



Will You Notice the Shoot?

ANN M. GARRIDO

Today's first reading from the prophet Isaiah offers a familiar Advent image: the shoot sprouting from the stump of Jesse. The verses immediately preceding speak of God walking through the forest with an ax: "The tall of stature shall be felled, and the lofty ones shall be brought low" (Isaiah 10:33). But now, amidst all the destruction, a tiny sign of new life emerges, and the Spirit of God descends upon it, bearing many gifts—wisdom, understanding, counsel, strength, knowledge, awe, delight.

So often, when we scroll through the news, our attention is captured by violence and war and the "mighty" who make great noise when they fall. "Even now the ax lies at the root of the trees," echoes John the Baptist in today's gospel. If we are looking



SCAN TO
LEARN ABOUT
AUTHOR ANN
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for where God's Spirit can be found, however, Isaiah reminds us we will need to look elsewhere. We will need to attend to the quiet, fragile resurrections taking place below the surface when it appears as if all has been lost. If we seek wisdom, understanding, counsel, strength, knowledge, awe, and delight, we will need to look where the little ones of the earth are found. We must have our eyes open for the shoots.

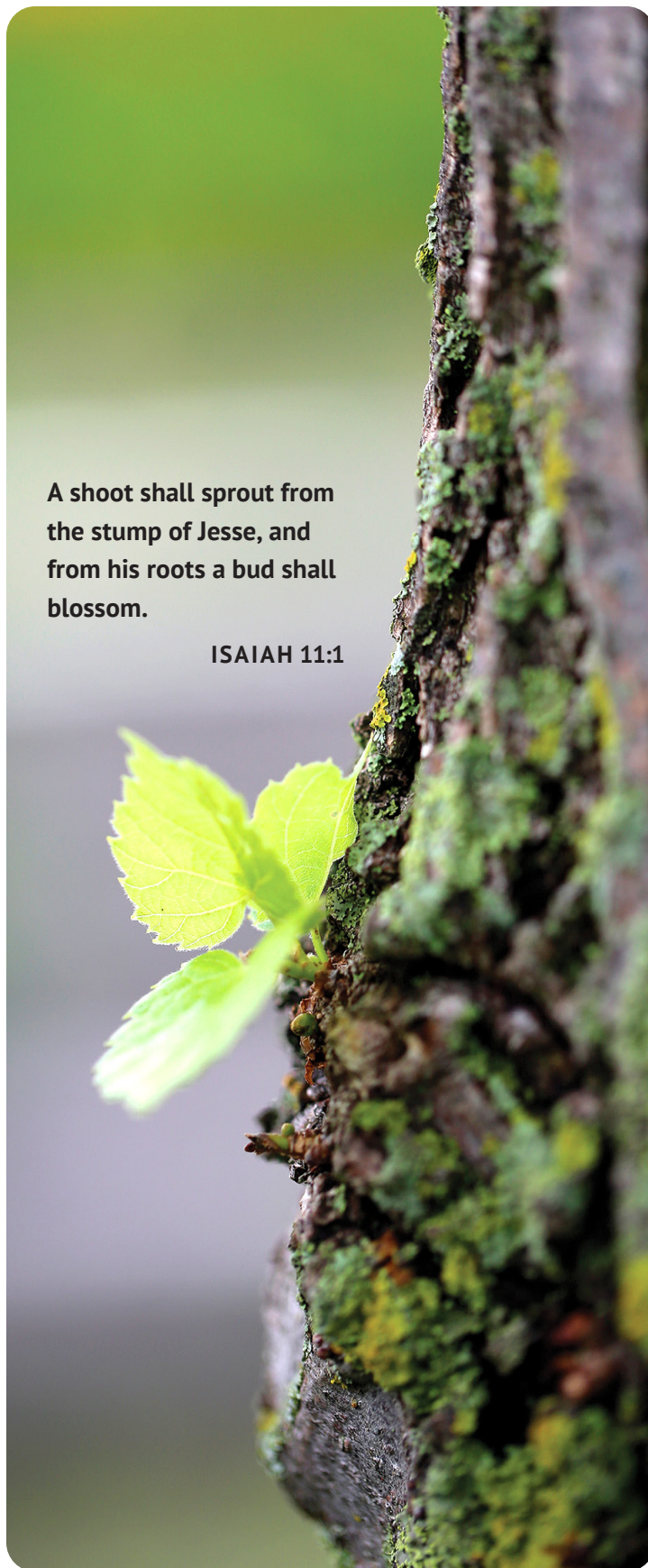
The gospels emphasize that Jesus was one such little one. Although the glory days of his people seemed to have come to a crashing close, they have not. In him, we glimpse the truth that life is stronger than death. We see that the future has not been erased, no matter how terrible the past. In him, we find our hope. ●

