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Introduction

As we continue our journey through Advent we hope you will find this collection of prayers and readings a helpful companion as we contemplate the coming of God in Christ. In all the uncertainty and anxiety of the present moment, the timeless truths of the Advent message remain: 'the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.' St John 1.5

With my love and prayers,



The Advent Collect

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and to put on the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility; that on the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Your prophets - called to make known your Word,
Proclaiming justice, convicting sin,
Displaying fruits of your love and grace -
*Comfort, comfort my people, says our God
And the glory of the Lord will be revealed.*

Your prophets - called to forth tell your Word,
Unfolding a vision of your eternity,
Making straight a highway to walk along -
*Comfort, comfort my people, says our God
And the glory of the Lord will be revealed.*

Daily Reflections

The Third Sunday of Advent, 13th December

In the third week of Advent we consider the call to watch for Christ's coming, to hear the voice of the prophets in our midst, and to clear the busyness of our minds as our celebration of the Incarnation draws near.

John the Baptist

There is silence all around. The Baptist appears, and cries: 'Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!' Soon after that comes Jesus, and in the knowledge that he is the coming Son of Man lays hold of the wheel of the world to set it moving on that last revolution which is to bring all human history to a close. It refuses to turn, and he throws himself upon it. Then it does turn; and crushes him. Instead of bringing in the eschatological conditions, he has destroyed them. The wheel rolls onward, and the mangled body of the one immeasurably great Man, who was strong enough to think of himself as the spiritual ruler of mankind and to bend history to his purpose, is hanging upon it still. That is his victory and his reign.

The Quest of the Historical Jesus, Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965)

Saint John The Baptist

The last and greatest Herald of Heaven's King,
Girt with rough skins, hies to the deserts wild,
Among that savage brood the woods forth bring,
Which he than man more harmless found and mild.
His food was locusts, and what young doth spring
With honey that from virgin hives distill'd;
Parch'd body, hollow eyes, some uncouth thing
Made him appear, long since from earth exiled.
There burst he forth: 'All ye, whose hopes rely
On God, with me amidst these deserts mourn;
Repent, repent, and from old errors turn!'
- Who listen'd to his voice, obey'd his cry?
Only the echoes, which he made relent,
Rung from their marble caves 'Repent! Repent!'

William Drummond (1585-1649)

Life in a prison cell reminds me a great deal of Advent. One waits and hopes and patters around but in the end what we do is of little consequence. The door is shut, and it can only be opened from the outside.

God is in the Manger, Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945)

Monday 14th December

To watch with Christ

Let us consider this most serious question - What is it to watch with Christ? I consider this word watching a remarkable word; remarkable because the idea is not so obvious as might appear at first sight, and next because our Lord and his disciples inculcate it. We are not simply to believe, but to watch; not simply to love, but to watch; not simply to obey, but to watch; to watch for what? For that great event, Christ's coming ...

Now what is watching?

I conceive it may be explained as follows: Do you know the feeling in matters of this life, of expecting a friend, expecting him to come, and he delays? Do you know what it is to be in unpleasant company, and to wish for the time to pass away, and the hour strike when you may be at liberty? Do you know what it is to be in anxiety lest something should happen which may happen or not, or to be in suspense about some important event, which makes your heart beat when you are reminded of it, and of which you think the first thing in the morning? Do you know what it is to have a friend in a distant country, to expect news of him, to wonder from day to day what he is now doing, and whether he is well? Do you know what it is so to live upon a person who is present with you, that your eyes follow his, that you read his soul, that you see all its changes in his countenance, that you anticipate his wishes, that you smile his smile, and are sad in his sadness, and are downcast when he is vexed, and rejoice in his successes? To watch for Christ is a feeling such as these; as far as feelings of this world are fit to shadow out those of another.

