

In the beginning was the Word...

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



Gift

Tuesday 26th December 2023



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Scripture Matthew 23.37-39

‘Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you, desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, “Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.” ’

To reflect.

All cities experience times of violence. Christianity's entry into Europe was in no way as peaceful as we might hope. Almost a Millennium after the birth of Christ and stoning of St Stephen, a young, Christian Duke of Bohemia was assassinated by his Pagan brother. He was immediately named a martyr; he was, of course, Wenceslaus, who became the High middle Ages' ideal just king. The chronicle of Cosmos of Prague states:

But his deeds I think you know better than I could tell you; for, as is read in his *Passion*, no one doubts that, rising every night from his noble bed, with bare feet and only one chamberlain, he went around to God's churches and gave alms generously to widows, orphans, those in prison and afflicted by every difficulty, so much so that he was considered, not a prince, but the father of all the wretched.

In light of this Wenceslaus, only a duke during his lifetime, was posthumously made "king", in honour of his generous Christian nature.

To pray Living Presence, radiant with glory,
giving us the Gift we hardly knew was our deepest heart's desire,
draw us into the mystery of your love,
bring us once more to the manger,
a song of joy on our lips,
a shining wonder in our eyes.
We pray this in the Spirit of Jesus, Word made flesh,
in the splendour of eternal light, now and for ever.

To listen *Good King Wenceslas* (Bing Crosby & Ella Fitzgerald)
<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=VCoxrJgv2ho>

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