

## Week 23 - 9th December 2017



### WINTER WASHING

One of the things I regret about autumn and winter is that I cannot use my washing line in the garden as much as I would like, and end up having wet washing in the house. Mind you, that is not as bad as it used to be. The new manse I moved into in September has an old fashioned washing rack that I can lower down from the ceiling, then haul it back up and let the washing dry, out of the way. I love it! But there is something really special about putting out wet washing, see it blowing in the wind, and getting it back in dried and soft. The feel and the smell of washing dried outside is quite unique. Drying my washing outside is a gift, it is for free. It's like washing the car or my windows because when it starts raining, as it invariably does, I feel that God is giving me a free rinse!

Watching washing blowing, even in the winter, getting all tangled then untangling, securely pegged but actually also quite insecure seems to me a bit like life. And in this Advent season, when we look forward to a time when the Saviour comes, we use this time to examine our lives and to hang out the washing of our lives and allow Christ to come afresh to us and in us, allowing the wind of his Spirit to challenge and blow away that which is not of God. We can sometimes forget in the business of the season that this is a time of reflection, penitence and looking again at what it means for God to be "made flesh."

Washing is such a mundane activity, but thankfully gone are the days when folk slaved all day over a copper boiler and mangle; today most of us programme the washing machine and get on with other things whilst the machine does the work. So too, the coming of Christ took all the hard work away for those who were attempting to try and keep every law and failing: Christ came to fulfil the law, and we live because Jesus has done all the hard work and through him we are made clean.

In all the pretty nativity scenes, we never see poor Mary having to wash nappies, dry wet washing, looking after her baby in what would seem to us very insanitary conditions. We have made it all very clean, nice and tidy, but the reality was very different. This Advent, allow God's love to flow through you afresh, letting the Spirit cleanse and make new the brokenness and the hurt. Being hung out to dry can be either very painful or very liberating – may this Advent be for you the latter.

*Holy God, thank you that you have made the way open for us to come close to you. That in your holiness which would consume us, you have given us a Saviour, and through him we can call you Father. As we come closer to Christmas, and the days get darker and the air damper and dank, remind us that the light of your love burns constantly, and the power of your love warms the hearts of those who reach out to you. Help us to let you cleanse us of all that is not of you that we may become more Christ like in all we say and do. Amen.*

*Weekly Prayers for December by Denise Creed.*