

Advent Prayer Service



“Advent being a season established by the Church to prepare the faithful to celebrate properly Our Lord’s coming into this world and to draw him into their hearts so that they may no longer live save by his Spirit, it would be very proper for us today and on the following Sundays to apply ourselves to prayer in order to prepare our hearts to receive Our Lord . . .” Preface for the Meditation on the Second Sunday of Advent by Saint John Baptist de La Salle

Leader: Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God. (pause)

Opening Song (Veni Emmanuel or Creator of the Stars of Night by Marty Haugen)

Opening Prayer

All: We long for your coming, Lord Jesus. Our hearts are empty until you fill them with your coming. As we prepare to celebrate again the feast of your historical coming, fill us with your Spirit so that we may be prepared for your Second Coming and enjoy your presence forever. Amen.

First Reading – *From Bread for the Journey*, Henri J. Nouwen

Waiting is essential to the spiritual life. But waiting as a disciple of Jesus is not an empty waiting. It is a waiting with a promise in our hearts that makes already present what we are waiting for. We wait during Advent for the birth of Jesus. We wait after Easter for the coming of the Spirit, and after the Ascension of Jesus we wait for his coming again in glory. We are always waiting, but it is a waiting in the conviction that we have already seen God’s footsteps.

Waiting for God is an active, alert—yes, joyful—waiting. As we wait we remember him for whom we are waiting, and as we remember him we create a community ready to welcome him when he comes.

Response – Psalm 80:1-4

Left: Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,
you who lead Joseph like a flock!

Right: You who are enthroned upon the cherubim,
shine forth before El’phraim and Benjamin and Ma•nas’seh.

Left: Stir up your might, and come to save us!
Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

Right: O LORD God of hosts,
how long will you be angry with your people's prayers?

Second Reading – *Waiting for God*, Simone Weil

Actions prompted by our inclination clearly do not involve an effort of will. In our acts of obedience to God we are passive; whatever difficulties we have to surmount, however great our activity may appear to be, there is nothing analogous to muscular effort; there is only waiting, attention, silence, immobility, constant through suffering and joy. . . .

We cannot take a single step toward heaven. It is not in our power to travel in a vertical direction. If however we look heavenward for a long time, God comes and takes us up. He raises us easily.

Period of Silent Reflection

Third Reading – *Parochial and Plain Sermons, Vol. 4*, John Henry Cardinal Newman.

They watch for Christ
who are sensitive, eager, apprehensive in mind,
who are awake, alive, quick-sighted,
zealous in honoring him,
who look for him in all that happens, and
who would not be over-agitated or overwhelmed,
if they found that he was coming at once . . .

This then is to watch:
to be detached from what is present, and
to live in what is unseen;
to live in the thought of Christ as he came once,
and as he will come again;
to desire his second coming, from our affectionate
and grateful remembrance of his first.

Prayers of Petition

Leader: Come, Lord Jesus, to rekindle the flame of faith in our hearts and make us more zealous to proclaim your salvation.

All: Come, Lord Jesus, come.

Leader: Come, Lord Jesus, direct our vision heaven-ward, from the distractions of the season and prepare us to seek your Second Coming with the same anticipation that we celebrate the feast of your first coming.

All: Come, Lord Jesus, come.

Leader: Come, Lord Jesus, to heal the wounds of the sick, the poor, the confused, the marginalized, the lost, the unloved.

All: Come, Lord Jesus, come.

Leader: Come, Lord Jesus, to accompany our beloved dead to your glorious kingdom.

All: Come, Lord Jesus, come.

Leader: For what else shall we pray?

All: Come, Lord Jesus, come.

Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer

All: Come, Lord Jesus. You are the light in the darkness of our lives. You are the rest from the frantic, misguided activities in which we find ourselves engaged. Your coming offers us hope that there is meaning and fulfillment beyond our feeble attempts to rise above our failings. As we prepare to celebrate the feast of your first coming in humble circumstances, make us humble and patient enough to welcome your coming into our lives now and at the end of time. Amen.

Leader: St. John Baptist de La Salle

All: Pray for us.

Leader: Live, Jesus, in our hearts

All: Forever!

Closing Song: (Veni Emmanuel or Creator of the Stars of Night by Marty Haugen)

Maranatha!