

Preparing for Christmas: Praying Scripture in Advent

Introduction	2
OPENING PRAYER - Lighting the Advent Candle	3
EVENING PRAYER (Week 1)	4
EVENING PRAYER (Week 2)	11
EVENING PRAYER (Week 3)	18
EVENING PRAYER (Week 4)	25
Advent Hymns	32
The Magnificat	34

Introduction

The book of Psalms has been the prayerbook of the people of God for thousands of years. Its poetry covers the whole range of human experience, from joyful trust in God to cries of anger or despair, from pleas for help in times of darkness to thanksgiving songs for deliverance from danger. Jesus prayed them, and both Jews and Christians have continued to do so down the centuries.

Since Christ's ascension into heaven Christ's followers have gathered to pray and give praise to God (Lk 18:1; 21:36; 1 Thess 5:17 & Eph 6:18). Very quickly forms of prayer evolved arising from the Jewish tradition of praying with the psalms and with certain Old Testament readings.

Significantly such scripture-based prayer has remained a constant in the life of the Church through the centuries, evolving to encompass New Testament readings and prayers of praise, thanksgiving and intercession.

Today the most popular form in the West is "The Liturgy of the Hours", also known as "The Divine Office". Pope Paul VI, Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI are among those who have encouraged the praying of the Liturgy of the Hours. After participation in the Eucharist, this form of prayer remains the most celebrated means for Christians to participate in Christ's sanctification of all human activity.

Through this booklet you shall be joining millions of Catholics throughout the world in participating in The Liturgy of the Hours. The four prayer sessions it contains are based on the Evening Prayer of the Liturgy of the Hours for the Wednesday, but with the Sunday Gospel readings for Advent in place of the Scripture reading of the day.

OPENING PRAYER - Lighting the Advent Candle

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

Leader: Mindful that Christ is our light let us light our Advent candle.

Short pause for lighting of candle

Leader: Jesus Christ is the light of the world.

Everyone: A light no darkness can extinguish.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

Everyone: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Leader: We give you thanks and praise O God,
without beginning and without end.

Through your Son, Jesus Christ,
you have created and preserved the world.
Father of Christ and Giver of the Holy Spirit
you rule over all creation.

The day you have made for the works of light
and the night for our refreshment and strength.

O Lord of love and source of all good
Receive our Advent prayer and praise.

You have guided us to this day and this hour.

Grant us in Christ an Advent filled with grace and free from all anxiety

And when at last we come to our own end

bring us into the everlasting life of your kingdom,
where you live and reign with Jesus Christ your Son,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever.

Everyone: Amen

EVENING PRAYER (Week 1)

Introduction

Leader: O God come to our aid.

Everyone: O Lord make haste to help us.

Leader: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit

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

HYMN (See back of booklet)

Psalmody

Leader: The Lord is my light and my help; whom shall I fear ?

Everyone: The Lord is my light and my help;
 whom shall I fear?
 The Lord is the stronghold of my life;
 before whom shall I shrink ?

**When evil-doers draw near
to devour my flesh,
it is they, my enemies and foes,
who stumble and fall.**

Though an army encamp against me
my heart would not fear .
Though war break out against me
even then would I trust.

**There is one thing I ask of the Lord,
for this I long,
to live in the house of the Lord,
all the days of my life,
to savour the sweetness of the Lord,
to behold his temple.**

For there he keeps me safe in his tent
in the day of evil.
He hides me in the shelter of his tent,
on a rock he sets me safe.

**And now my head shall be raised
above my foes who surround me
and I shall offer within his tent
a sacrifice of joy.**

I will sing and make music for the Lord.

Leader: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit

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

Everyone: The Lord is my light and my help; whom shall I fear?

SILENCE

Leader: It is your face, O Lord, that I seek; hide not your face.

Everyone: O Lord, hear my voice when I call;
have mercy and answer.
Of you my heart has spoken:
'Seek his face.'

**It is your face, O Lord, that I seek;
hide not your face.
Dismiss not your servant in anger;
you have been my help.**

Do not abandon or forsake me,
O God my help!
Though father and mother forsake me,
The Lord will receive me.

**Instruct me, Lord, in your way;
on an even path lead me.
When they lie in ambush
protect me from my enemy's greed.
False witnesses rise against me,
breathing out fury.**

I am sure I shall see the Lord's goodness
in the land of the living.
Hope in him, hold firm and take heart.
Hope in the Lord!

Leader: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit

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

Everyone: It is your face, O Lord, that I seek; hide not your face.