Reflect

***Are my eyes open to the small signs of God's work
in the world, or am I too distracted to notice?***

**A shoot shall sprout from
the stump of Jesse, and
from his roots a bud shall
blossom.**

ISAIAH 11:1





St. Joseph's Church

was consecrated on the 29th of January 1928.
It is the oldest standing Roman Catholic Church on the island.

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or
P.O. Box MA 05, Mangrove Bay, Sandys MABX, Bermuda.
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Mass Schedule

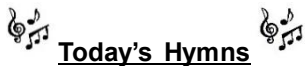
Saturday afternoon at 4:00 p.m. until 6th December
Sunday morning at 9:00 a.m.

Baptism	By appointment: one month in advance
Weddings	By date: one year in advance (approx.)
Sacrament of Reconciliation	Sunday morning: 8:30 a.m.
Filipino Mass – Saturday	20th December 2025 11:00 a.m.
Kids & Youth Ministry	7th December 2025 10:00 a.m.
Children's Mass	TBA.
Pastoral & Finance Council	TBA
Coffee Social	January
Second Collection	Second weekend of the Month

DIOCESE OF HAMILTON IN BERMUDA
Most Rev. Bishop, Wiesław (Wes) Śpiewak
www.romancatholicbermuda.bm

Parish Team Leaders

Mrs. Elizabeth Card – Pastoral Council Chairperson	Mrs. Annette Barclay St. Vincent de Paul Society Representative
Walette Cross Stewardship Representative	Natalia Walker & Justin Tavares Religious Education - Kids & Youth Ministry
Mrs. Mary Harvey - Parish Administrator & Finance Committee Team Leader	Mrs. Jane Farge - Music Ministry



Today's Hymns

Entrance:	On Jordan's Bank	#278
	Light the Advent Candle	(children)
Offertory:	You Are Near	#687
Communion:	I Have Loved You	#623
Recessional:	Soon and Very Soon	#755

Leader of Song: Justin Tavares



The St. Joseph's Parish family takes this opportunity to thank you for coming to worship with us today. May the loving Lord always be with you, and with your families.



Sunday – 14th December 2025

Proclaimer of God's Word
Opening/Closing of the Church
Eucharistic Minister
Collection Counters
Altar Server
Music

Elizabeth Card
Elizabeth Card
Joanne Smith
Simon & Mary Stones
Seamus Stones
Jane Farge

Prayers: Please keep our **sick and shut-ins** in your prayers, especially Ilene Bremar, Andrew Card, Eleanor Correia and Mary Maybury.

MASS INTENTIONS:

Saturday, 6th December

+ Eugene DeSilva

Sunday, 7th December

+ Roland DeJesus

ATTENDANCE & COLLECTION

MASS	Attendees	Collection
Saturday 29 th November - 4:00 p.m. (Reg)		
Sunday 30 th November - 9:00 a.m. (Reg)	45	417.00
Flower Donation		70.00
Special Collection for Jamaica		400.00
TOTAL:		\$887.00

Thank you for your kindness and generosity, it is appreciated. Banking information: St. Joseph's Parish – Account Number: 20006060757062100 – Bank NT Butterfield

The 4:00 p.m. Mass will be held this Saturday (6th) after which, it will be suspended until the New Year.



Next weekend 13th/14th December, is the second weekend of the month, therefore, there will be two collections – regular and maintenance.



