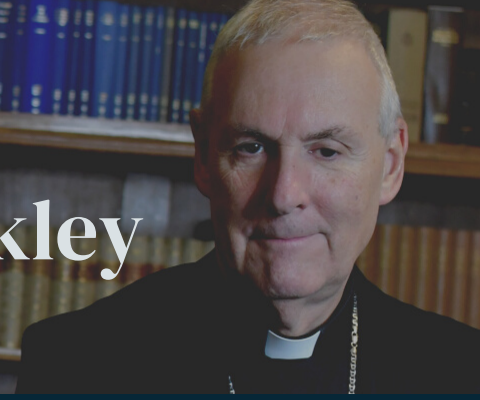




# Bishop David Oakley

Bishop of Northampton



## Letter for the Second Sunday of Advent 2023

December 10, 2023

### To my dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

In this second week of advent, we will reflect for a moment on the theme of peace. Of course, when we look around our world today, during these advent weeks, we see so much need for peace. We see peace needed in the wars that are taking place in the Ukraine and in the Holy Land. We see the need for peace in our communities, we recognise the need for peace within our families and perhaps we recognise too, the need for peace within ourselves as individuals.

As always, I would like to share with you a few words from the Advent scriptures. These are the words of the Prophet Isaiah used by the evangelist Luke to talk about the ministry of John, the son of Zechariah, the one who would be known as the Baptist.

“A voice cries in the wilderness. ‘Prepare a way for the lord, make his paths straight’. Every valley will be filled in, every mountain and hill will be made low, winding waves will be straightened and rough roads made smooth and all mankind will see the salvation of God”.

This is the peace that the Lord speaks of in his Word, it is a peace which begins when we are open and receptive to the Word of God, to the power of God, His Kingdom at work in our lives, and it involves some hard works. The prophet puts it in those beautiful and familiar terms, about hills being laid low and about valleys being filled in.

Sometimes when I’m driving and see workmen on the motorway, it reminds me how challenging it is to keep that road straight that we use so often to get around the place. Then I look inside myself and I recognise that peace comes at a cost. Peace was won for us by our Lord's death on the cross and when we receive the grace of that cross into our lives, then we are at peace with almighty God.

So let’s pray for peace in our world and let us recognise that the journey towards worldwide peace, comes with that step of peace within ourselves. When we respond to the invitation of God to become peacemakers, not least, and first of all, within ourselves.

Sincerely,

**Bishop David Oakley**

Bishop of Northampton