SILENCE

Leader: He is the firstborn of all creation; he is supreme over all creatures.

Everyone: Let us give thanks to the Father,

who has qualified us to share
in the inheritance of the saints in light.

**He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness
and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,
in whom we have redemption,
the forgiveness of sins.**

He is the image of the invisible God,
the firstborn of all creation,
for in him all things were created, in heaven and on
earth, visible and invisible.

**All things were created
through him and for him.
He is before all things,
and in him all things hold together.**

He is the head of the body, the Church;
he is the beginning,
the firstborn from the dead,
that in everything he might be pre-eminent.

**For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,
and through him to reconcile to himself all things,
whether on earth or in heaven,
making peace by the blood of his cross.**

Leader: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit

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

Everyone: He is the firstborn of all creation; he is supreme over all creatures.

SILENCE

GOSPEL READING AND REFLECTION: Luke 21:25-28, 34-36

Luke 21:25-28, 34-36 “There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in a cloud’ with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.” “Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

- What words or phrases in this passage do you like? What strikes a chord with you?

Reread the Text

- What do you find disturbing or frightening in this passage?
- What words do you find consoling?

Reread the Text

- How would you describe Jesus here? Is he fearful or hopeful?

Discussion: We read the passage again and reflect on some of the following:

1. *“Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads...”* How do we react to what is taking place in our world today?
2. *“Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down...”* What weighs us down? What lifts that weight from us?
3. What signs of hope do you see in the world around you? Where do we see God drawing close to us?
4. *“Stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”* Where do we see these signs of God drawing close to us?

Prayers:

Leader: We have listened to the text and to our lives. What you do want to say to the Lord about what you have heard? What hope or prayer has this text stirred in your heart? I invite you to share any prayer of praise, thanksgiving or petition inspired by our reflection on the Gospel or by this Evening Prayer.

Short prayers from the group

Response: Come and visit your people!

Leader: Let us pray together our family prayer

Everyone: Our Father who art in heaven ...

Magnificat Antiphon

Leader: The Law will go forth from Sion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

Everyone: The Magnificat (see back cover)

Leader: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit

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

Everyone: The Law will go forth from Sion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

Concluding Prayer

Leader: Prepare our hearts, Lord,
by the power of your grace.
When Christ comes,
may he find us worthy
to receive from his hand
the bread of heaven at the feast of eternal life.
We make this prayer through the same Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

Everyone: Amen.

Leader: The Lord bless us, and keep us from evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

Everyone: Amen.

EVENING PRAYER (Week 2)

Introduction

Leader: O God come to our aid.

Everyone: O Lord make haste to help us.

Leader: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit

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

HYMN (See back of booklet)

Psalmody

Leader: We are waiting in hope for the blessings of the glorious coming of our Saviour.

Everyone: In God alone is my soul at rest;
my help comes from him.
He alone is my rock, my stronghold,
my fortress: I stand firm.

**How long will you all attack
one man to break him down,
as though he were a tottering wall,
or a tumbling fence?**

Their plan is only to destroy:
they take pleasure in lies.
With their mouth they utter blessings
but in their heart they curse.

**In God alone be at rest, my soul;
for my hope comes from him.
He alone is my rock, my stronghold,
my fortress: I stand firm.**

In God is my safety and glory,
the rock of my strength.
Take refuge in God all you people.
Trust him at all times.
Pour out your hearts before him
for God is our refuge.

**Common folk are only a breath,
great men an illusion.
Placed in the scales, they rise;
they weigh less than a breath.**

Do not put your trust in oppression
nor vain hopes on plunder.
Do not set your heart on riches
even when they increase.

**For God has said only one thing:
only two do I know:
that to God alone belongs power
and to you, Lord, Love;
and that you repay each man
according to his deeds.**

Leader: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit

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

Everyone: We are waiting in hope for the blessings of the glorious coming of our Saviour.

SILENCE

Leader: Let God bless us; let his face shed its light upon us.

Everyone: O God, be gracious and bless us
and let your face shed its light upon us.
So will your ways be known upon earth.
and all nations learn your saving help.

**Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you.
Let the nations be glad and exult
for you rule the world with justice.**

With fairness you rule the peoples,
you guide the nations on earth.
Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you.

**The earth has yielded its fruit
for God, our God, has blessed us.
May God still give us his blessing
till the ends of the earth revere him.**

Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you.

Leader: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit

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

Everyone: Let God bless us; let his face shed its light upon us.

