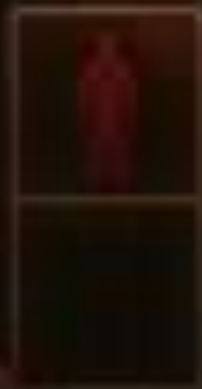


Advent 2019

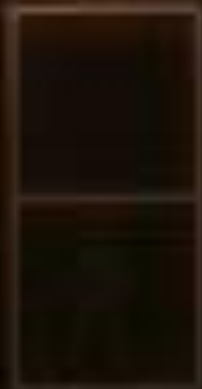
PEDESTRIANS
push button and wait
for signal opposite

WAIT

wait



cross
with care



do not start
to cross



The Season of Advent

The countdown to Christmas seems to start earlier each year, did anyone spot Christmas cards and decorations in the shops in August?

But it's not until these days of December that the real build up begins with the season of Advent. This special time of year helps us to focus on the true meaning of Christmas, and the real reason why we celebrate with such enthusiasm on 25th December. Advent asks us to wait, to slow down and to be still, so that we can prepare peacefully, gently and prayerfully for the birth of Jesus.

Over the next three weeks of Advent, our Daily Prayer invites us to think about who we are waiting for. In the Old Testament the prophets wrote about the future promise of God, anticipating the hope and salvation God would bring to the world. In the New Testament, the arrival of Jesus puts flesh and blood on the promise and Jesus' presence in the world is shown fully.

Each day, we'll take one of the images, titles or phrases given to describe Jesus and think about how his life makes a difference to us.

Suggested format Advent's Daily Prayer

- Start with the Sign of the Cross
(In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.)
- Ask someone to read the short Scripture passage, then move on to read the Reflection on the day's Action and Prayer Theme.

Please note: the text of the Reflection is intended as a suggestion.

Students are invited to discuss the theme for the day.

- Invite the Students to spend some time in quiet reflection, or to share their thoughts about the theme for the day.
- Invite spontaneous prayer on the theme, or on any other needs or intentions.
- Read the Prayer together..
- Conclude with the Sign of the Cross.

**The First week of Advent
Week Commencing
2nd December 2019**



Be Prepared

“Be prepared” is the motto for the Boy Scout, movement, but it is also a great motto for us to have as Christians during Advent. This week the Church begins new year, because Sunday saw the beginning of a new year in the Christian calendar, Advent – the word Advent comes from the Latin word “Adventus” which means “Arrival” It is a time of waiting for the arrival of Christmas, the coming of Jesus to earth when he was born as a baby at Bethlehem over two thousand years ago.

As Christians we are asked to “Be prepared” and “Stay awake” to the real meaning of Christmas.

These days we can get so carried away with the commercialism of Christmas that we see all around us, the buying of presents, clothes, food, the organising of parties, that we can sometimes leave Jesus out of Christmas all together and replace him with Father Christmas and Christmas trees, tinsel and decorations.

Advent, the season of preparation reminds us to celebrate the good news of the birth of Jesus as a baby in Bethlehem and to also remember that one day he will return to earth as our judge.

This Advent how can we help ourselves to remain alert to the opportunities to grow in the love and service of others?



Monday 2nd December 2019

The Word was
the **true light**
that enlightens
all people.
John 1:9

Theme

Be Prepared - Bringing light into places of darkness

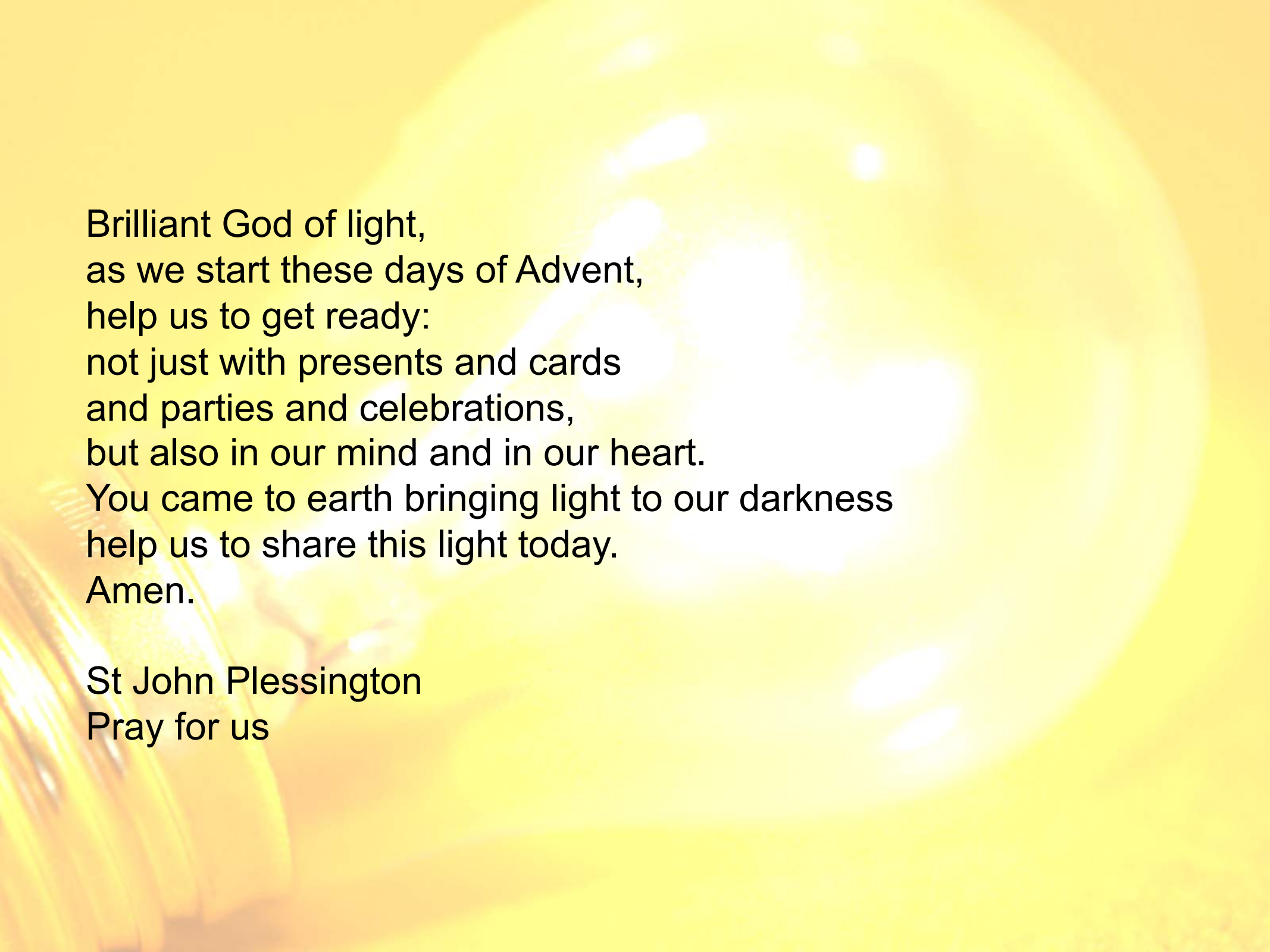
Action

Be a star for someone today

Reflection


As we journey into winter, the days shorten and we come to rely more on artificial light to guide us on our way. Jesus' birth 2000 years ago is a bit like that: the world was a dark place that needed the light of God. It is true today, too, especially in our darkest moments: when we're struggling, unhappy, gloomy or in a bad place – we need the light of hope and brightness to cheer us up and help us see things differently. We need God's light.

Advent traditionally begins with the lighting of the first candle on the Advent Wreath. As Christmas gets closer more candles are lit to show that Jesus' birth brings real light real freedom into our world of darkness. Today, we're invited to reflect God's light, shining out in a gloomy world as signs of promise and hope, of brightness and goodness. Think for a moment about how you can shine today, perhaps thinking especially of who you can shine for: who can you help, support, encourage and enlighten today?



Brilliant God of light,
as we start these days of Advent,
help us to get ready:
not just with presents and cards
and parties and celebrations,
but also in our mind and in our heart.
You came to earth bringing light to our darkness
help us to share this light today.
Amen.

St John Plessington
Pray for us



He is like a **shepherd**
feeding his flock,
gathering lambs in his arms.
Isaiah 40:11

Tuesday 3rd December 2019



Theme

Be prepared - Care for others

Action


Spend time with someone you don't normally get on with

Reflection

In the Old Testament, Isaiah described God as a shepherd who cared for his sheep. He described God as one who is dedicated, caring, supportive and always there.

Jesus' birth in a stable at Bethlehem showed that God was there in a very direct and obvious way. Later on, Jesus would show God's care and compassion through his healing miracles, his words of forgiveness and his invitation to love one another.

God asks us, too, to share the love and care that we receive with others.



Jesus the Good Shepherd,
you gently care for us and watch over us,
showing us a great example of love and compassion.
Help the flock of our college today,
especially those who might feel sad or troubled.
Teach us to reach out to them with kindness.
Amen.