Christmas Flower Envelopes are at the back of the church if you would like to donate to the memory of loved ones. If so, please return the envelopes by the 14th December.



THANK YOU to ALL who helped in any way to make our Christmas Bingo a most enjoyable evening. Good food, great fellowship, and lots of laughs. We appreciate all the wonderful donations of food and prizes, and your support.



Please stay a while after Mass this morning to help decorate the Christmas tree and the Church for Christmas. You know the adage "Many hands, make light work."



Our “Afternoon of Christmas” will be held on Sunday, 14th December at 2:30 p.m., in the Church (carols, songs, music). This is an “informal” celebration so let us have fun and enjoy it as a Parish Family in the Spirit of the Season! We will have refreshments afterwards in the Parish Centre. 😊



On Sunday, 14th December, the children in our Kid's & Youth Ministry will visit Packwood Home at 10:15 a.m. to sing a few carols, and to present them with a gift basket like we did last year. If you would like to donate some vegetables/ items (pumpkin, squash, potatoes or packages of green peas, lentils, macaroni, rice), or the like, there is a box at the back of the church. Your kindness would be most gratefully appreciated.

BISHOP's CORNER

Dear Fellow-Catholics,

Pope Leo, during his apostolic journey to Türkiye last week, celebrated his only public Mass on Saturday evening, 29th of November. In his homily, he spoke about the feast of St. Andrew, the patron of the Orthodox Church, as well as the start of Advent, with a three-part call to promote unity.

First there is unity within the local Church united to Rome, which there are four different ethnic groups, Latin, Armenian, Chaldean, and Syriac. Then unity among all Christians, and finally unity with other non-Christians.

The Pontiff reflected that we should want to walk together by appreciating what unites us, breaking down the walls of prejudice and mistrust, promoting mutual knowledge and esteem in order to give to all a strong message of hope and an invitation to become “peacemakers”.

The Pope also suggested, "Let us make these values our resolutions for the season of Advent and even more so for our personal and communal life."

He ended his homily, saying, “We journey as if on a bridge that connects earth to Heaven, a bridge that the Lord has built for us. Let us always keep our eyes fixed on both shores, so that we may love God and our brothers and sisters with all our hearts in order to journey together and find ourselves one day united in the house of the Father.” The official text of the homily: <https://tinyurl.com/yc2y6mzn>

Have a serene weekend and a blessed 2nd week of Advent!

Bishop Wes

Please be advised that due to Bishop Wes' trip to Canada next week, there will be no 6:0 0.p.m. Portuguese Mass on Wednesday the 10th of December at St. Patrick's Church.

A VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS

The 2nd Sunday of Advent Year A points to something new. Isaiah speaks of a branch growing from Jesse's Stump. It is a sign of hope. God is doing something fresh. The old ways are ending. A peaceful king will come. Justice and harmony will grow again. Even nature will change.

In the Gospel, John the Baptist appears. He tells the people to Repent. Turn around. Get ready. Someone greater is coming. He will bring the Holy Spirit and Fire. John reminds us that real faith shows in our actions. We must bear good fruit.

Paul reminds us that scripture gives hope. God is Faithful to His promises. Jews and Gentiles are both part of His plan. We are called to live in Peace with one another.

The 2nd Sunday of Advent is about getting ready in the right way. It is not just about waiting. It is about turning back to God with open hearts and open hands.

Source: Young Catholics 2025



2nd Sunday of Advent - Fruitful Stewardship

“Therefore, every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.” MATTHEW 3:10

Do you bear good fruit for Jesus? Do you spend time in prayer, or do you waste it with mindless activity? Do you use your talent to help others or are you too busy? Do you use your treasure to support the Church, or do you buy more things that go unused? Our Stewardship time, talent, and treasure are gifts from God. What we do with these gifts is our gift back to Him. What gifts are you planning to give to the Lord during this upcoming Christmas season?



Second Sunday of Advent
the “**Candle of Love**” is lit.
Preparation means to ‘get ready’.
Help us to be ready to welcome You, O God!
Luke 3:4-6

Dear Padre,

Do non-Catholics go to heaven?

