

## Thursday 5 December

Today is Thursday, the 5 December, in the First Week of Advent.

The monks of the Abbey of Keur Moussa sing, Sur tes murailles. 'On your walls, Jerusalem, I set watchmen. Day or night they must never be silent.' These words from the Prophet Isaiah speak of the care God has for his people, watching over them at every moment, to guard them, guide them, protect them. As you enter into prayer, ponder for a moment the care that God has for you, how God, even now, is holding you in the palm of his hand.

Today's reading is from the Prophet Isaiah.

Yet another powerful image from Isaiah today – of the division between rich and poor being overturned by God, who 'brings low those who live up high', so that their houses crumble and are trampled on by the poor. How do you find this prospect? Exciting? Frightening? Unrealistic maybe? What reactions does it stir in you?

There are also strong images of safety and security in this passage – the strong city, the wall and rampart to guard us – safety for those who are faithful and live in peace. What does this image do for you? – the image of a place of safety, where people live free from fear?

There is probably that desire in all of us for a turning of the tables, for justice, for certain powerful people to get their comeuppance, and for those who have faithfully persevered to be vindicated. As you listen again to the reading, notice if it calls to mind any situations in your life, or in the world around you, that make you long for this kind of justice to be meted out?

Once more, bring this time of prayer to a conclusion by noticing what feelings it has given rise to in you, what dreams and longings of yours it has made you more aware of – dreams and longings you might normally dismiss rather quickly and forget. But instead of dismissing them, instead of putting them to one side, bring them centre stage and present them to the Lord. Talk to God, as friend speaks to friend, about what you truly desire.

O Wisdom, Lord and Ruler, Root of Jesse, Key of David, Rising Sun, King of the nations, Emmanuel, Come, Lord Jesus.