St John Plessington
Pray for us

God, you are our Father.
We're the clay and you're our **potter**:
all of us are what you made us.
Isaiah 64:8



Wednesday 4th December 2019

Theme

Be Prepared - Being content with who we are

Action

Celebrate your good qualities

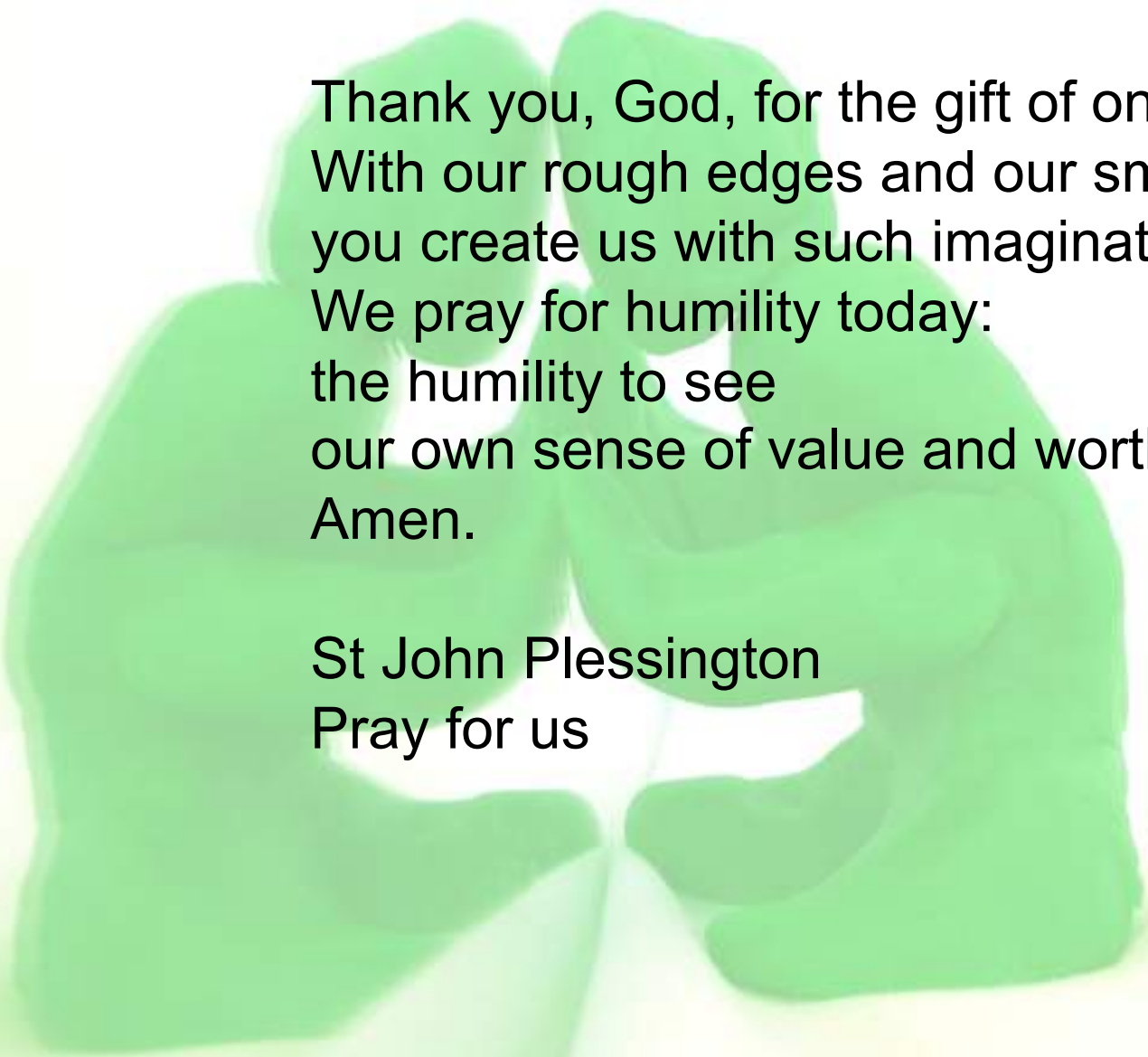
Reflection

Did you look at yourself in the mirror this morning? What did you see in the reflection? Hopefully you liked what you saw! Our Creator God forms us and moulds us into the beautiful and wonderful people that we are.

We should be able to look at ourselves and be truly thankful for being so brilliant and awesome: that's just the way God has made us. Look in the mirror tomorrow morning and tell yourself, 'I'm gorgeous!' – it's true!


Of course, we can have our rough edges, and sometimes we can mess up but just like the potter smooth's away any imperfections, so God gently moulds us, softening out any tough bits and making us perfect again. It's easy to do when we recognise and acknowledge the bits we'd like to change.

Today, be that perfect creation! Celebrate the wonderful person that you are. Think about your good qualities and positive bits of your character (they're there, even if they sometimes seem hidden away!) Be content and happy with who you are.



Thank you, God, for the gift of one another.
With our rough edges and our smooth,
you create us with such imagination and creativity.
We pray for humility today:
the humility to see
our own sense of value and worth.
Amen.

St John Plessington
Pray for us

A bronze statue of Lady Justice, blindfolded and holding a sword and scales. The statue is positioned on the left side of the image, with its right arm raised holding a sword and its left arm extended holding a pair of scales. The scales are balanced, with two pans hanging from a central point. The statue is blindfolded, symbolizing impartiality. The background is a plain, light color.

Time's coming when
I'll establish...
a ruler who knows
how to rule justly.
He'll make sure of justice
and keep people united.
This is the name
they'll give him:
**'God-who-puts-
everything-right.'**
Jeremiah 23:5-6

Thursday 5th December 2019



Theme

Be Prepared - Justice in the world

Action

Treat people fairly

Reflection

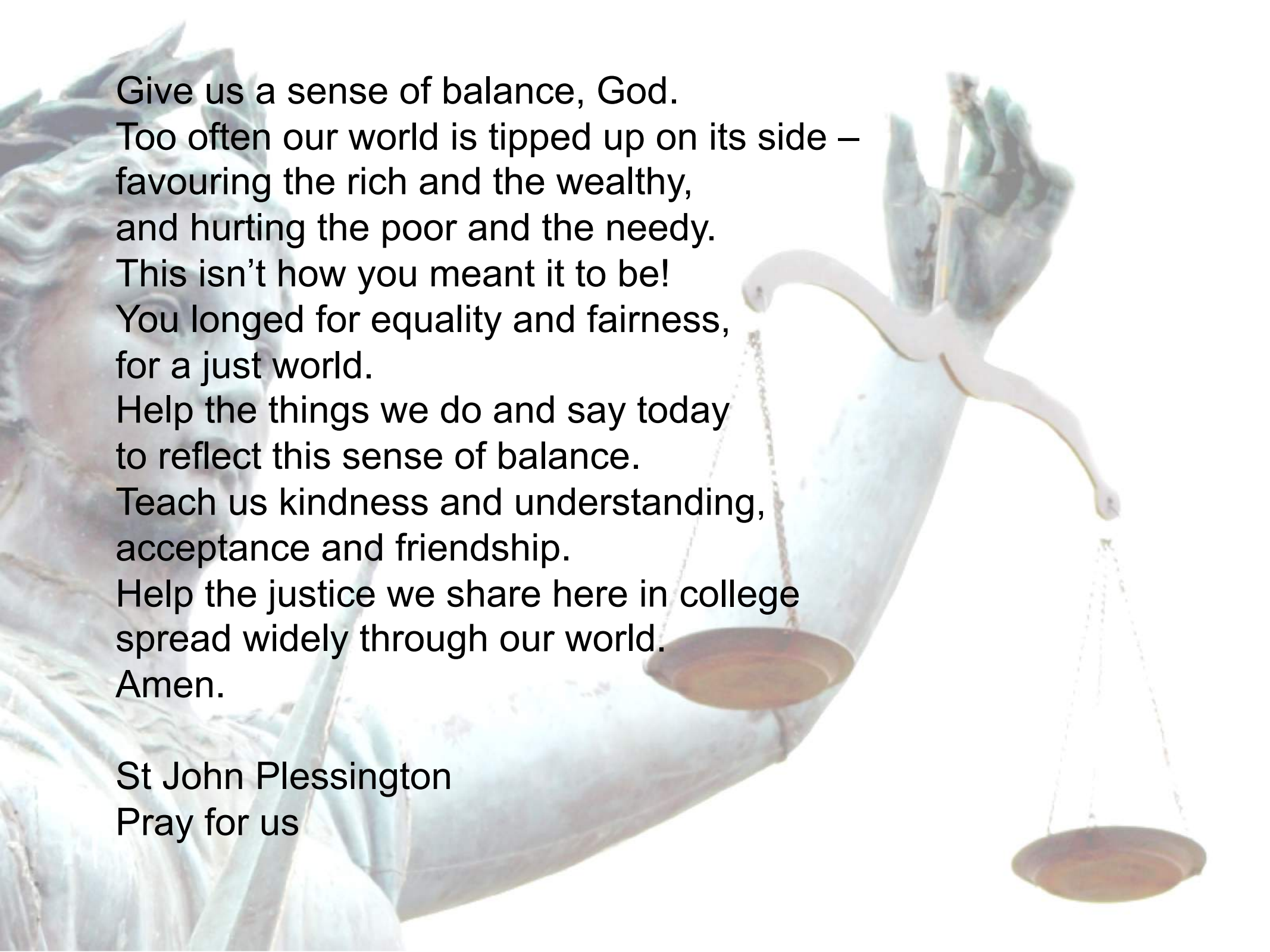
Do you ever see those car stickers that say 'A dog is for life, not just for Christmas'? We could just as easily substitute the word 'dog' for 'God'. It's great to celebrate Jesus' birth on Christmas Day but it's equally important to celebrate just what his birth means for our world.

The prophet Jeremiah expressed how much people were looking for God to put everything right, to remind us how to treat people equally, and to bring justice and peace to the world. Jesus showed this in the work he did: he challenged people to think differently, encouraging them not to judge others, but to be fair and just.

And that's a message not just for Christmas, but for every day. In a just world everybody would be free from poverty, famine, conflict or war. A just world sees everyone having the same opportunity to flourish in life.

So today we pray for justice in the world. It might seem like a big ask – like it's something beyond our own capability. But even by trying to treat the people we know fairly, we'll be joining in God's work of building a just world.

Try not to judge others today. Avoid the temptation to bitch or gossip. Strive to be a good friend try not to fall out. And as you do all this, think about those who really struggle to be treated fairly in the world.

A statue of a person, likely a religious figure, holding a large balance scale. The scale is tilted, with the left pan being higher and the right pan being lower, indicating an imbalance. The statue is made of a light-colored material, possibly stone or marble, and is set against a plain white background.

Give us a sense of balance, God.
Too often our world is tipped up on its side –
favouring the rich and the wealthy,
and hurting the poor and the needy.
This isn't how you meant it to be!
You longed for equality and fairness,
for a just world.
Help the things we do and say today
to reflect this sense of balance.
Teach us kindness and understanding,
acceptance and friendship.
Help the justice we share here in college
spread widely through our world.
Amen.