He watches with Christ, who, while he looks on to the future, looks back on the past, and does not so contemplate what his Saviour has purchased for him, as to forget what he has suffered for him. He watches with Christ, who ever commemorates and renews in his own person Christ's cross and agony, and gladly takes up that mantle of affliction which Christ wore here, and left behind him when he ascended. And hence in the Epistles, as often as the inspired writers show their desire for his second coming, so often do they show their memory of his first, and never lose sight of his crucifixion and in his resurrection.

Parochial and Plain Sermons, St John Henry Newman (1801-1890)

For I Am Persuaded

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written,

'For thy sake we are being killed all the day long;
we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.'

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8. vv 35, 39

Tuesday 15th December

Advent

Charm with your stainlessness these winter nights,
Skies, and be perfect! Fly vividly in the fiery dark, you quiet meteors,
And disappear.
You moon, be slow to go down,
This is your full!

The four white roads make off in silence
Towards the four parts of the starry universe.
Time falls like manna at the corners of the wintry earth.
We have become more humble than the rocks,
More wakeful than the patient hills.

Charm with your stainlessness these nights in Advent,
holy spheres,
While minds, as meek as beasts,
Stay close at home in the sweet hay;
And intellects are quieter than the flocks that feed by starlight.

Oh pour your darkness and your brightness over all our
solemn valleys,
You skies: and travel like the gentle Virgin,
Toward the planets' stately setting,

Oh white full moon as quiet as Bethlehem!
Thomas Merton (1915-1968)

Holy Waiting

Advent is the consecration of waiting in our lives. Human life is full of waiting; people wait for trains and buses and planes; they stand in queues in shops; they sit nervously in dentists' waiting rooms; they wait in anguish for news of loved ones. They wait for the slow process of healing to take its time; they wait for the birth of a child. Waiting can be very different in these different situations, according to our attitude. In an age of 'instant' products, any delay can be viewed as negative, for 'time is money.' Yet some things cannot be skimmed or hurried; we have to let them take the time they need. You can't make the grass grow by pulling it, as the proverb wisely warns ... Faith can demand long, patient waiting when nothing seems to be happening, and this is necessary to growth. The waiting changes us, schools us, teaches us to know God.

The Coming of God, Maria Boulding (1929-2009)

Phoenix

Are you willing to be sponged out, erased, cancelled, made nothing?
Are you willing to be made nothing?
dipped into oblivion?
If not, you will never really change.

The phoenix renews her youth
only when she is burnt, burnt alive, burnt down
to hot and flocculent ash.
Then the small stirring of a new small bub in the nest
with strands of down like floating ash
Shows that she is renewing her youth like the eagle,
Immortal bird.

D. H. Lawrence (1885-1930)

The Peaceful Kingdom

A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.
The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.
He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear;
but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.
Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist,
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them.
The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.
They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain;
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord
as the waters cover the sea.

Isaiah 11. 1-9

Thursday 17th December

Visions of Heaven

In speaking of this desire for our own far off country, which we find in ourselves even now, I feel a certain shyness. I am almost committing an indecency. I am trying to rip open the inconsolable secret in each one of you-the secret which hurts so much that you take your revenge on it by calling it names like Nostalgia and Romanticism and Adolescence; the secret also which pierces with such sweetness that when, in very intimate conversation, the mention of it becomes imminent, we grow awkward and affect to laugh at ourselves; the secret we cannot hide and cannot tell, though we desire to do both.

We cannot tell it because it is a desire for something that has never actually appeared in our experience. We cannot hide it because our experience is constantly suggesting it, and we betray ourselves like lovers at the mention of a name. Our commonest expedient is to call it beauty and behave as if that had settled the matter. Wordsworth's expedient was to identify it with certain moments in his own past. But all this is a cheat. If Wordsworth had gone back to those moments in the past, he would not have found the thing itself, but only the reminder of it; what he remembered would turn out to be itself a remembering. The books or the music in which we thought the beauty was located will betray us if we trust to them; it was not in them, it only came through them, and what came through them was longing.

