

Expectant Waiting in Joyful Hope

Advent Prayer

Virtue Link: Faith, Hope, Love, Justice, Fortitude
Catholic Character Themes: Community, Compassion, Discipleship, Reverence, Solidarity



INTRODUCTION

Good morning. At the start of our four week Advent journey, let us pause to gather our thoughts, concerns and deepest longings, and bring them to prayer.

OPENING SONG

Please join in our opening song, (Sugg, *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*)

OPENING PRAYER

Let us begin our prayer: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Let us pray. Lord, you sent us Jesus your Son to bring light to our darkness and lead us to eternal life. As we begin this Advent season, enkindle within us the deep desire to seek him in all things. We ask you this in his name. Amen

And now, let us be attentive to God's word.

READING

A reading from the Prophet Isaiah
(Is 40:1-5, 9-11)

Comfort, give comfort to my people,
says your God.
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her
that her service is at an end,
her guilt is expiated;
indeed, she has received from the hand of the
LORD
double for all her sins.

A voice cries out:
In the desert prepare the way of the LORD!
Make straight in the wasteland a highway for our
God!
Every valley shall be filled in,
every mountain and hill shall be made low;
the rugged land shall be made a plain,
the rough country, a broad valley.
Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together;
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

Go up on to a high mountain,
Zion, herald of glad tidings;
cry out at the top of your voice,
Jerusalem, herald of good news!
Fear not to cry out
and say to the cities of Judah:
Here is your God!
Here comes with power
the Lord GOD,
who rules by his strong arm;
here is his reward with him,
his recompense before him.
Like a shepherd he feeds his flock;
in his arms he gathers the lambs,
carrying them in his bosom,
and leading the ewes with care.
(pause)
The word of the Lord.
- Thanks be to God.

REFLECTION

Imagine how the hearts of Isaiah's listeners swelled with hope and expectation at the words he delivered. They were living as captives in Babylon, a pagan kingdom, whose ways were far from God's covenant with Abraham and the laws of Moses. The Hebrews were no longer in the land God had given them. They were without a king, Temple or country.

The Hebrews had forsaken their covenant relationship with God. Relying on their own strengths, they had ignored the prophets' warnings of destruction that a life without faith and justice would bring. Finally, they were surrounded by enemies and taken from Jerusalem in chains.

Reaching out to the Chosen People in exile, God's word, spoken through Isaiah brought them comfort, mercy and hope for deliverance.

What is my exile today, this week or this year? What holds me captive and yearning for freedom and peace? (pause for a moment)

No matter where we are, God's heart longs – more than our own – for our comfort, peace and strength in the shelter of His wings. God desires to rekindle in us the gift of hope we received at Baptism. This Advent, let us bring our deepest longings to the tender compassion of our Maker, who knows our needs, and in Christ, longs to set us free.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Let us pray for the Church. That all who share a common Baptism might find unity in their desire for Christ's peace. We pray to the Lord. *Lord, hear our prayer.*

Let us pray for the World. That in this Advent season, all peoples might learn to welcome the presence of God in one another. We pray to the Lord. *Lord, hear our prayer.*

Let us pray for those who suffer, especially those in our own communities and homes. That they may experience the tender compassion of Christ in our attentiveness to their needs. We pray to the Lord. *Lord, hear our prayer.*

Let us pray for our families and loved ones. That their captivities of heart, body or spirit will be released by friendship, Christian hope and joy. We pray to the Lord. *Lord, hear our prayer.*

Let us pray for ourselves. That our experiences of exile will be transformed this Advent by the tender compassion of Christ. We pray to the Lord. *Lord, hear our prayer.*

For our own intentions.... We pray to the Lord. *Lord, hear our prayer.*

Let us unite our prayers – spoken aloud and in the silence of our hearts – using the words Jesus gave us: ***Our Father...***

CLOSING PRAYER

Let us pray. Lord, you fashioned our hearts to be satisfied with nothing less than Your love which overflows for us in Christ. As we journey through Advent, rekindle within us your gift of hope, and turn our expectant waiting into readiness to welcome Him in all persons we meet. We make this prayer to you in the name of Jesus, your Son. Amen. And may Almighty God bless us: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen

CLOSING SONG

Please join in singing our closing song, (Sugg. *O Come, Divine Messiah*)