St John Plessington
Pray for us



The virgin will conceive
and give birth to a son
and they will call him
Emmanuel,
a name which means
'God-is-with-us'.
Matthew 1:22-23

Day 6th December 2019



Theme

Be Prepared - Having courage and faith in God

Action

Be open to God

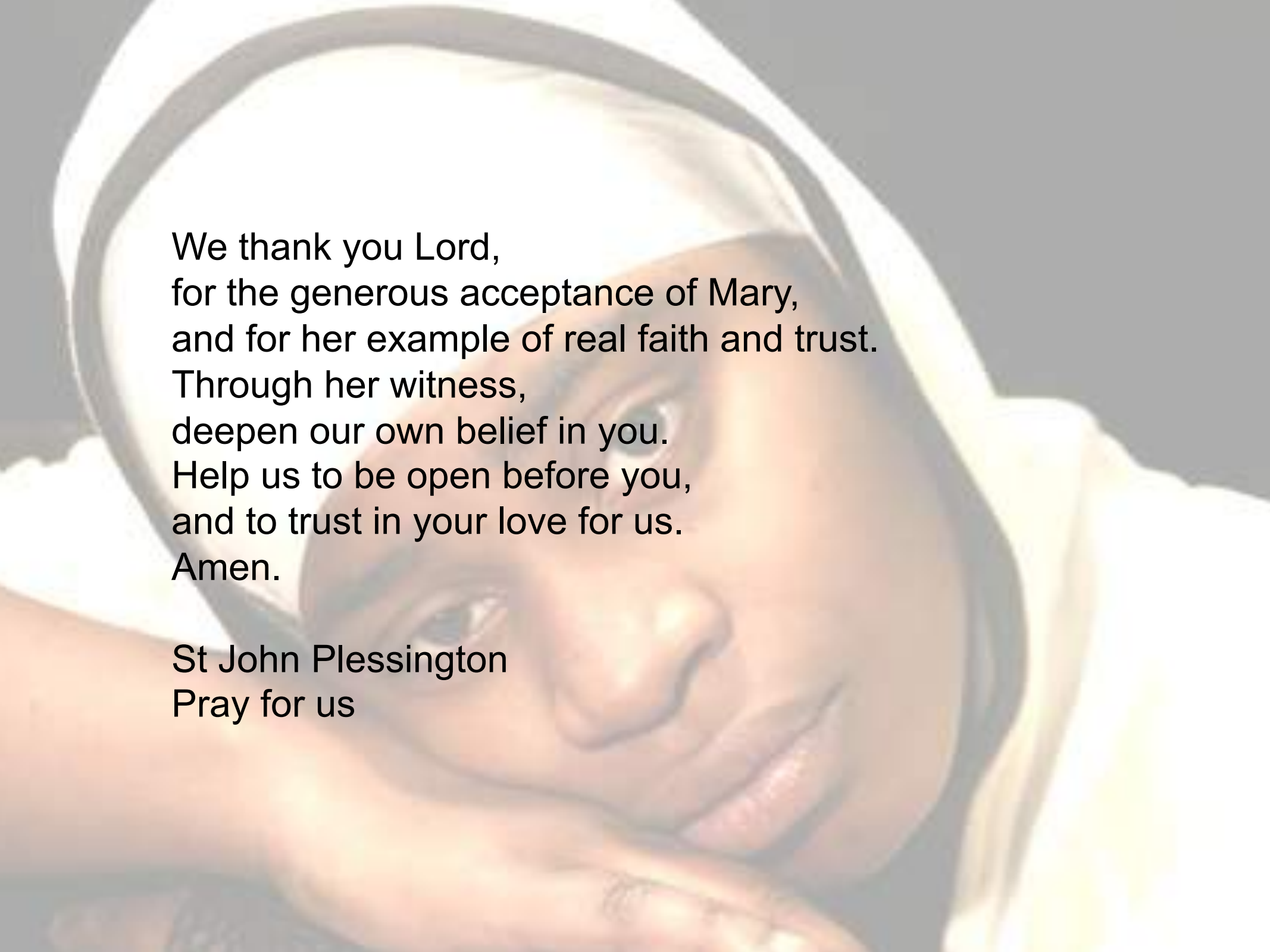
Reflection

During Advent we think about Mary and her choice to give up the freedom to live a normal life when she chose to be the mother of Jesus.

Why did God choose Mary? Did he know she'd agree so easily? What made her so special? Perhaps it is because Mary was so ordinary and so unremarkable that she was asked to take on this huge responsibility. She's ordinary, but extraordinary. The most important thing for Mary was her trust and faith in God. As crazy as it might sound to be told you were pregnant about to give birth to the Son of God, by a strange bloke with wings at that, Mary seemed to take it all in with a real sense of calm and acceptance. Maybe there's something the Gospel accounts don't tell us about her reaction!

We certainly know that Mary's life was changed beyond compare following the visit of the Angel Gabriel. And thanks to her example of generous faith shown to us by Mary, our lives are changed too. Through their witness, we come to know that God is with us always.

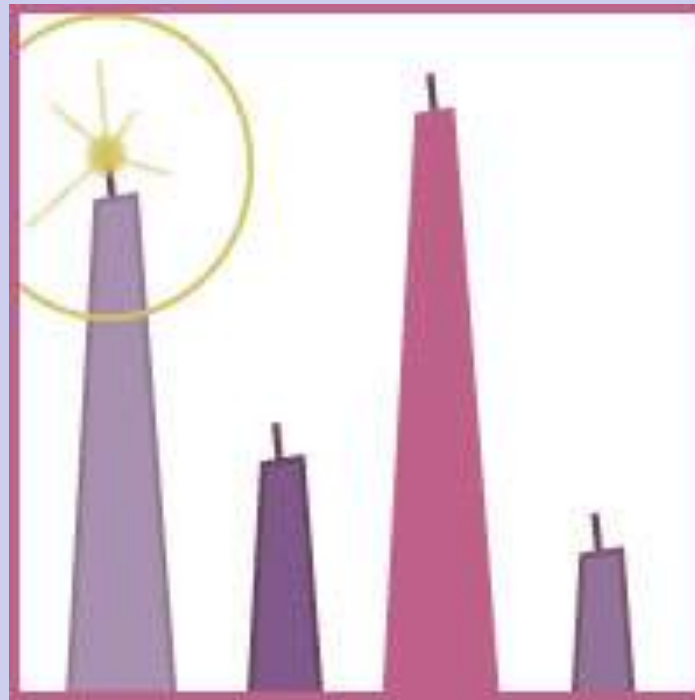
So today we're invited to be open to God – to trust in the Lord just as Mary did. Even if we only shared in a little bit of faith, we'd be drawn ever closer to God.



We thank you Lord,
for the generous acceptance of Mary,
and for her example of real faith and trust.
Through her witness,
deepen our own belief in you.
Help us to be open before you,
and to trust in your love for us.
Amen.

St John Plessington
Pray for us

**The Second week of Advent
Week Commencing
9th December 2019**



Change your ways

“If you are going out in the evening or have been invited to a special celebration, you take your time to get yourselves washed and changed into your best clothes.

In our gospel this week John The Baptist told people they had to be baptised (washed) and changed their lives, to enable them to welcome the Messiah.

This is what Advent is really all about, preparing ourselves for the coming of Jesus the Messiah at Christmas.

John the Baptist came to help people get their priorities right. This Advent we are being asked to get our priorities right as well. There are more important things to do than buying presents and decorating our homes, or buying nice clothes to wear and good things to eat.

Remember the story of Martha and Mary when Jesus came to their house. Mary stopped what she was doing to simply “be” in the presence of Jesus, while Martha her sister busied herself doing things in the house, she missed out on being in the presence of Jesus.

This advent we have to get the balance right. We can enjoy being in the presence of Jesus as well as preparing to celebrate, if we make our preparations flow from our prayers to God, then Jesus will really help us to make Christmas special this year.



Monday 9th December 2019

Trust in the Lord for ever, for the Lord,
the Lord, is the **Rock** eternal.
Isaiah 26:4

Theme

Change your ways - Strength for those who suffer

Action

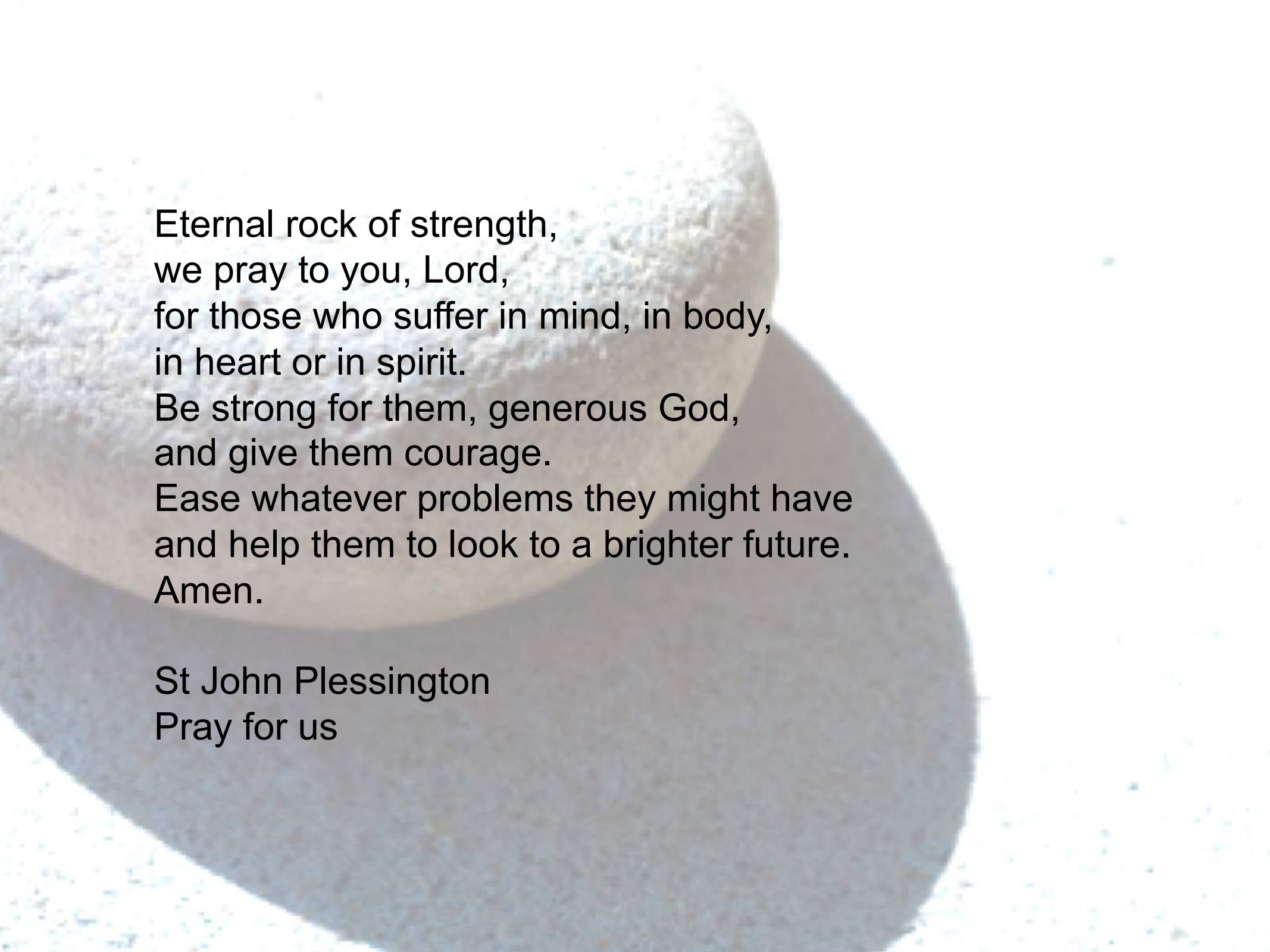
Pray for one person you know who is suffering

