Friday 9.30am Low Mass,  
Last Mass of Advent

I probably should have noticed before, but it really struck me this year that *O Oriens*, ‘Christ the Dawn’, ‘the Morning Star’, is on 21st December each year. The shortest day of the year, the darkest and longest night, is the day we call, ‘Christ the Daystar’, ‘Christ the Dawn’.

So much of our faith is about finding God in small and ordinary things – prayer, beauty, love, vocation, peace, simple acts of kindness and goodness - diamonds in soil of life. God speaks, if only we had eyes to see and ears to hear.

So much of our faith is about holding on when confusion or darkness reigns. The house on the rock: the rains came, the waters rose, the wind blew – ‘he who endures to the end will be saved’. Think of ancient Israel’s challenge to hold fast to covenant and hope, even when things were tough.

But *O Oriens* a few days ago, and *O Emmanuel* (God with us) yesterday on 23rd, and today, in this last Eucharist of Advent, these last hours of waiting for Him to come, isn’t either of those things *only*. This last Mass of Advent *is* about finding the small chinks of Divine light in the last hours of expectant darkness. It *is* about holding on in hope. But it is also a third thing, another way of being that embodies so much of our faith.
And that is this: defiantly, and in a revolutionary spirit proclaiming a reality that flies in the face of worldly wisdom and present circumstance. Belligerent, loving, revolutionaries.

On the darkest day of the year, and with a pleasing irony, we Christians sing of the dawn that is come, that is now and that will come again.

Today in the Gospel, Zechariah, old and knackered, in a tiny, occupied territory of a global empire, the over-looked geriatric member of a perhaps archaic temple cult of a tiny minority sect, a has-been ‘bit part’ on the world’s stage... Today, Zechariah sings words that are laughably pathetic – of liberation and the dawn of righteousness, of powerful prophecy, faithful covenant and Divine action. Pathetic. Were it not that they were all true. They could not have looked more ridiculous, but here we are 2,000 years later, living out the same hope, and indeed singing and saying those same words of the Benedictus every single morning, with millions of other Christians at the heart of Morning Prayer every day, in the liturgy of the universal Church, East and West.

God is faithful. The darkness is real, but He remembers His covenant. Christ has died, Christ is Risen and Christ will come again. ‘The Kingdom of this world has become the Kingdom of our God and of His Christ’. We are called and sent to defiantly, and in a revolutionary spirit proclaim a reality that flies in the face of worldly wisdom and present circumstance. Belligerent, loving, revolutionaries is exactly the right thing to be.