These things - the beauty, the memory of our own past - are good images of what we really desire; but if they are mistaken for the thing itself they turn into dumb idols, breaking the hearts of their worshipers. For they are not the thing itself; they are only the scent of a flower we have not found, the echo of a tune we have not heard, news from a country we have never yet visited.

C S Lewis (1898-1963)

A New Heaven

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Behold, the dwelling of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.'

And the one who was seated on the throne said, 'See, I am making all things new.' Also he said, 'Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.' Then he said to me, 'It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children.'

Revelation of St John the Divine 21. 1-7

Friday 18th December

Waiting for The Coming

For Christians shaped by the Old and New Testaments, the act of waiting is not new. The Scriptures are punctuated with the word 'wait'; a sense of active, hallowed waiting can be found on nearly every page of the texts. The long wait of Sarah and Abraham, of Moses and the people of Israel in bondage in Egypt, their lingering wait in the wilderness en route to the promised land, only begin to tell the story. As we read Scripture, we see that someone is always waiting on someone else, usually the people are waiting in anticipation of the next promising move of God. And they never wait in vain!

In the New Testament, the texts of the early Christian experience, this sense of waiting is still very much evident. The immediacy of the incarnation was not instantly appropriated. Decades passed before some could see, and then only a few, that in one sense their waiting was over. After what appeared to be the decisive defeat of death by crucifixion, the disciples withdrew to grieve and wait. After what appeared to be the decisive victory of resurrection, the disciples had to go to Galilee and wait for Him there. In the encounter on the road to Emmaus, all things were not immediately apparent; they had to wait for what they had seen and heard to become intelligible.

After forty days, Christ ascended into heaven and promised that he would come again. That coming is sooner than it has ever been before, but we continue to wait. Few things are more important for the continuing growth and renewal of Christian life and faith today than the recovery of a profound sense of holy waiting. Because of the advances in medicine and technology, we have more time for our use than at any previous time. In response, we have expanded our activity to fill the void and exhaust ourselves with busyness - with the result that we are less productive, less involved with each other in any meaningful way, and with far less time for rest and refreshment. We have allowed ourselves to live as though more is better - with the result that we want more now so that life will be better now. This is not an appeal to waste time with meaningless inactivity, but a call to engage one's vocation, one's relationships, one's hope, one's life in God, in an active presence, a holy waiting.

Pursuing knowledge and skill while waiting on the gift of wisdom is not wasting time.
Living gently with other human beings while waiting on the gift of friendship is not wasting time.

Keeping the church's discipline of word and prayer while waiting for further spiritual empowerment is not wasting time.

Actively longing in the hope of Christ's coming is not wasting time.
Things take time. Like diamonds and wine, depth of love and growth in grace cannot be rushed.

Wait.

J Neil Alexander (b 1954)

Saturday 19th December

What is Advent?

The Advent mystery
is the beginning of the end
of all in us that is not yet Christ.

Thomas Merton (1915-1968)

Advent Calendar

He will come like last leaf's fall.
One night when the November wind
has flayed the trees to bone, and earth
wakes choking on the mould,
the soft shroud's folding.

He will come like frost.
One morning when the shrinking earth
opens on mist, to find itself
arrested in the net
of alien, sword set beauty.

He will come like dark.
One evening when the bursting red
December sun draws up the sheet
and penny-masks its eye to yield
the star-snowed fields of sky.

He will come, will come,
will come like crying in the night,
like blood, like breaking,
as the earth writhes to toss him free.
He will come like child.

Rowan Williams (b 1950)

De Profundis

Out of the deep have I called unto thee, O Lord: Lord, hear my voice.
O let thine ears consider well: the voice of my complaint.
If thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss: O Lord, who may abide it?
For there is mercy with thee: therefore shalt thou be feared.
I look for the Lord; my soul doth wait for him: in his word is my trust.
My soul fleeth unto the Lord: before the morning watch, I say, before the morning watch.
O Israel, trust in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy:
and with him is plenteous redemption.
And he shall redeem Israel: from all his sins.