Reflection

The prophet Isaiah uses many different images for the Lord. 'Eternal rock' suggests that God is strong and powerful, a strong foundation. It's why Isaiah talks about trusting in God: he's solid and won't let us down.

This remains true even when we're having a hard time. God encourages us to turn to him in our need. God is just always there for us, no matter what we're experiencing or how we are feeling. In the Gospels, Jesus showed this many times, reaching out especially to the sick and suffering and giving them strength, healing and hope.

Today we're invited to pray for just one person who you know is suffering at the moment. It might be a member of your family, or someone here in college, or if you don't know of anyone personally, you can choose somebody that you've heard about in the news. Take a moment as we reflect together to hold that person in your heart. Pray for that person, asking God to be a rock of strength for them today. And as you go about your day, keep this person in your mind, stopping every now and again to pray for them.



Eternal rock of strength,
we pray to you, Lord,
for those who suffer in mind, in body,
in heart or in spirit.
Be strong for them, generous God,
and give them courage.
Ease whatever problems they might have
and help them to look to a brighter future.
Amen.

St John Plessington
Pray for us



Tuesday 10th December 2019

That day it will be said:
See, this is our God
in whom we hoped for salvation;
the Lord is **the one in whom we hoped.**
Isaiah 25:9



Theme

Change your ways - Hope

Action

Be hopeful: think positively as you prepare to celebrate Christmas

Reflection

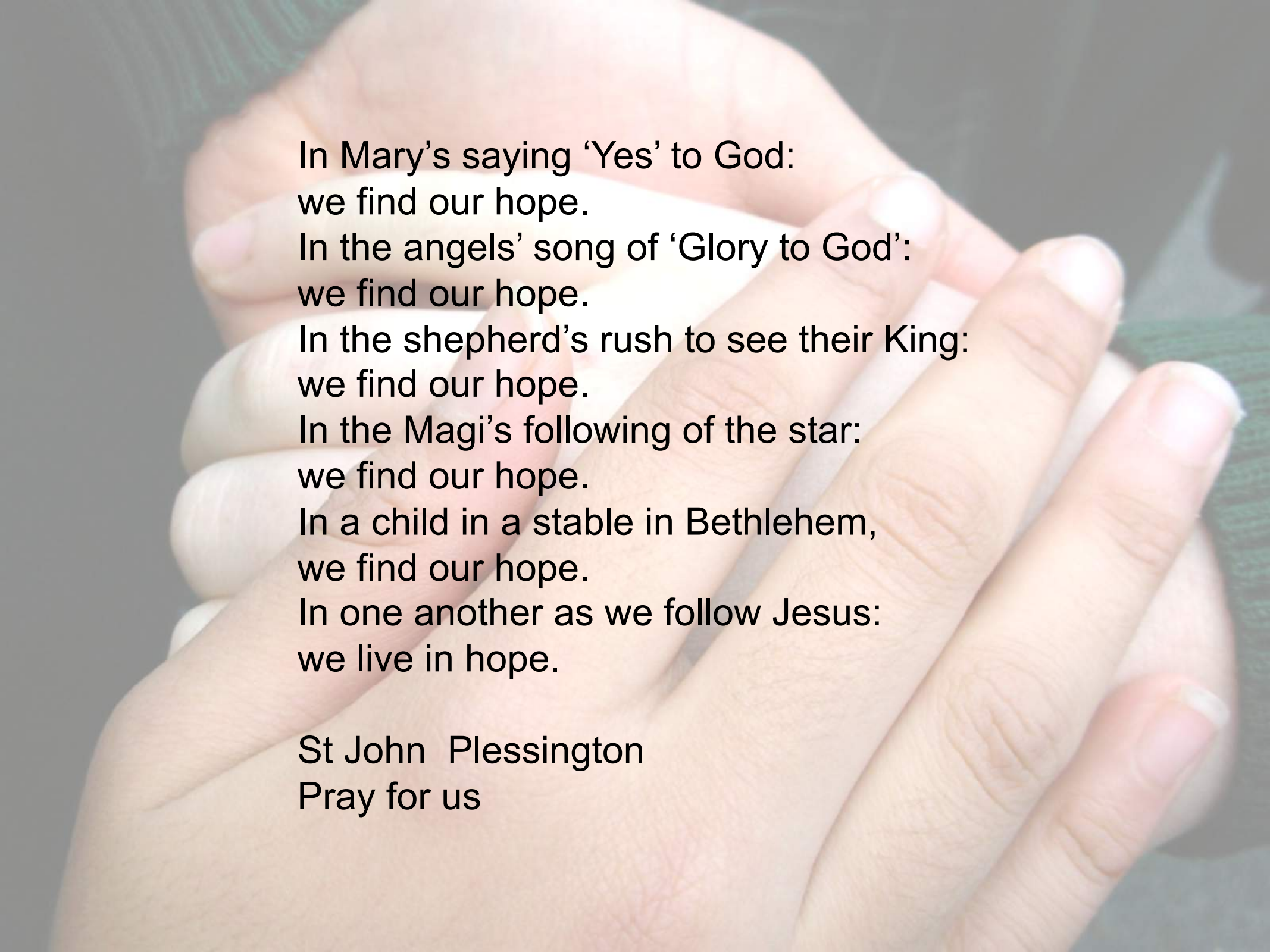
A wise man once said: 'Optimism is the belief that things will get better. Hope is the faith that, together, we can make things better.'

As Christians, the birth of Jesus is the ultimate sign of the great hope and promise that God gives to us: he is the answer to our prayers and a sign of God's total love for humanity. Jesus proves this love on the Cross, bringing forgiveness and new life to a broken world.

Hope is one of the greatest gifts of this Advent season. Hope keeps us going when things are tough. It helps us to persevere and look to the future with confidence. Hope can help us through hard times, but it can also affect us in our good times too, giving us a positive attitude and a good spirit.

So today's action invites us to be a community of hope: to be a family that thinks positively, acts generously, speaks lovingly, and treats fairly.

Being hopeful, with faith in God, helps us to make our little bit of the world that little bit better. Doing this together helps that hope to grow!



In Mary's saying 'Yes' to God:
we find our hope.
In the angels' song of 'Glory to God':
we find our hope.
In the shepherd's rush to see their King:
we find our hope.
In the Magi's following of the star:
we find our hope.
In a child in a stable in Bethlehem,
we find our hope.
In one another as we follow Jesus:
we live in hope.

St John Plessington
Pray for us

Superdrug[☆]

Enhanced HealingTM

PROTECTS WOUNDS

PROMOTES HEALING

RELIEVES PAIN

REDUCES SCARRING

Look, there is
the **Lamb of God**
that takes away
the sin of the world.

John 1:29

Wednesday 11th December 2019

Theme

Change your ways - Forgiveness of others

Action

Forgive someone that has hurt you

Reflection

John the Baptist describes Jesus as the 'Lamb of God' just as he is about to be baptised in the River Jordan. It seems like a strange description but it comes from some Old Testament images. John wanted to show that Jesus was one who would suffer for others, taking on all the sin and hurt of the world.

Throughout his life on earth, Jesus encouraged people to turn away from sin and to seek forgiveness. Through many stories, parables and miracles, he showed how massive God's power of forgiveness is – it's a generous, unconditional, limitless forgiveness: as long as we're able to forgive others too.

Advent is often seen as a time of excited preparation, but it's a time for forgiveness too. In these days, God asks us to take a good look at our lives and to see if we're really ready for Jesus. If we are generous in our forgiveness of others, we will be!

So today we're asked to be forgiving. It can be difficult to forgive someone who has done something to hurt us. But it's much more difficult to carry a load of anger and resentment inside.

Forgiving others takes courage and humility, but the healing and happiness it brings is well worth it.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us.

Let this mercy overflow today and change our hearts.

We sometimes hold grudges
or stubbornly refuse to forgive,
but this only makes things worse.

