



Have you ever considered that you are a gift? You are a gift from God to the world. You are unique. No one else is like you. You are loved. You are special, and you are a gift to the world. At the start of Advent, which begins on Sunday, 30th November, we think about the coming of the Christ child, Jesus, as God's gift to the world, God's means of bringing the world back to God. And you are part of that! You may think to yourself 'I'm nothing special – what can I offer? What can I do?' But the truth is, God made you, **you**, for a reason, and all of us have a part to play, in whatever circumstances we find ourselves. You are a gift.

God saved us by his grace when we believed. And we can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. For we are God's masterpiece. God has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things planned for us long ago. (Ephesians 2:8–10, NLT).

All of us have a part to play in God's plan. Without you, the picture is incomplete. Without you doing whatever it is that God is asking of you, the world will be less rich, less colourful. Because you are unique. You are God's masterpiece.

Francis Dewar, in his book *Called or Collared*¹, quoting John Powell, writes:

*There is an old Christian tradition
that God sends each person into this world
with a special message to deliver,
with a special song to sing for others,
with a special act of love to bestow.
No one else can speak my message,
or sing my song,
or offer my act of love.
These are entrusted only to me.*

This is our calling. Our personal vocation from God.

Francis Dewar continues:

Whatever you do in response to this calling it will have about it something that is unique to you, it will not be just some recognized role or some task that you do simply to fulfil other people's expectations. It is something that is entrusted to you personally. Until you discover it and offer it, it will be unknown and unexpected. If you do not offer it, it will remain forever unoffered. But if you do respond, whatever the problems or difficulties, you discover that you are doing what you were born for, and find in it a profound sense of rightness, you find that peace of God, which passes all understanding.

Just as we are gifts from God, we can gift to others.

What if we all tried to believe this just a little more this Advent season? What if we all decided to try and be the gift that God intends each one of us to be? How might the world change?

¹ Francis Dewar, *Called or Collared? An Alternative Approach to Vocation*, p. 1. Published by SPCK, 2000.

Gift-giving God
may Advent be for us a time of giving
and receiving

Lord God of this Advent season, of every season, every day, minute and second, give us, we pray, the gift of peace in this season of Advent.

Bring peace to the world, but also bring peace within each of us.

Gift-giving God,
may Advent be for us a time of giving
and receiving.

Lord God, we give ourselves afresh to you as we step into Advent.

Let us iron the crumples and the creases from our lives

so that we may be the best gift that we can be.

Gift-giving God,
may Advent be for us a time of giving
and receiving.

May we start today and not wait to become, and to be, the people you want us to be, so that we can give the best that we can of you and ourselves, to those around us.

Gift-giving God,
may Advent be for us a time of giving
and receiving. AMEN