Psalms 130

The Angelus

This devotion is traditionally recited in the morning, at noon, and again in the evening. It reminds us of the centrality of the Incarnation in our lives and in our world. Wherever you may find yourself you are invited to join in its recitation.

The angel of the Lord brought tidings to Mary.
And she conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now
and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Behold, the handmaid of the Lord.
Be it unto me according to thy word.

Hail Mary ...

And the word was made flesh.
And dwelt among us.

Hail Mary ...

Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God:
That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Almighty God, pour thy grace into our hearts, that as we have known the incarnation of thy Son Jesus Christ by the message of an angel, so by his ✠ Cross and Passion we may be brought unto the glory of his resurrection; through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.



Daily Offices

You may like to use one or more of the following services as a daily basis for your prayer.

Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer and Compline are designed for the time of day.

Prayer During the Day can be used at any point.

To accompany the services, we offer a biblical reading for each day.

Sunday 13th December

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight'. John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. *St Mark 1.1-5*

Monday 14th December

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness - on them light has shined. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onwards and for evermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this. *Isaiah 9. 2, 6-7*

Tuesday 15th December

Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. *James 5. 7-10*

Wednesday 9th December

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom. Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are of a fearful heart, 'Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you.' *Isaiah 35. 1,3,4*

Thursday 10th December

The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.' And let everyone who hears say, 'Come.' And let everyone who is thirsty come. Let anyone who wishes take the water of life as a gift. The one who testifies to these things says, 'Surely I am coming soon.' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the saints. Amen. *Revelation 22.17,20,21*

Friday 11th December

In days to come the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it. Many peoples shall come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. *Isaiah 2.2-3*

Saturday 5th December

Then Isaiah said: 'Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. *Isaiah 7.13-14*

A Simple Form of Morning Prayer

Opening Sentences

O Lord, open thou our lips
And our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

✠ O God, make speed to save us
O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen

Praise ye the Lord.
The Lord's name be praised.

Benedictus – The Song of Zechariah

✠ Blessed be the Lord God of Israel :
for he hath visited, and redeemed his people;
And hath raised up a mighty salvation for us :
in the house of his servant David;
As he spake by the mouth of his holy Prophets :
which have been since the world began;
That we should be saved from our enemies :
and from the hands of all that hate us;
To perform the mercy promised to our forefathers :
and to remember his holy covenant;
To perform the oath which he sware to our forefather Abraham :
that he would give us,
That we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies :
might serve him without fear,
In holiness and righteousness before him :
all the days of our life.

And thou, child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest :
for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways;
To give knowledge of salvation unto his people :
for the remission of their sins;
Through the tender mercy of our God :
whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us;
To give light to them that sit in darkness,
and in the shadow of death :
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son :
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be :
world without end. Amen.

Reading

A reading for the day can be found on page 10.

Prayers

- ❖ Give thanks for a new day, for all God's blessings.
- ❖ Pray for those we will encounter today, and those far from us.
- ❖ Pray for the blessing of peace for all nations and people.
- ❖ Pray that our time may be consecrated by the presence of Christ.

The Lord's Prayer

Collects

The Collect of the Third Week of Advent

O Lord Jesus Christ, who at your first coming sent your messenger to prepare your way before you: grant that the ministers and stewards of your mysteries may likewise so prepare and make ready your way by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that at your second coming to judge the world we may be found an acceptable people in your sight; for you are alive and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

The Collect for Peace

O God, who art the author of peace and lover of concord, in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life, whose service is perfect freedom; defend us thy humble servants in all assaults of our enemies; that we, surely trusting in thy defence, may not fear the power of any adversaries; through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Collect for Grace

O Lord, our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God, who hast safely brought us to the beginning of this day; defend us in the same with thy mighty power; and grant that this day we fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of danger, but that all our doings may be ordered by thy governance, to do always that is righteous in thy sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Conclusion

✠ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen.

