

## Advent

I am writing this just a few days after the clocks have gone back and I am very aware of the beautiful autumn colours in the trees and hedgerows. How magnificent our natural world is and what a great message it silently conveys to us. All the wonderful colours arise as the leaves die off and all the growing things settle down for a time of rest. It teaches us the necessity in our own lives to have times when we stop all our frenetic activity. Of course we find it so hard to give up our rushing around and continual busyness but it is essential to follow the example of nature and take the time to stop, look and listen – to be still and silent. As the Psalmist in the Bible says “Be still and know that I am God.” This has surely recently been brought home to us most vividly on the television programme “The Great Silence.” December also brings the season of Advent – a season of watching and waiting with eager expectation. The great 20<sup>th</sup> century spiritual writer and Cistercian monk Thomas Merton wrote of Advent and Christmas in this way:

*Advent is the “sacrament” of the presence of God in his world, in the mystery of Christ at work in history.... This mystery is the revelation of God in his Incarnate Son. But it is not merely a manifestation of the Divine Perfections; it is the concrete plan of God for the salvation of all and the restoration of the whole of creation in Christ.*

Perhaps we can come together during this advent that we might experience this for ourselves!

Fr. Patrick