Yes, they do, because of the grace of God at work in his people. To suggest otherwise would seem to imply that Catholics somehow have a “golden ticket,” or some kind of right that simply does not exist.

The Incarnation of Jesus healed the division between heaven and earth, a division established by the “sin of Adam” and confirmed by our own lives of sin. Through his passion, death, and resurrection, all has been restored to the manner that the Father first envisioned through his Creation. The division was between humanity and divinity, not between religious practices and divinity. Catholics believe and celebrate that God accepts all people of a good heart and a good spirit. God is not blinded by the labels that sometimes blind his people to the bigger reality.

When Catholics, or people of any religion, proclaim exclusivity and specialness, particularly when it concerns eternal life, all people should be very cautious about what they assume. To assume a certain type of arrogance—to yourself and to your belief and life of faith—that excludes others or separates another as “not one of us” simply has no place in the kingdom of God. ●

Fr. Thomas M. Santa, CSsR / DearPadre.org



PASCAL HUOT / SHUTTERSTOCK

Monday

December 8
The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Gn 3:9–15, 20
Eph 1:3–6, 11–12
Lk 1:26–38

Tuesday

December 9
Advent Weekday
Is 40:1–11
Mt 18:12–14

Wednesday

December 10
Advent Weekday
Is 40:25–31
Mt 11:28–30

Thursday

December 11
Advent Weekday
Is 41:13–20
Mt 11:11–15

Friday

December 12
Our Lady of Guadalupe
Zec 2:14–17
or Rv 11:19a; 12:1–6a, 10ab
Lk 1:26–38 or Lk 1:39–47

Saturday

December 13
St. Lucy, Virgin and Martyr
Sir 48:1–4, 9–11
Mt 17:9a, 10–13

Sunday

December 14
Third Sunday of Advent
Is 35:1–6a, 10
Jas 5:7–10
Mt 11:2–11

Do you have a question for the Padre?

Go to **DearPadre.org** to send your question and to learn more about **Dear Padre**.

A WORD FROM POPE LEO XIV

With the light and the strength of the Holy Spirit, let us build a Church founded on God's love, a sign of unity, a missionary Church that opens its arms to the world, proclaims the word, allows itself to be made “restless” by history, and becomes a leaven of harmony for humanity.

HOMILY, ROME, MAY 18, 2025



NICOLÁS NUÑEZ LC / CATHOLICA



ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY

Hamilton, HM EX

525-1191 - svdp@northrock.bm

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY

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Parish**

Patricia Rodrigues

Vice President

St. Anthony's Parish

Sandra Neal

Secretary

Stella Maris Parish

Hellen Gillis- Cooze, CA

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**St. Theresa's Cathedral
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Tommy Sinclair

Committee Member

**St. Theresa's Cathedral
Parish**

Vanessa Turner

Committee Member

**St. Theresa's Cathedral
Parish**

1st December 2025

Season's Greetings everyone,

Wishing you a blessed Advent Season! As the anticipation of the birth of the Christ Child, together with the excitement of Christmas events, shopping, gift giving etc. starts to affect us all, let us take a moment to thank God for our own blessings of family, health, and friends. We also thank God for the privilege we enjoy in assisting and being of service to and sharing of our gifts with others. We believe the SVdP Society makes a positive impact in the community around us. Thank you for whatever role you play to help make this happen, whether as a volunteer, donor, sharing our news with others etc. Every effort makes a difference, always remembering that *"There go I but for the Grace of God."*

As reported in last year's 2024 letter, the following ministries continue:

The General Food Voucher Programme – In our community today the number of individuals and families seeking assistance with food insecurity throughout the year is ever increasing. The continual rise of inflation affects all aspects of daily living. Committee Members who field the numerous phone requests are acutely aware of the extent of this critical situation. The disparity between the "haves" and "have nots" is widening and in most cases through no fault of their own.

