21st November 2022

Time

"No time like the present."

Mrs Manley, *The Lost Lover (1696)*

It's only thirty-four days till Christmas, even though Christmas merchandise has been pushed in catalogues and on display in stores for *ages.* A recent report indicated that the major Superstore chains have been airing their meg-expensive Christmas advertising campaigns even earlier this year to encourage people to "buy early" in order to "spread the load during a cost-of-living crisis". Only thirty-four days left, folks …

But, more importantly, it's only a week to the beginning of Advent, that period of the Christian Year when we're encouraged to prepare spiritually for Christmas. So why flag this up now and not in a week's time? Because I've just taken delivery of a new book from *Wild Goose Publications* which encourages us to use Advent in a different kind of way. Called *In God's Time,* (https://www.ionabooks.com/product/in-gods-time) it's been edited by a poet and story-teller, Jan Such Pickard, who's based on Mull, and contains contributions from members, associates and friends of the Iona Community. I'm delighted to be included in that list.

The book is described as "An Advent Calendar with a difference".

This book offers more than a month of Advent readings, inspired by the concept of *Kairos* – God's time. Instead of cardboard cut-outs, the "windows" we open are word-pictures and stories from the Land called Holy. We glimpse how people in Palestine/Israel face an unjust and divisive situation with courage and often hope.

The depth, insight, reality and emotion in these pieces are a challenge and encouragement for a different journey through Advent. The book also includes extra information for further reading or action. And there are powerful little prayers too, to allow us to draw closer to the people, nearer to God, and always "In God's Time". And I'll be returning to some of these prayers when we come to Advent itself.

Jan apologies that, for this Advent Calendar, "we could not include chocolate". But who needs chocolate when we're encouraged to think ahead, to plan spiritually for our Advent, be at one with the people of the Holy Land, and give yourselves to God's Time – to Christmas and beyond?

A prayer for today

Loving God, we commit ourselves to live in this coming year with the logic of love. Amen

Jan Such Pickard, from "In God's Time"

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