Prayer During the Day

Preparation

✠ O God, make speed to save us.

O Lord, make haste to help us.

You have been my helper

and under the shadow of your wings will I rejoice.

Praise

A hymn, song, canticle, extempore praise or this –

For the gift of his Spirit:

blessed be Christ.

For the catholic Church:

blessed be Christ.

For the means of grace:

blessed be Christ.

For the hope of glory:

blessed be Christ.

For the triumphs of his gospel:

blessed be Christ.

For the lives of his saints:

blessed be Christ.

In joy and in sorrow:

blessed be Christ.

In life and in death:

blessed be Christ.

Now and to the end of the ages:

blessed be Christ.

from A Litany of the Resurrection

The Word of God

Psalmody

Sunday: Psalm 2

Why are the nations in tumult,
and why do the peoples devise a vain plot?

The kings of the earth rise up,
and the rulers take counsel together,
against the Lord and against his anointed:

‘Let us break their bonds asunder
and cast away their cords from us.’

He who dwells in heaven shall laugh them to scorn;
the Lord shall have them in derision.

Then shall he speak to them in his wrath
and terrify them in his fury:

'Yet have I set my king
upon my holy hill of Zion.'
I will proclaim the decree of the Lord;
he said to me: 'You are my Son; this day have I begotten you.
Ask of me and I will give you the nations for your inheritance
and the ends of the earth for your possession.
You shall break them with a rod of iron
and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.'
Now therefore be wise, O kings;
be prudent, you judges of the earth.
Serve the Lord with fear, and with trembling kiss his feet,
lest he be angry and you perish from the way,
for his wrath is quickly kindled.
Happy are all they
who take refuge in him.

Monday: Psalm 15

Lord, who may dwell in your tabernacle?
Who may rest upon your holy hill?
Whoever leads an uncorrupt life
and does the thing that is right;
Who speaks the truth from the heart
and bears no deceit on the tongue;
Who does no evil to a friend
and pours no scorn on a neighbour;
In whose sight the wicked are not esteemed,
but who honours those who fear the Lord.
Whoever has sworn to a neighbour
and never goes back on that word;
Who does not lend money in hope of gain,
nor takes a bribe against the innocent;
Whoever does these things
shall never fall.

Tuesday: Psalm 42.1-7

As the deer longs for the water brooks,
so longs my soul for you, O God.
My soul is athirst for God, even for the living God;
when shall I come before the presence of God?
My tears have been my bread day and night,
while all day long they say to me, 'Where is now your God?'
Now when I think on these things, I pour out my soul:
how I went with the multitude
and led the procession to the house of God,
With the voice of praise and thanksgiving,
among those who kept holy day.

Why are you so full of heaviness, O my soul,
and why are you so disquieted within me?
O put your trust in God;
for I will yet give him thanks,
who is the help of my countenance, and my God.

Wednesday: Psalm 96

Sing to the Lord a new song;
sing to the Lord, all the earth.
Sing to the Lord and bless his name;
tell out his salvation from day to day.
Declare his glory among the nations
and his wonders among all peoples.
For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised;
he is more to be feared than all gods.
For all the gods of the nations are but idols;
it is the Lord who made the heavens.
Honour and majesty are before him;
power and splendour are in his sanctuary.
Ascribe to the Lord, you families of the peoples;
ascribe to the Lord honour and strength.
Ascribe to the Lord the honour due to his name;
bring offerings and come into his courts.
O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness;
let the whole earth tremble before him.
Tell it out among the nations that the Lord is king.
He has made the world so firm that it cannot be moved;
he will judge the peoples with equity.
Let the heavens rejoice and let the earth be glad;
let the sea thunder and all that is in it;
Let the fields be joyful and all that is in them;
let all the trees of the wood shout for joy before the Lord.
For he comes, he comes to judge the earth;
with righteousness he will judge the world
and the peoples with his truth.

