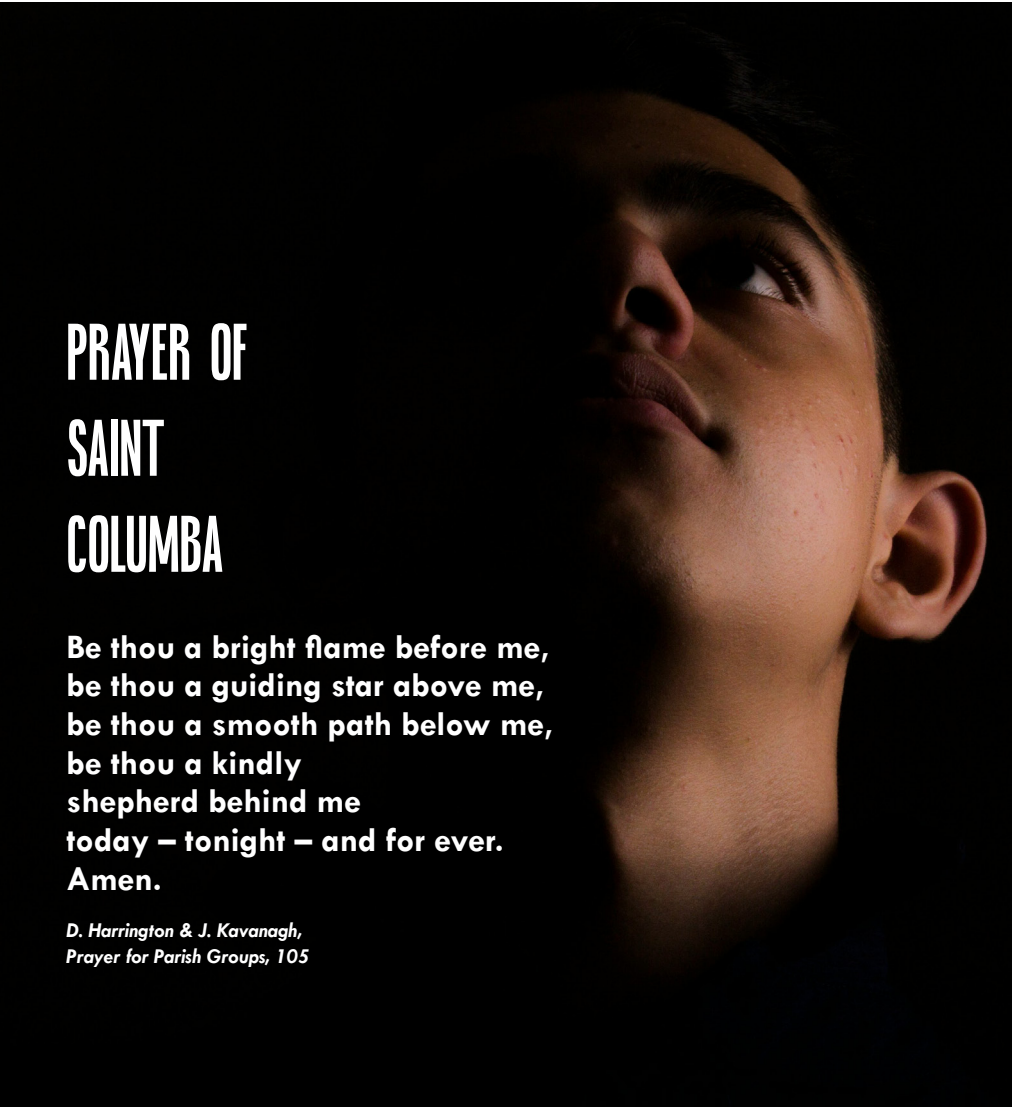
(*Timothy Radcliffe OP, Synod Retreat Meditation 1: 'Hoping Against Hope' October 1, 2023*).

FROM PILGRIMS OF THE PAST

- **Lord, help me to live this day**, quietly, easily. To lean upon Thy great strength, trustfully, restfully. To wait for the unfolding of Thy will, patiently, serenely. To meet others, peacefully, joyously. To face tomorrow, confidently, courageously. *St Francis of Assisi*
- **Lay all your cares about the future trustingly in God's hands**, and let yourself be guided by the Lord just like a little child.
St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross
- **Hope is being able to see** that there is light despite all of the darkness. *Desmond Tutu*

FOR THINKING AND PRAYING

- **What words stand out for you?**
- **What insights might you take with you on your own life 'pilgrimage'?**



PRAYER OF SAINT COLUMBA

Be thou a bright flame before me,
be thou a guiding star above me,
be thou a smooth path below me,
be thou a kindly
shepherd behind me
today – tonight – and for ever.
Amen.

*D. Harrington & J. Kavanagh,
Prayer for Parish Groups, 105*

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Acknowledgements: *Pope Francis, Spes Non Confundit, Bull of Indiction of the Ordinary Jubilee of the Year 2025*, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/bulls/documents/20240509_spes-non-confundit_bolla-giubileo2025.html; *Timothy Radcliffe OP*, Synod Retreat Mediation, 'Hoping Against Hope', October 1, 2023, <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2023-10/retreat-day-1-radcliffe-first-meditation.html>; *St Francis of Assisi* quoted at: <https://www.daily-prayers.org/angels-and-saints/prayers-of-saint-francis-of-assisi>; *St Benedicta of the Cross* quoted at <https://integratedcatholiclife.org/2023/12/daily-quote-saint-teresa-benedicta-of-the-cross>; *Desmond Tutu* quoted at: <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/9354253-hope-is-being-able-to-see-that-there-is-light>; *Donal Harrington & Julie Kavanagh, Prayer for Parish Groups: Preparing and Leading Prayer for Group Meetings, The Columba Press:Blackrock, Co Dublin, 1998.*