

THROUGH THE WILDERNESS

It was many years before I realised why there was such a difference in feel between the two seasons [of Lent and Advent], even if the reason now seems obvious. Advent encapsulates the Israelite peoples' centuries of longing, watching and waiting through the long night of Old Testament history for the coming of the Messiah. It also anticipates our own watching and waiting as we look forward to the promised return of Christ at the end of time, even though we know neither the day nor the hour when he might come. But in both these dimensions, the long night of waiting moves inexorably towards the promise of new life and light encapsulated in history in the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem. Easter, too, celebrates glorious, miraculous new life and the birth of a new creation in the resurrection of Christ from death. But the only way we can get to that resurrection and to truly experience this new life is to walk faithfully the Lenten journey with Christ; and with Christ, we will find ourselves led inevitably through the wilderness to the cross.

Barbara Mosse, *The Treasures of Darkness* (Norwich, Canterbury Press, 2003), p.66.