Thursday: Psalm 121

I lift up my eyes to the hills;
from where is my help to come?
My help comes from the Lord,
the maker of heaven and earth.
He will not suffer your foot to stumble;
he who watches over you will not sleep.
Behold, he who keeps watch over Israel
shall neither slumber nor sleep.
The Lord himself watches over you;
the Lord is your shade at your right hand,

So that the sun shall not strike you by day,
neither the moon by night.
The Lord shall keep you from all evil;
it is he who shall keep your soul.
The Lord shall keep watch over your going out
and your coming in,
from this time forth for evermore.

Friday: Psalm 125

Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion,
which cannot be moved, but stands fast for ever.
As the hills stand about Jerusalem,
so the Lord stands round about his people,
from this time forth for evermore.
The sceptre of wickedness shall not hold sway
over the land allotted to the righteous,
lest the righteous turn their hands to evil.
Do good, O Lord, to those who are good,
and to those who are true of heart.
Those who turn aside to crooked ways
the Lord shall take away with the evildoers;
but let there be peace upon Israel.

Saturday: Psalm 133

Behold how good and pleasant it is
to dwell together in unity.
It is like the precious oil upon the head,
running down upon the beard,
Even on Aaron's beard, running down upon the collar of his clothing.
It is like the dew of Hermon running down upon the hills of Zion.
For there the Lord has promised his blessing:
even life for evermore.

Each psalm ends with

**Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

Short readings – A reading for the day can be found on page 10.

Response

Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
St Matthew 5.3

Prayers

- ❖ The universal Church
- ❖ Bishops, synods and all who lead the Church
- ❖ The leaders of the nations
- ❖ The natural world and the resources of the earth
- ❖ All who are in any kind of need

Bring us, O Lord God, at our last awakening
into the house and gate of heaven,
to enter that gate and dwell in that house,
where there shall be no darkness nor dazzling, but one equal light;
no noise nor silence, but one equal music;
no fears nor hopes, but one equal possession;
no ends or beginnings, but one equal eternity;
in the habitations of your glory and dominion,
world without end. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

The Conclusion

May God give us grace to follow his saints in glory.
Amen.



A Simple Form of Evening Prayer

Opening Sentences

O Lord, open thou our lips.

And our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

✠ O God, make speed to save us.

O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Praise ye the Lord.

The Lord's Name be praised.

Magnificat – The Song of Mary

✠ My soul doth magnify the Lord :
and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

For he hath regarded :

the lowliness of his hand-maiden.

For behold, from henceforth :

all generations shall call me blessed.

For he that is mighty hath magnified me :

and holy is his Name.

And his mercy is on them that fear him :

throughout all generations.

He hath shewed strength with his arm :

he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

He hath put down the mighty from their seat :

and hath exalted the humble and meek.

He hath filled the hungry with good things :

and the rich he hath sent empty away.

He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel :

as he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed, for ever.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son :

and to the Holy Spirit;

as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be :

world without end. Amen.

Reading

A reading for the day can be found on page 10.

Prayers

- ❖ Give thanks for the day past, for the means of grace and the hope of glory.
- ❖ Pray for all who are in need, for those who are sick in body, mind or spirit.
- ❖ Pray for those who have died, those we have loved, those who have inspired us.
- ❖ As the day fades we commend ourselves to the love and mercy of God.

The Lord's Prayer

Collects

The Collect of the Third Week of Advent

O Lord Jesus Christ, who at your first coming sent your messenger to prepare your way before you: grant that the ministers and stewards of your mysteries may likewise so prepare and make ready your way by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that at your second coming to judge the world we may be found an acceptable people in your sight; for you are alive and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

The Collect for Peace

O God, from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed: Give unto thy servants that peace which the world cannot give; that both our hearts may be set to obey thy commandments, and also that by thee we being defended from the fear of our enemies may pass our time in rest and quietness; through the merits of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

The Collect for Aid Against All Perils

Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord; and by thy great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of thy only Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Conclusion

✠ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all evermore. Amen.