The Christmas Voucher Programme - Christmas "Hamper" Food Vouchers will be distributed to over 500 individuals in December. A daunting but rewarding task. In the spirit of "Christmas Giving" the provision of food to the many vulnerable members of our community provides a very temporary feeling of joy and happiness – one many of us take for granted.

The Loaves & Fishes Feeding of the Vulnerable Programme. This 16-year programme of weekly distribution of hot meals continues each Sunday, serving between 130-140 people each time. We are grateful to the Portuguese Bakery for their major support and to Crow Lane Bakery for their donations. We are equally grateful for the adult and teen volunteers who come from all walks of life for their continued support and generosity throughout the year. Volunteers are welcome, so if interested in participating in this rewarding activity, and it is rewarding - please contact Joanne Judd, the programme director, on 337-6625 for further information.

Hardship Assistance Programme - Additionally, in a crisis, SVdP continues to provide relief for BELCO, Medical, Rent, and other urgent expenses on a case-by-case basis throughout the year.

The St. Vincent de Paul Society Committee wants to increase its reach-out ministries and the SVdP Committee Membership. If you are a Roman Catholic; have a strong sense of compassion, empathy, and love of the poor and vulnerable; have a generous spirit and would like to participate in giving back to the Community please call Grace Lovecchio, our President, at 525-1191 and have a chat. Or alternatively, our current Committee Members are listed at the side of this letter. Any member will be happy to share further information with you. Pray on it and get in touch! This is an important part of our Faith life, and your participation is needed and would be appreciated.

The Financial Report for 2024 vs 2023 is included for your review. Any questions or concerns, please contact us. If you wish to donate, envelopes have been placed in each of our six Churches. Drop these into the Collection Basket in your parishes or place them in the Poor Boxes of your church and your parish administrator will pass on to us. Alternatively, and more efficiently, a direct deposit can be made to the **SVdP Society** with the **BNTB - BMD 20006060476711100** or **USD 8400784730010**.

On behalf of the patrons we assist and our SVdP Committee, we wish you a happy, healthy, joyful, and prayer-filled Advent as you prepare for the birth of our Lord. We also take this opportunity to thank everyone and to wish everyone a very Blessed and Merry Christmas and much happiness, joy, good health and prosperity in 2026.

The Committee of the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY		
INCOME & EXPENSES FOR THE YEARS ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024		
	2024	2023
Income		
Reserved Funds - Diocese	15,000	15,000
Donations-in-kind (Vouchers)	-	1,000
In Memory	1,450	2,275
General	53,630	46,808
Total Donations	70,080	65,083
Donations-Poor Box		
St. Anthony's Church	494	238
St. Joseph's Church	495	365
St. Michael's Church	1,166	1,713
St. Patrick's Church	4,633	8,000
St. Theresa's Cathedral	5,780	7,380
Stella Maris Church	-	267
Donations - Poor Box	12,568	17,963
Interest income	280	10
Total Income	82,928	83,056
Expense		
Food Voucher Programmes:		
Christmas Voucher Programme	42,575	37,350
General Voucher Programme	22,525	20,000
Total Food Vouchers	65,100	57,350
Loaves & Fishes Programme	27,822	24,757
Client Assistance - Hardship	7,093	6,044
Administration Expenses:		
Bank charges	911	211
Digicel - SVDP Cell Phone	144	132
Nonprofit Alliance of Bermuda	100	100
Printing Expense	-	186
Registered Charity Fee	275	275
Misc - Retreat & PC Repair	-	400
	1,430	1,304
Donation - Hall Usage	1,200	1,200
Total Expense	102,645	90,655
Net Income (Loss)	(19,717)	(7,599)

Our Sunday Readings

ISAIAH 11:1-10
PSALM 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17
ROMANS 15:4-9
MATTHEW 3:1-12

When He Comes

ISAIAH 11:1-10

Reading closely

1. What all might God's people have wanted from their rulers?
2. How does God empower this ruler?
3. What will this ruler do?
4. How will this ruler's actions be different from those who ruled before him?
5. How is the rest of creation affected?
6. Why will other nations be drawn to Israel?
7. How might God's people have reacted to this prophecy?

