

## First Sunday of Advent | Sunday 29 November 2020

This weekend is Saturday the 28th and Sunday the 29th of November, the first Sunday of Advent.

Salt of the Sound sing, 'O Come O Come Emmanuel'.

Today, the first Sunday of Advent, marks the first day of the Church's annual cycle of prayer. What a road we've been on, since we set out on that journey this time last year! COVID, and lockdowns, and quarantines. Some, have very sadly died. Many more have fallen sick. And all of our lives have changed in ways we couldn't have imagined. It's likely that for each of us it has been difficult at times to find God in the middle of all of this, or to understand what a kind and loving God could possibly be doing. Yet we are still here, still praying, still asking God for the help we need. This weekend's reading from the prophet Isaiah starts by addressing a God who seems hidden...

Isaiah 64:1,3-8

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down,

so that the mountains would quake at your presence—

When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect,

you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.

From ages past no one has heard,

no ear has perceived,

no eye has seen any God besides you,

who works for those who wait for him.

You meet those who gladly do right,

those who remember you in your ways.

But you were angry, and we sinned;

because you hid yourself we transgressed.

We have all become like one who is unclean,  
and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.

We all fade like a leaf,  
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

There is no one who calls on your name,  
or attempts to take hold of you;  
for you have hidden your face from us,  
and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.

Yet, O LORD, you are our Father;  
we are the clay, and you are our potter;  
we are all the work of your hand.

Isaiah starts by wishing God would appear and repeat the awesome deeds that he's done in the past. Do you share his wish today? What would you like God to be doing at the moment?

The passage ends with a famous image. Our lives are like clay being moulded and shaped by God's hands. Do you find that image comforting? Threatening? Challenging? Or what?

As you listen to the reading again, hear it as if it had been written today. Not addressing the Jews centuries ago, but speaking directly to wherever you find yourself as you listen now.

In this passage you have heard what Isaiah wants to say to God. Take these last moments to address God in your own words about all that you have seen here.

O Wisdom

Lord and Ruler



Root of Jesse

Key of David

Rising Sun

King of the Nations

Emmanuel

Come, Lord Jesus.