Compline

✠ In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Lord Almighty grant us a quiet night and a perfect end. Amen.

Brethren be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist, steadfast in the faith.
(1 Peter 5.8)

But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us:

Thanks be to God.

O God, make speed to save us:

O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

**As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.**

Praise ye the Lord:

The Lord's name be praised.

One or more of the following psalms is read:

Psalm 4

Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness
thou hast set me at liberty when I was in trouble;
have mercy upon me and hearken unto my prayer.

O ye sons of men, how long will ye blaspheme mine honour
and have such pleasure in vanity, and seek after leasing?

Know this also, that the Lord hath chosen to himself the man that is godly
when I call upon the Lord, he will hear me.

Stand in awe and sin not commune with your own heart,
and in your chamber, and be still.

Offer the sacrifice of righteousness:
and put your trust in the Lord.

There be many that say:

Who will show us any good?

Lord, lift thou up:

the light of thy countenance upon us.

Thou hast put gladness in my heart:

since the time that their corn, and wine, and oil, increased.

I will lay me down in peace, and take my rest:

for it is thou, Lord, only, that makest me dwell in safety.

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit:**

**as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.**

Psalm 31

In thee, O Lord, have I put my trust
let me never be put to confusion, deliver me in thy righteousness.
Bow down thine ear to me; make haste to deliver me
and be thou my strong rock, and house of defence,
that thou mayest save me.
For thou art my strong rock, and my castle
be thou also my guide, and lead me for thy name's sake.
Draw me out of the net, that they have laid privily for me
for thou art my strength.
Into thy hands I commend my spirit
for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of truth.

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.**

Psalm 91

Whoso dwelleth under the defence of the most High
shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
I will say unto the Lord, thou art my hope, and my stronghold
my God, in him will I trust.
For he shall deliver thee from the snare of the hunter
and from the noisome pestilence.
He shall defend thee under his wings,
and thou shalt be safe under his feathers
his faithfulness and truth shall be thy shield and buckler.
Thou shalt not be afraid for any terror by night
nor for the arrow that flieth by day.
For the pestilence that walketh in darkness
nor for the sickness that destroyeth in the noon-day.
A thousand shall fall beside thee, and ten thousand
at thy right hand
but it shall not come nigh thee.
Yea, with thine eyes shalt thou behold,
and see the reward of the ungodly
For thou, Lord, art my hope;
thou hast set thine house of defence very high.
There shall no evil happen unto thee
neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.
For he shall give his angels charge over thee,
to keep thee in all thy ways
They shall bear thee in their hands;
that thou hurt not thy foot against a stone.

Thou shalt go upon the lion and adder
the young lion and the dragon shalt thou tread under thy feet.
Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him
I will set him up, because he hath known my name.

He shall call upon me, and I will hear him.
Yea, I am with him in trouble; I will deliver him,
and bring him to honour.
With long life will I satisfy him and shew him my salvation.

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.**

Psalm 134

Behold now, praise the Lord all ye servants of the Lord.
Ye that by night stand in the house of the Lord
even in the courts of the house of our God.
Lift up your hands in the sanctuary and praise the Lord.
The Lord that made heaven and earth
give thee blessing out of Sion.

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.**

Reading: the following, or the daily reading (p10).

Come to me, all who labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.
Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart,
and you will find rest for your souls.
For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

St Matthew 11:28-30

followed by short silence.

Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit:
Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.

For thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of truth:
I commend my spirit.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.

Te lucis ante terminum

Before the ending of the day,
Creator of the world, we pray,
that with thy wonted favour thou
wouldst be our guard and keeper now.