Living the word

8. What part of the passage stands out to you? Why?
9. What are all the ways life would be different in a world like this one?
10. How does Jesus fulfill this prophecy?

THE FIRST READING

Sprouting in God's spirit

When Isaiah wrote this passage, he was angry about the quality of Israel's kings; none were as good and holy as David (the son of Jesse) had been. The impiety of these bad kings made the hereditary line of Jesse seem like a lifeless stump.

Things will change when God sends his spirit upon a descendant of David. This new king won't follow bad advice but will obey only God (v.2). The king will also have the strength to carry out God's will. His many virtues will flow from his total obedience to God (*fear of the LORD*). We draw our list of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit from this passage.

The king won't let personal preferences or favoritism influence his actions (v.3). Instead he will unfailingly act with justice. No one who acts wickedly will be able to stand against him (v.4). Isaiah mentions the customary royal robes and insignia to underscore the king's goodness and loyalty to God (v.5).

A new world order

Once the new king establishes justice, peace will come to every person and to all creation. Wild animals will no longer be a threat (vv.6-8). God will purge the world of violence and suffering until the holiness of Jerusalem (*my holy mountain*) encompasses all creation (v.9). Everyone will be drawn to the new king and to God's kingdom. All will know and obey the LORD (v.10).

MATTHEW 3:1-12

Reading closely

1. What Old Testament stories are set in the desert and/or by the Jordan River?
2. Imagine that you lived at the time of John the Baptist.
 - a. What are people saying about John?
 - b. Do you want to go out to hear John? Why/Why not?
 - c. What is your impression of John?
 - d. Do you go to be baptized? Why/Why not?
 - e. Who do you think John is talking about when he speaks of one *mightier than I*?
 - f. What do you think about John's reaction to the arrival of the Pharisees and Sadducees?
 - g. Why do you think the Pharisees and Sadducees show up?
 - h. How do you react to what John says to these religious leaders?
 - i. What do you think is going to happen?
 - j. What do you hope will happen?
 - k. What all do you feel?

Living the word

3. What, if anything, do you feel about the Advent season?
4. Does this passage reinforce or contradict your feelings about Advent?
5. How does each reading challenge you?
6. How does each reading comfort you?

THE GOSPEL READING

John the Baptist

John spent time in the desert, a place people went to discipline themselves and listen for God. He ate what was available. His clothes were like Elijah's (2 Kings 1:8). In Malachi 3:23 we hear that Elijah will return to warn people about *the day of the LORD*. John fulfilled this expectation.

John earned the title *the Baptist* because he adapted the practice of ritual washing. People were baptized by John because they believed that God was coming soon to judge them. Like the ancient prophets, John warned people to *repent*, to turn away from their old lives and ready themselves for God's arrival.

Abraham's descendants

The religious leaders who show up to be baptized don't plan on acting any differently. John yells at them to stop faking it (vv.7-8). Doing what is moral and just (*bearing good fruit*) is a notable theme of the Gospel of Matthew (see also 7:17-20 and 25:31-46).

John also warns the leaders that they shouldn't think God will protect them simply because they're Jews (v.9a). Their claim to having Abraham as their ancestor is ultimately meaningless (v.9b).

Mightier than I

John says several things that contrast him with *the one who is coming*.

- John baptizes with water; the one who comes will baptize with God's spirit
- John's baptism is only a sign of change; the one who comes will bring about real and decisive change
- John is not even worthy to act as a slave for the one who is coming

With fire

John evokes Malachi 3:19 when he warns that God's judgment includes a fiery purification. John describes a farmer tossing wheat into the air to separate it from the chaff, the inedible part. The grain is kept; the rest is burned.

PRAYER

from Saint John Paul II

O God,
Creator of the universe,
who extends your paternal concern over every creature and guides the events of history to the goal of salvation...

Renew for us the wonders of your mercy:
send forth your Spirit
that he may work in the intimacy of hearts,
that enemies may begin to dialogue,
that adversaries may shake hands and
peoples may encounter one another in harmony.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.