

ADVENT PRAYER SERVICE

Virtue Link: Faith, Hope, Love, Justice, Fortitude

Catholic Character Themes: Community, Compassion, Discipleship, Reverence, Solidarity



INTRODUCTION:

Welcome to our Advent prayer service. Please join in our opening song:
(Sugg. *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*)

OPENING PRAYER SEQUENCE:

LEADER: As we begin this Advent prayer, let us unite ourselves with Jesus, whom we await with joyful expectation, marking ourselves with the sign of his cross, through which he has made all things new.

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

LEFT: As our autumn days shorten and winter's darkness takes hold...

RIGHT: We look to you, O Radiant Light, to guide our steps along the way..

ALL: Come, Lord Jesus.

LEFT: As summer's green fades, leaving our horizons pale and gray...

RIGHT: We look to you, Emmanuel, hope of all God's people.

ALL: Come, Lord Jesus.

LEFT: In a world where unity and respect are ruptured by human greed and violence,

RIGHT: We look to you, Prince of Peace, to restore in us the peace and harmony of your Kingdom.

ALL: Come, Lord Jesus.

Lighting of Advent Wreath Candles

(Someone comes forward to light Advent candle, after which all recite the prayer below)

ALL: O gentle infant Redeemer, how strange to us is your path to glory. Your birth amid the shadows and smells of a stable was hope for the poor and humble of heart. Emmanuel, Wonderful Counselor, Prince of Peace, we light this candle as a sign of our hope in you. We pray that your Holy Spirit might prepare our hearts to welcome you in prayer, in your word and sacrament; in friends, family and colleagues; in the poor, the sick, the hungry, the lonely, and all whom you have called us to serve.

Let us now be attentive to God's word.

Reading: (Isaiah 40, 1-5, 9-10)

A reading from the prophet Isaiah:

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all the people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

Get you up to a high mountain O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!"

(pause)

The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God

Response: (Read by two groups)

O Come Emmanuel, Our Lord

A: When comforts all but fail
To quell the soul's desire for peace
We look to You, expectantly
Whose gaze brings waiting hearts release.

A: And so the time is now
To straighten paths once gone astray
To welcome you with open hearts
In those we meet throughout the day.

B: The humble, poor and tired
For whom you are the soul's Great Rest
Will find their yearning satisfied
When you, O Lord become their guest.

B: O come, Emmanuel our Lord
To dimming eye, restore your sight
And speed our steps along the way
To greet your dawning Christmas light.



Prayer of the Faithful:

As we prepare to enter the mystery of our Saviour's birth, let us turn to the One who sent him with our needs in this holy season. The response to our intentions is: *Lord hear our prayer.*

1. Let us pray for the Church. That all who share a common baptism will embrace their call to bring Christ's love to the world. We pray to the Lord...
Lord, hear our prayer.
2. Let us pray for the world. That the grace of this holy season might break through all hardness of heart, and strengthen bonds of love and understanding among all peoples. We pray to the Lord...
Lord, hear our prayer.
3. Let us pray for the poor and suffering in our communities and world. That people everywhere will recognize in them the face of Christ, and reach out to them with greater generosity. We pray to the Lord...
Lord, hear our prayer.
4. Let us pray for those in leadership in our schools and board system. That they might be attentive to the concerns of all who turn to them, and find their gifts welcomed by all. We pray to the Lord...
Lord, hear our prayer.
5. Let us pray that in this busy season, we might find the time to slow down and welcome the gift of Christ's presence in one another with *warmth, hospitality, good humour and joy.* We pray to the Lord...
Lord, hear our prayer.

Let us take a moment to gather all of our intentions in the silence of our hearts, and offer them to the Father in the words that Jesus taught us: **Our Father ...**

Closing Prayer (together)

Lord God, open our hearts to the joyful hope of this Advent season. As we prepare to enter the mystery of your Son's incarnation, help us to recognize his presence in family, student, colleague and neighbour. In so doing, may we, like the shepherds of Bethlehem be ready to welcome him at Christmas. We ask you this in Jesus' name.

And may Almighty God bless us: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen

CLOSING SONG:

Please join in our closing song: (Sugg. *People Look East*)

