

In the beginning was the Word...

An Advent & Christmas Course from the Diocese of Aberdeen & Orkney



Valley

Tuesday 12th December 2023



Dee Valley on the Feast of St Nicholas 2023 (Photo by author)

Scripture: Isaiah 40.1-11

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.

Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,

and cry to her

that her warfare is ended,

that her iniquity is pardoned,

that she has received from the LORD's hand

double for all her sins.

A voice cries:

“In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD;

make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be lifted up,

and every mountain and hill be made low;

the uneven ground shall become level,

and the rough places a plain.

And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,

and all flesh shall see it together,

for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

A voice says, “Cry!”

And I said, “What shall I cry?”

All flesh is grass,
and all its beauty is like the flower of the field.
The grass withers, the flower fades
when the breath of the LORD blows on it;
surely the people are grass.
The grass withers, the flower fades,
but the word of our God will stand for ever.
Get you up to a high mountain,
O Zion, herald of good news;
lift up your voice with strength,
O Jerusalem, herald of good news;
lift it up, fear not;
say to the cities of Judah,
“Behold your God!”
Behold, the Lord GOD comes with might,
and his arm rules for him;
behold, his reward is with him,
and his recompense before him.
He will tend his flock like a shepherd;
he will gather the lambs in his arms;
he will carry them in his bosom,
and gently lead those that are with young.

To reflect:

The Voice that cries in the valley is bound to echo. The echo is heard as the voice that ‘cries’ turns into the voice that ‘says’. Prophet Isaiah hears both the ‘cries’ and the ‘says’ of the Voice. Advent is the time to be in the valley to hear the Voice. The promise and the fulfilment of ‘Comfort’ is in the Voice in the valley. In the withering grass and the fading flowers, the Voice of the valley ‘will sound for ever.’ And we hear that eternal Voice in tenderness saying, ‘Behold your God! ... He will gather the lambs in his arms and will carry them in his bosom and gently lead those that are with young’. Deep in the valley of Dee runs the river full of life both on the surface and in the deep. Here the Voice remains to sustain, in the intimacy to empower all life.

To pray:

O the Voice of the Valley, speak to me tenderly in the depth of my being. May your Voice echo in the valley of the shadows of my soul to quicken me into life, for in ‘Him was life and the life was the light of all, and the light shines in darkness.’ May the Voice resound with life and fill the valley with your joy and Peace. Amen.

To listen:

Kyrie Ellison, Seabury Mass by Paul Mealor <https://youtu.be/byXdLYfLX2A?feature=shared>

The word for each day (3-25 December is taken from Advent Word 2023 #adventword).

...and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.