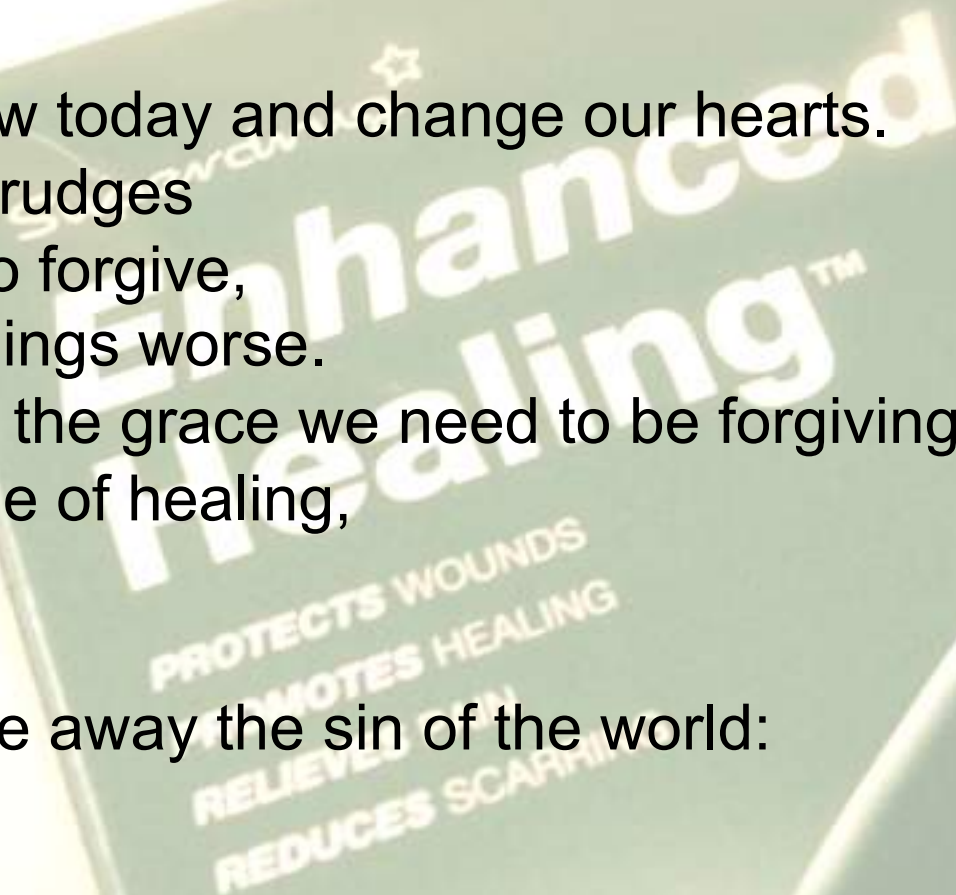
Instead, Lord, give us the grace we need to be forgiving.

Help this day to be one of healing,
of putting things right,
and making peace.

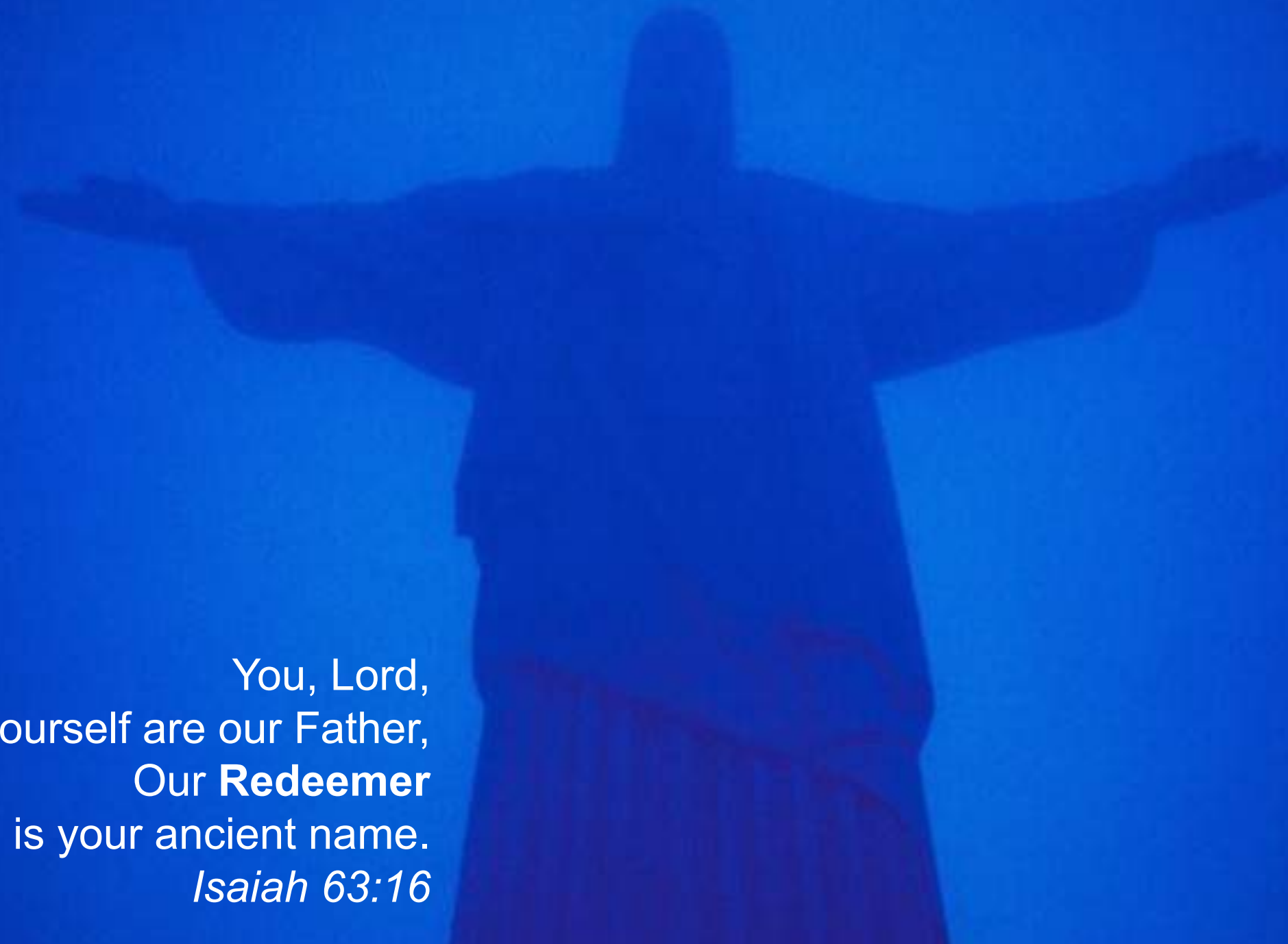
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us.

St John Plessington

Pray for us



Thursday 12th December 2019



You, Lord,
yourself are our Father,
Our **Redeemer**
is your ancient name.
Isaiah 63:16

Theme

Change your ways - Saying sorry

Action

Spend some time thinking about things you need to say sorry for

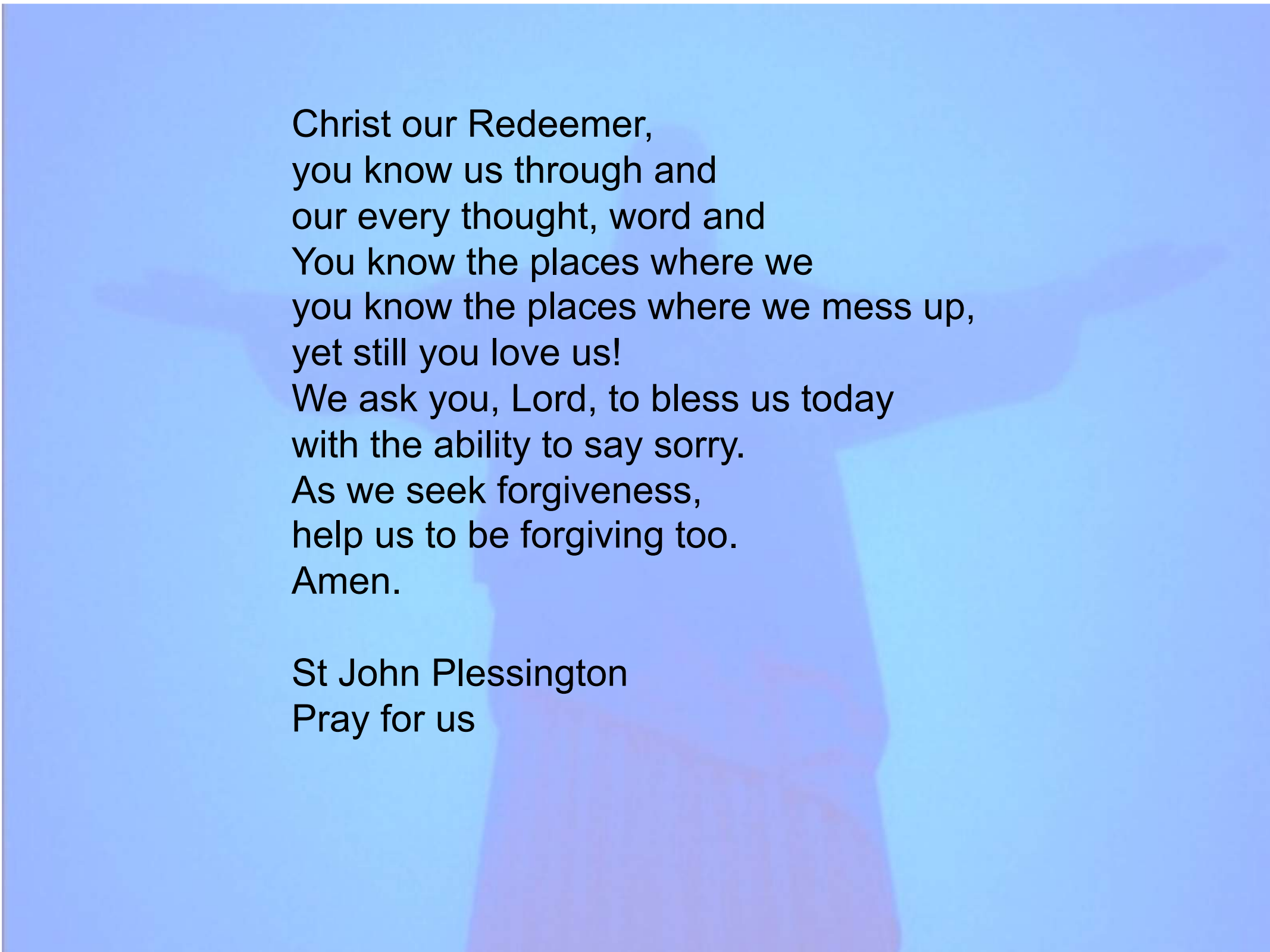
Reflection

Yesterday, we thought about how we forgive others. Today, we think about the other side of forgiveness: how we say sorry and seek to be forgiven.

