

**Pembroke Diocesan Council of the Catholic Women's League of Canada
Fall Meeting, Our Lady of Sorrows, Petawawa, October 28, 2023, Oral Report
Father Michael Coyne, Spiritual Advisor**

It is that time of year again when the weather turns, to its harsher reflection of beauty, and that also means it is time for another short fall spiritual reflection from your Pembroke Diocesan Spiritual Director.

As the weather turns, colder, darker, most of us brace ourselves for winter to come, inevitable as death, but I also say most because I am writing these words in my office which overlooks Our lady of Lourdes School's playground. So, I also recognize from the joyful screams of the children outside my window at break times, fall and winter are also quite fun for others of a younger generation. Although I personally consider myself more attuned to the bear philosophy; just wanting to hibernate in my cave for the winter, and then come back out in the spring.

As it is fall and late November that means we also stand on the turning of another kind liturgically, as we prepare ourselves spiritually for the season of Advent.

I have been reflecting recently on the great Emmanuel Advent hymn, specifically the verse "O come, O come Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile." This great Christian hymn of advent sadness born out of people in lost in exile. Created during the monastic 8th and 9th centuries of our early church, this song truly resonates with us in a special way this late Nov. of 2023, when our shared Holy land rages in war once again. Israel their endless exile, and mourning, forever being denied the peace that most of us take for granted sadness my heart on this late November day. This Thursday's last week's gospel from Luke Ch. 19:41-44 also resonated with me as Jesus looks upon Jerusalem and weeps, stating, "if this day you only knew what makes for peace-but now it is hidden from your eyes."

This has always been the reality of our Christian faith, living in 2 worlds, the world that is, and the world we wish it could be, the world of the Beatitudes. The world Jesus wished it could be.

In every mass we wish each other peace, that peace may be with each of us. In that greeting, that encounter we hope that we can find enough common ground among our differences, and that we can get past our prejudices, so that we can see the other as we wish to be seen. To love as we wish to be loved. To forgive as we wish to be forgiven. That is reality of being Christian, being "*people of the way.*"

Let this by our guiding light on our way to this coming Advent, a prayer for peace in the Holy Land and a pray of peace for each other.

I pray that you all have a blessed, and peace filled advent.