

# BEHOLD

Daily Advent & Christmas Reflections 2013



*Through the spirituality of*

Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (*Douglas Park*)

Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (*Hartzer Park*)

Discalced Carmelites (*Varroville*)

Benedictines (*Jamberoo Abbey*)

2 December 2013

*Monday of the first week of Advent*



**“Lord, I am not worthy.” (Matthew 8:8)**

Waiting is a part of everyday life. We become impatient and annoyed at its inconvenience. Our hearts become restless and scattered. Yet there can be a benefit in waiting if we approach it in expectation and joyful hope. In Advent we prepare ourselves for the coming of God’s Reign – The Kingdom of God. Jesus speaks of this in terms of a great banquet, declaring “many will come from East to West” to take their place at this banquet, not just people *like us*, but those we least expect. The centurion in today’s Gospel is one of those. He knew his unworthiness, yet Jesus looked into his heart and saw sincerity and faith. The centurion recognised the reign of God and shows us how to open our hearts and lives to it. And Jesus said “that is real faith.”

In today’s high tech world of instant communication and information overload, our minds and hearts are constantly bombarded with images, ideas and distractions. Many people today think that their ideas and what goes on in their minds define who they are and what their life is all about. A spirituality of the heart teaches us that it is what is happening in our hearts that is central to our identity and our relationship with God. That is why the Advent invitation to “ponder these things in our hearts in joyful hope and anticipation” is so important.

***“Having God is not a question of capturing God. It is a question of coming to see God everywhere, in everything – and first of all, deep within ourselves.”***

***Sr Joan Chichister***

Fr Stephen Dives msc

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*Today’s Readings: Isaiah 2:1-5; Psalm 121:1-4, 8, 9;  
Matthew 8:5-11*

# 26 December 2013

## *Saint Stephen*



**“Into your hands, O Lord, I entrust my spirit.”  
(Psalm 30:6)**

There really isn't any way around it – if we choose to love, then we choose to be hurt. When love comes into our life it feels as though everything is suddenly possible. Dreams are a reality and so they should be. Yet we soon realise that love actually costs and in the face of that realisation so many of us lose heart and walk away.

Perhaps as you read this you are getting ready to walk away too. Pope Francis told us a little while ago that some of us walk away just when we are within a hair's breadth of what we really want. What do we do when we reach this point in our lives when love is just too hard?

The only way I know is to take a leaf out of Saint Stephen's book and abandon yourself to the God who never stops loving us. All you need do is repeat the words of today's responsorial psalm in any way you like. Perhaps as Jesus said them on the Cross, “Father I abandon myself into your hands.”

It is truly amazing what that simple act does in the heart over a stretch of time. Your vision, like Stephen's becomes wider. Your capacity to offer and receive forgiveness deepens. Those dreams you had when you first loved, become truly what they were always meant to be – eternal. Start today!

***Father, I abandon myself into your hands. Amen.***

Sr Hilda Scott osb

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*Today's Readings: Acts 6:8-10, 7:54-59;  
Psalm 30:3-4, 6, 8, 16-17; Matthew 10:17-22*