Someone once had a t-shirt with the slogan 'It's hard to be ever so humble when you're perfect in every way.' But, of course, nobody is perfect. Even the most saintly of us will mess up from time to time – it's part of being human! The important thing is to humbly recognise where we make mistakes, to say sorry for those things and to learn from our experience.

In the Gospels, Jesus the Redeemer talked a lot about forgiveness, but he didn't do it so that we feel bad about ourselves. He recognised the fact that saying sorry helped us to grow peacefully and patiently with one another. It helps us to be real with each other. Even though it can be difficult to admit where we've gone wrong, the benefits of being forgiven are incredible – it just puts us in the right place.

So today we're asked to think about what we need to say sorry for. Be honest – and try to put it right today.



Christ our Redeemer,
you know us through and
our every thought, word and
You know the places where we
you know the places where we mess up,
yet still you love us!
We ask you, Lord, to bless us today
with the ability to say sorry.
As we seek forgiveness,
help us to be forgiving too.
Amen.

St John Plessington
Pray for us

A photograph of a sandy beach with scattered seaweed. A long, dark shadow of a person is cast across the sand, extending from the upper center towards the bottom. The shadow is clearly defined against the lighter sand. The seaweed is dark and clumpy, scattered across the beach. The overall scene is bright and sunny.

Friday 13th December 2019

Sing and shout for joy
for great in your midst
is the **Holy One** of Israel.
Isaiah 12:6



Theme

Change your ways - Recognising the presence of God around us

Action

Try to see God in one another

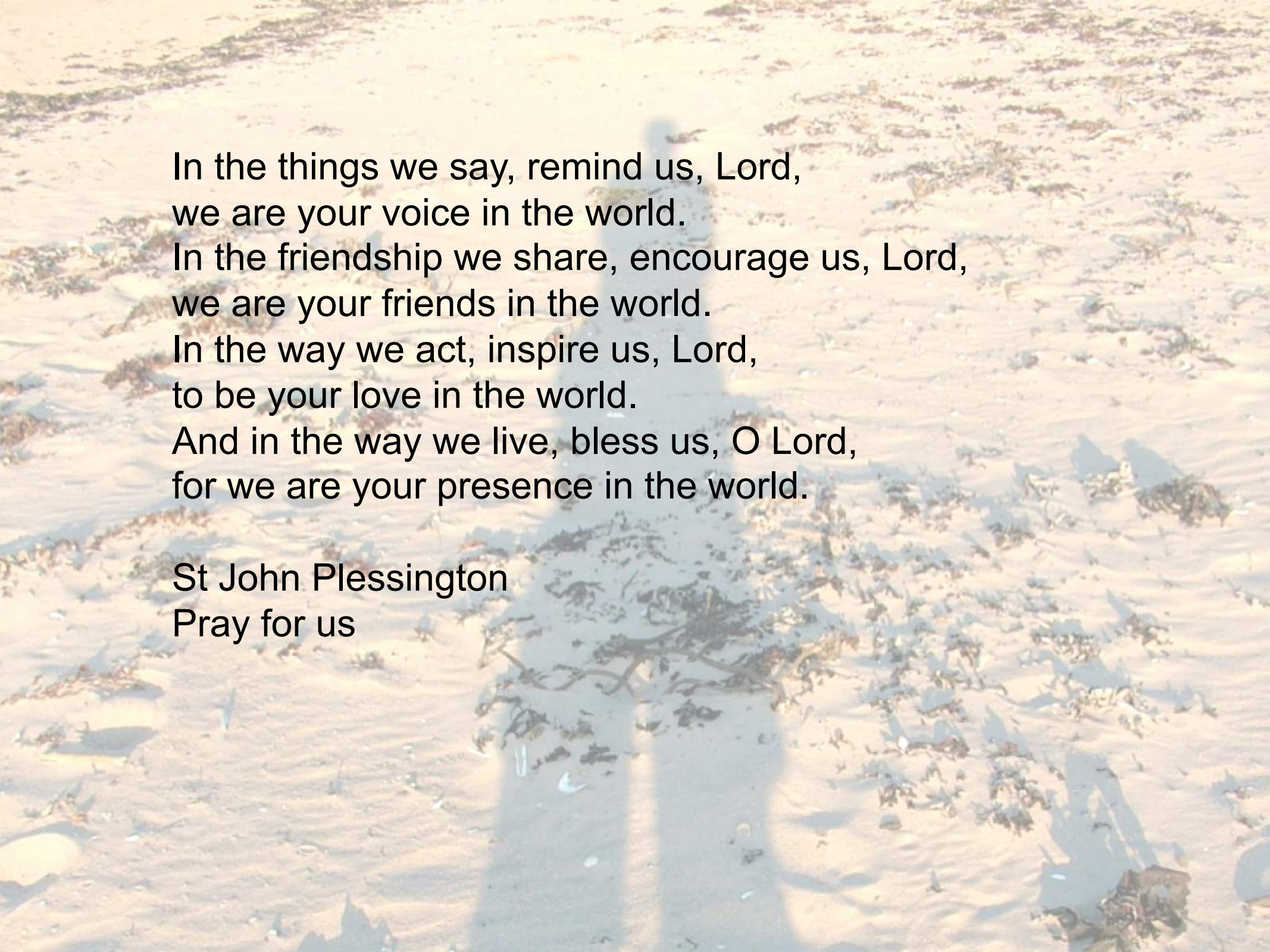
Reflection

Meister Eckhart wrote 'What is the good if Mary gives birth to the Son of God two thousand years ago if I do not give birth to the Son of God today?

We are all meant to be mothers of God – God is always needing to be born.' It's a reminder of how we are called to reflect the amazing mystery of Christmas each day in our lives. 'Giving birth' to the Son of God means making God present in every time, place and situation.

We might not always consider ourselves to be Christ-like or Godly. Yet we are called to reflect God in the way we live. And that's easier to do when we try to see the good (and the God) in one another.

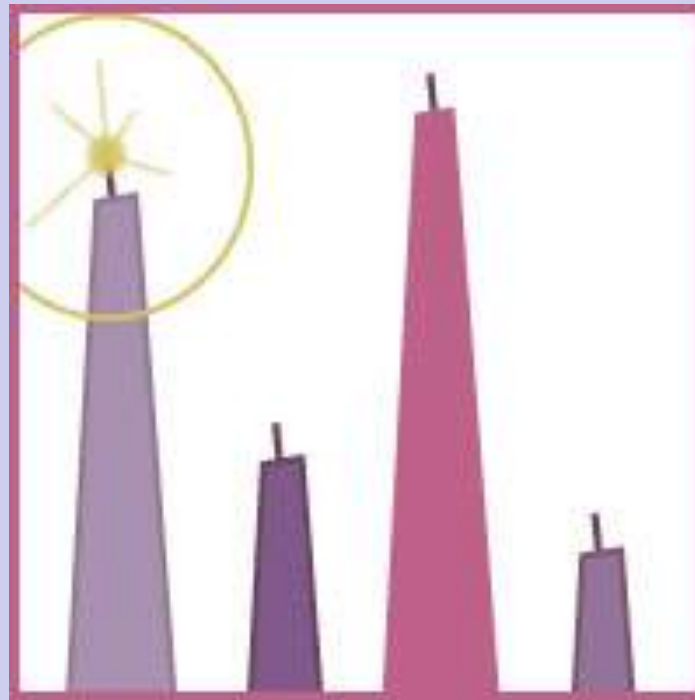
Give birth to the Son of God today – be God's witness, God's presence, and God's love.



In the things we say, remind us, Lord,
we are your voice in the world.
In the friendship we share, encourage us, Lord,
we are your friends in the world.
In the way we act, inspire us, Lord,
to be your love in the world.
And in the way we live, bless us, O Lord,
for we are your presence in the world.

St John Plessington
Pray for us

**The Third week of Advent
Week Commencing
16th December 2019**



Are we there yet?

Christmas day is not so far away now. We all want to be happy don't we?

That is how it should be. God made us to be happy.

Things like the adverts on the television or in magazines or the National Lottery all suggest that happiness come from having more and more, or being famous and successful.

Jesus the baby in Bethlehem had none of these things, later in his life he taught us that the true secret of happiness will come and stay with us if we lovingly do things for others, if we are unselfish.

Let make the remaining days that we have left in college before we finish for the Christmas holidays as an opportunity to be more aware of the need of those who are around us.

The Lord Almighty
is his name –
the Holy One of Israel
is your Redeemer;
he is called the **God of all the earth.**
Isaiah 54:5