From all ill dreams defend our eyes,
from nightly fears and fantasies;
tread under foot our ghostly foe,
that no pollution we may know.

O Father, that we ask be done,
through Jesus Christ thine only Son,
who, with the Holy Ghost and thee,
doth live and reign eternally. Amen.

Keep me as the apple of an eye:
Hide me under the shadow of thy wings.

Antiphon

Preserve us, O Lord, while waking,
**and guard us while sleeping, that awake we may watch with Christ,
and asleep we may rest in peace.**

Nunc Dimittis – The Song of Simeon

✠ **Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace:
according to thy word.
For mine eyes have seen thy salvation:
which thou hast prepared before the face of all people.
To be a light to lighten the Gentiles:
and to be the glory of thy people Israel.**

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.**

**Preserve us, O Lord, while waking,
and guard us while sleeping, that awake we may watch with Christ,
and asleep we may rest in peace.**

Lord, have mercy upon us.
Christ, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy upon us.

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Blessed art thou, Lord God of our fathers:
To be praised and glorified above all for ever.

Let us bless the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit:
Let us praise him and magnify him for ever.

Blessed art thou, O Lord, in the firmament of heaven:
To be praised and glorified above all for ever.

The Almighty and most merciful Lord guard us
and give us his blessing.
Amen.

Silence for recollection

**We confess to God Almighty, the Father, the Son,
and the Holy Spirit, that we have sinned in thought, word,
and deed, through our own grievous fault.
Wherefore we pray God to have mercy upon us.**

Wilt thou not turn again and quicken us:
That thy people may rejoice in thee?

O Lord, shew thy mercy upon us:
And grant us thy salvation.

Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this night without sin:
O Lord, have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us.

O Lord, hear our prayer:
And let our cry come unto thee.

One or more of the following Collects is said:

Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord; and by thy great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of thy only Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Be present, O merciful God, and protect us through the silent hours of this night, so that we, who are wearied by the changes and chances of this fleeting world, may repose upon thy eternal changelessness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Look down, O Lord, from thy heavenly throne, illuminate the darkness of this night with thy celestial brightness, and from the children of light banish the deeds of darkness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, who at this evening hour didst rest in the sepulchre, and didst thereby sanctify the grave to be a bed of hope to thy people: make us so to abound in sorrow for our sins, which were the cause of thy passion, that when our bodies lie in the dust, our souls may live with thee: who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God world without end. Amen.

Visit, we beseech thee, O Lord, this place and drive away all the snares of the enemy; let thy holy angels dwell herein to preserve us in peace; and may thy blessing be upon us evermore; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give thine angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for thy love's sake. Amen.

We will lay us down in peace and take our rest:

For it is thou, Lord, only that makest us dwell in safety.

The Lord be with you:

And with thy spirit.

Let us bless the Lord:

Thanks be to God.

✠ The Almighty and merciful Lord, the Father, the Son,
and the Holy Spirit, bless and preserve us.

Amen.

May the divine assistance remain with us always,

✠ and may the faithful departed, through the mercy of God,
rest in peace and rise in glory. Amen.



The Office may conclude with the Salve Regina:

Salve, Regina, Mater misericordiae;
vita, dulcedo, et spes nostra, salve.
Ad te clamamus, exsules filii Hevae,
ad te suspiramus, gementes et flentes
in hac lacrimarum valle.
Eia, ergo, advocata nostra, illos tuos
misericordes oculos ad nos converte;
et Iesum, benedictum fructum ventris tui,
nobis post hoc exilium ostende.
O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria.

*Hail, O Queen, mother of mercy;
our life, our sweetness and our hope, hail.
To you do we cry, the banished, children of Eve;
to you do we sigh, lamenting and weeping in this vale of tears; therefore, our advocate, your
eyes of mercy turn towards us,
And Jesus, the blessed fruit of your womb, to us, after this exile, reveal.
O clement, O devoted, O sweet Virgin Mary.*