Monday 16th December 2019

Theme

Are we there yet - The global community

Action

Pray for people in another country

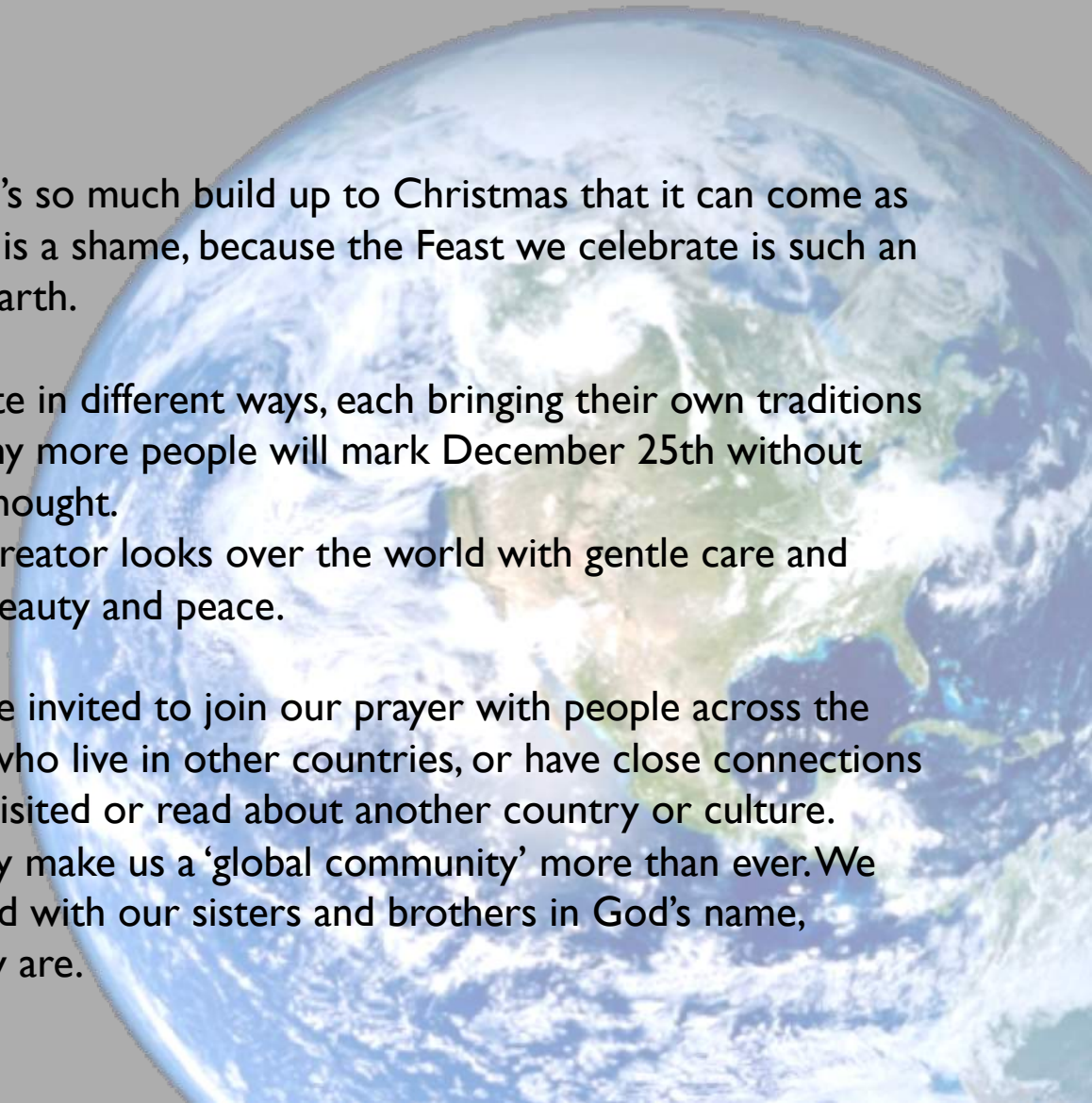
Reflection

Not long now until the Big Day... There's so much build up to Christmas that it can come as a bit of an anti-climax in the end. Which is a shame, because the Feast we celebrate is such an amazing event: God being born on the earth.

Christians across the world will celebrate in different ways, each bringing their own traditions and customs, both holy and worldly. Many more people will mark December 25th without even giving the birth of Jesus a second thought.

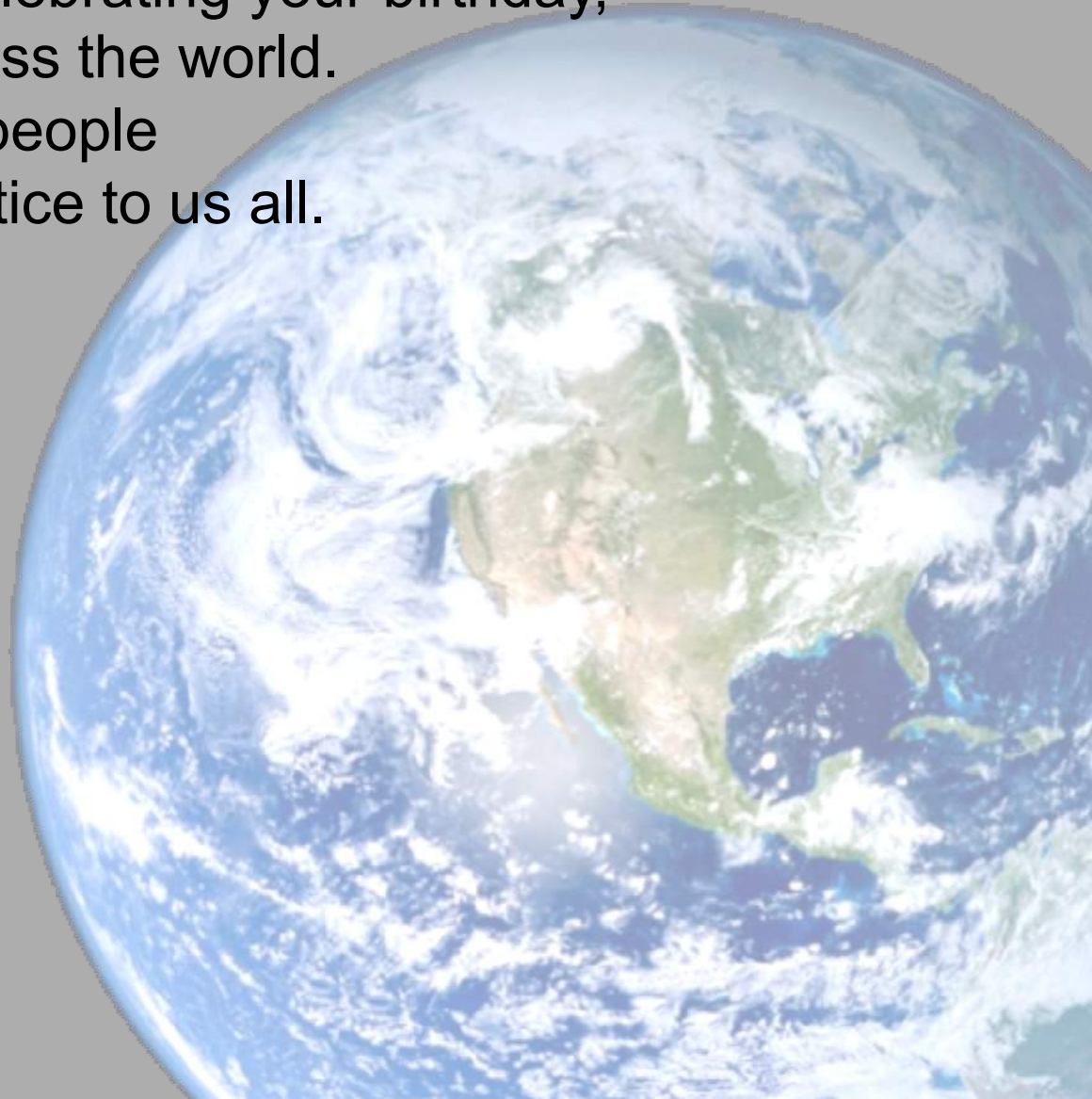
Yet God is born for all the earth. Our Creator looks over the world with gentle care and concern, longing for it to be a place of beauty and peace.

As we start this final week of term, we're invited to join our prayer with people across the world. You might have family or friends who live in other countries, or have close connections with another place. Or perhaps you've visited or read about another country or culture. Modern communications and technology make us a 'global community' more than ever. We can also be a prayerful community, united with our sisters and brothers in God's name, whatever their needs and wherever they are.



God of all the earth,
we praise you for your creative genius.
As we come closer to celebrating your birthday,
unite us with others across the world.
Hear the needs of your people
and bring peace and justice to us all.
Amen.

St John Plessington
Pray for us



Tuesday 17th December 2019

Where is the **infant king**
of the Jews?
We saw his star as it rose
and have come
to do him homage.
Matthew 2:2

Theme

Are we there yet - Bringing our gifts before God

Action

Spend some time in God's presence today

Reflection

The Magi (or 'Wise Men') joined in the journey to see the new born Jesus, following the star from the East. Their presence in the Christmas story reminds us that Jesus' birth was an event for all of humanity. We'll celebrate the arrival of the Magi properly on the Feast of the Epiphany.

For now, though, they remind us of the magical wonder of Christmas. They follow the light of the star and come to Jesus, the Light of the World. In this child, they find the hope and promise they had longed for. They brought their gifts to Jesus – gold to express the majesty of God, frankincense as a sign of the priesthood of Jesus, myrrh as a sign that he was anointed and that he would suffer.

What gifts do we bring before God? What can we offer Jesus as we come to celebrate his birth in a few days time? Perhaps more than anything, we can give God our time. We live in a busy world that doesn't often give us time or space just to 'be'. The end of term and the start of the Christmas holidays can often be especially hectic. So today's action asks us just to spend some time with God today. Our prayer here and now is a good start.

But perhaps we can also find the odd moment just to pause and reflect a moment. Maybe even to spend a minute or two before the Crib in the Atrium. Just to make a little time for God and to remember why we celebrate in these days.

Wednesday 18th December 2019



The Word became **flesh and blood**
and moved into the neighbourhood.

John 1:14

Theme

Are we there yet - The Kingdom of God

Action

Be a good neighbour – think of how you can build God's Kingdom.

Reflection

With the birth of Jesus, God becomes human – real flesh and blood.

Christmas tends to paint a cosy, cute kind of picture of this, with the familiar sights of the Manger at Bethlehem, Mary and Joseph gazing adoringly at the new born Jesus, with shepherds, wise men, angels and donkeys all looking on. It's a powerful and beautiful image, of course, and important that we remember this scene.

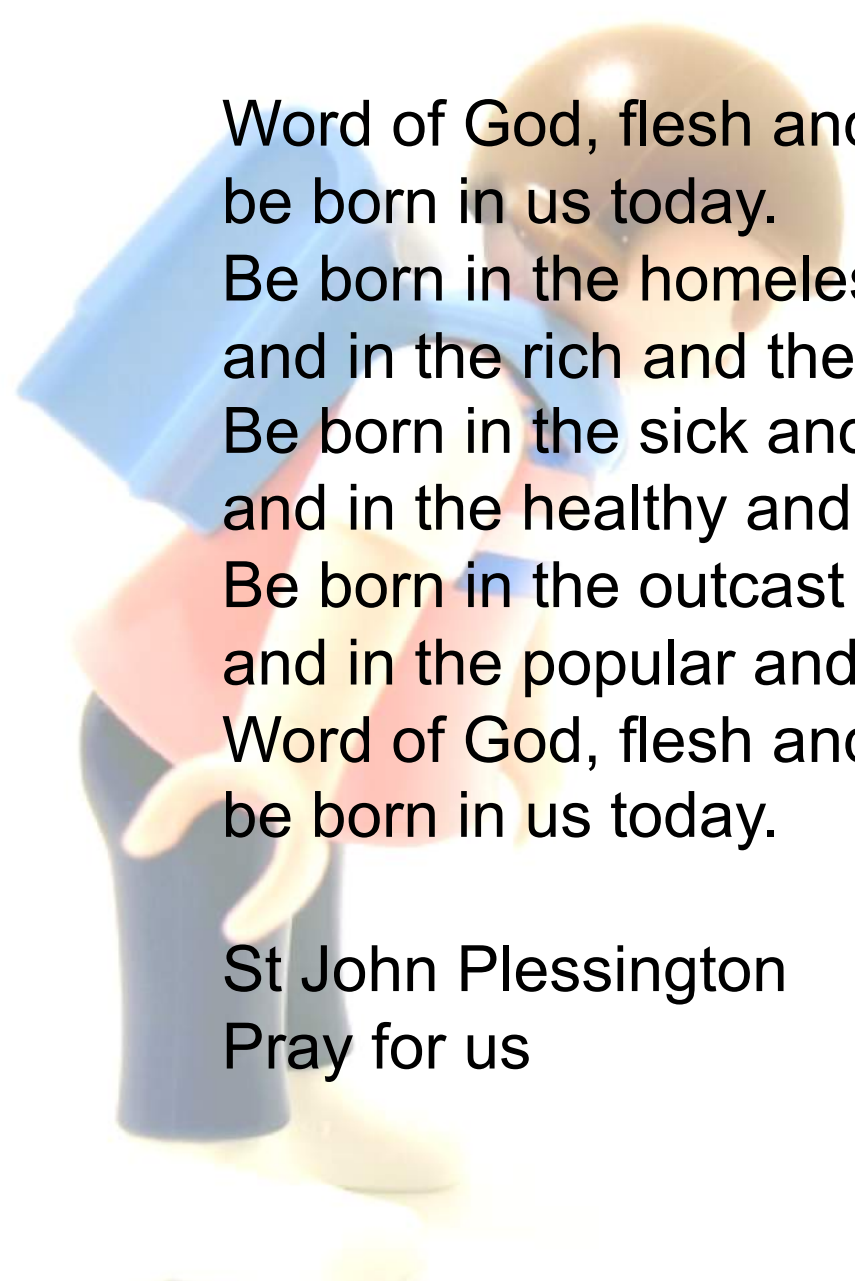
But the reality of the events of Christmas are most strongly felt when Jesus grows up and starts work: moving into the neighbourhood to start sharing God's word with the people. This is what the child Jesus is all about: building the Kingdom of God, bringing new hope, forgiveness, and healing to the world.

Challenging us to look at our own lives and to think of others. Turning the world upside down by presenting an alternative way of doing things.

That said, the idea of following Christ easily becomes mere lip service. We throw around phrases like 'love' and 'peace' and 'forgiveness' really easily.

The concept of God's Kingdom sounds really nice and fluffy. But making it real is a whole different thing. Putting flesh and blood on God's way of doing things demands time, energy and commitment – it takes a load of courage and the guts to stand up for what you believe in.

Question is, do you think it's worth it? The choice is yours, it's free to make. Today, if you choose God, you can choose to be good neighbour, a Kingdom-builder. It's up to you.



Word of God, flesh and blood,
be born in us today.


Be born in the homeless and hungry,
and in the rich and the wealthy.

Be born in the sick and troubled,
and in the healthy and happy.

Be born in the outcast and stranger
and in the popular and the friend.

Word of God, flesh and blood,
be born in us today.

St John Plessington
Pray for us



A child has been born – for us!
His names will be:
Amazing Counsellor,
Strong God, Eternal Father,
Prince of Peace.
Isaiah 9:5

Thursday 19th December 2019



Theme

Are we there yet - Peace in the world

Action

Be a peaceful person – try to have a day without arguments or negativity

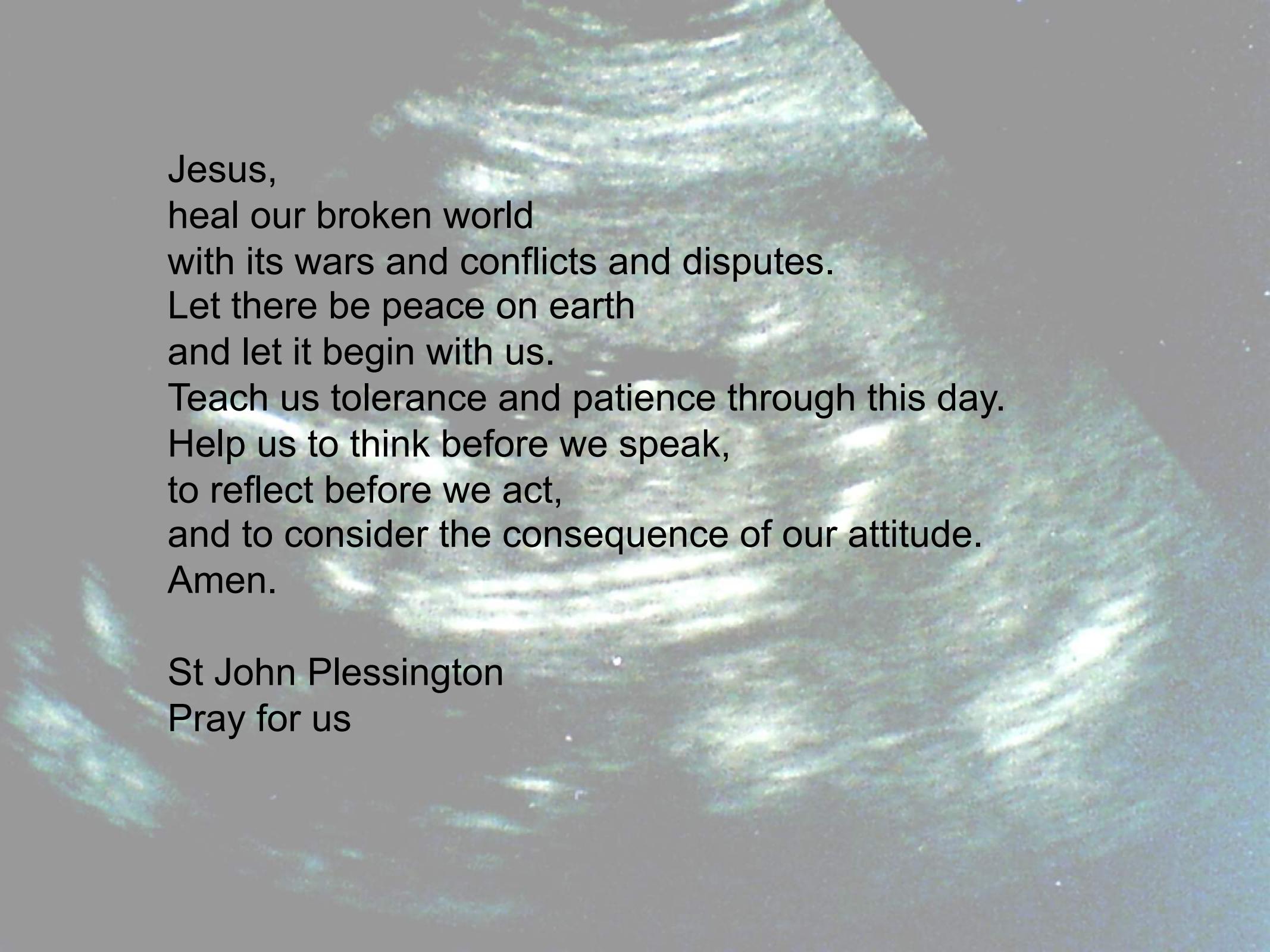
Reflection

During the First World War, the story is told of how German and British troops set aside their weapons to play a Christmas Day football match in no-man's land near Armentieres, France. (The Germans won 3-2...)

So it seems that Christmas has this magical quality that can stop war, even if only for a day. Jesus, the Prince of Peace, born in the mess and chaos of a barn in downtown Bethlehem, cuts through unnecessary dispute and conflict, instead promoting acceptance, tolerance and forgiveness. It's shameful if the effects of his birth last no more than a day a year...

Perhaps today could be our football match? A day to share in the peace of Christ. If you're already a peaceful person, keep it going! But if you can be grumpy, negative, argumentative or aggressive, lay your weapons down.


Think about those places in our world that are at war at this time. Be a peaceful person – and see what a difference it makes.




Jesus,
heal our broken world
with its wars and conflicts and disputes.
Let there be peace on earth
and let it begin with us.
Teach us tolerance and patience through this day.
Help us to think before we speak,
to reflect before we act,
and to consider the consequence of our attitude.
Amen.

St John Plessington
Pray for us

Friday 20th December 2019



I'm here to announce
a great and joyful event
that is meant
for everybody, worldwide.
A **Saviour** has been born
in David's town,
a Saviour who is
Messiah and Master.
Luke 2:10-12

A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a newborn baby lying down. The baby's head is on the right, and its hands are near its face. The background is a soft, out-of-focus white.


yet - Celebrating Christmas

community as Christmas begins

...e, flick'ring small in our darkness,
...ines through infant eyes.
...ing, yet the earth sleeps in shadows;
...k set a world on fire?
...shine from our lives, spirit blazing,
...ame of his holy fire.
...elulia!
...alleluia!
...y Graham Kendrick)

At the end of term we get even closer to Christmas – a real time to celebrate! Through these days of Advent we think about who we are waiting for, who we are celebrating at this special time of year. The different images, descriptions of God have shown us that he is peaceful, gentle, compassionate and forgiving. God is generous, loving. And all of this is focused on a tiny child, born in a manger under the star of Bethlehem.

For the holidays, we pray for all the members of our community, praying that God will watch over us and keep us safe through these coming weeks. And we pray, too, that we'll be able to remember and celebrate the meaning of Christmas, so that God's light will indeed shine from our lives as Jesus shines on us.

A close-up photograph of a newborn baby lying down. The baby's face is in the upper right, with its mouth slightly open. Its hands are clasped together near its chest. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light color.

God of light, our Saviour and Lord,
we thank you for the work of this term,
and for all the experiences we have shared.
As our Christmas holidays begin,
watch over your family, we pray.
Show us the real meaning of these days
as we celebrate your birth.
Bathe us in your light
and let your light shine in us.
Amen.

St John Plessington
Pray for us