SILENCE

Leader: All things we created in him and he holds all things in being.

Everyone: Let us give thanks to the Father,
who has qualified us to share
in the inheritance of the saints in light.

**He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness
and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,
in whom we have redemption,
the forgiveness of sins.**

He is the image of the invisible God,
the firstborn of all creation,
for in him all things were created, in heaven and on
earth, visible and invisible.

**All things were created
through him and for him.
He is before all things,
and in him all things hold together.**

He is the head of the body, the Church;
he is the beginning,
the firstborn from the dead,
that in everything he might be pre-eminent.

For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,

**and through him to reconcile to himself all things,
whether on earth or in heaven,
making peace by the blood of his cross.**

Leader: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit

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

Everyone: All things were created in him and he holds all things in being.

SILENCE

GOSPEL READING AND REFLECTION: Luke 3: 1-6

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low,

and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth;

and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”

- What words or phrases in the passage strike you, or console you or call you?

Reread the Text

- To whom and where did the Word of God come? What happened next?

Reread the Text

- What is God about to do?

Discussion: We read the passage again and reflect on some of the following:

1. *“In the fifteenth year of the reign of the Word of God came to John”*. What Word of God is Pope Francis proclaiming in the sixth year of his papacy?
2. *“The crooked ways shall be made straight and the rough made smooth.”* Who are the people who smooth out our rough paths? 3. *“All flesh shall see the salvation of God.”* Where do we see traces of God at work through people, saving, healing and rescuing?”
4. *“Stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”* Where do we see these signs of God drawing close to us?

Prayers:

Leader: We have listened to the text and to our lives. What you do want to say to the Lord about what you have heard? What hope or prayer has this text stirred in your heart? I invite you to share any prayer of praise, thanksgiving or petition inspired by our reflection on the Gospel or by this Evening Prayer.

Short prayers from the group

Response: Come, Lord Jesus!

Leader: Let us pray together our family prayer

Everyone: Our Father who art in heaven ...

Magnificat Antiphon

Leader: Sion, you will be built anew. Your Holy One will come to you and you will see him.

Everyone: The Magnificat (see back cover)

Leader: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit

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

Everyone: Sion, you will be built anew. Your Holy One will come to you and you will see him.

Concluding Prayer

Leader: At your bidding, Lord,
we are preparing the way for Christ, your Son.
May we not grow faint on our journey
as we wait for his healing presence.
We make this prayer through the same Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

Everyone: Amen.

Leader: The Lord bless us, and keep us from evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

Everyone: Amen.

EVENING PRAYER (Week 3)

Introduction

Leader: O God come to our aid.

Everyone: O Lord make haste to help us.

Leader: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit

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

HYMN (See back of booklet)

Psalmody

Leader: The Lord who is all-powerful will come from Sion to save his people.

Everyone: When the Lord delivered Sion from bondage,
 It seemed like a dream.

Then was our mouth filled with laughter,
on our lips there were songs.

**The heathens themselves said:
'What marvels the Lord has worked for them!'
What marvels the Lord worked for us!
Indeed we were glad.**

Deliver us, O Lord, from our bondage
as streams in dry land.
Those who are sowing in tears
will sing when they reap.

**They go out, they go out, full of tears,
carrying seed for the sowing:
they come back, they come back, full of song,
carrying their sheaves.**

Leader: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit

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

Everyone: The Lord who is all-powerful will come from Sion to save his
people

SILENCE

Leader: About Sion I will not be silent until her Holy One shines forth
like light.

Everyone: If the Lord does not build the house,
in vain do its builders labour;
if the Lord does not watch over the city,
in vain does the watchman keep vigil.

**In vain is your earlier rising,
your going later to rest,
you who toil for the bread you eat:
when he pours gifts on his beloved while they slumber.**

Truly sons are a gift from the Lord,
a blessing, the fruit of the womb.
Indeed the sons of youth
are like arrows in the hand of a warrior.

**O the happiness of the man
who has filled his quiver with these arrows!
He will have no cause for shame
when he disputes with his foes in the gateways.**

Leader: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit

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

Everyone: About Sion I will not be silent until her Holy One shines forth like light.

SILENCE

Leader: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me He sent me to bring the good news to the poor

Everyone: Let us give thanks to the Father,
who has qualified us to share
in the inheritance of the saints in light.

He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness

**and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,
in whom we have redemption,
the forgiveness of sins.**

He is the image of the invisible God,
the firstborn of all creation,
for in him all things were created, in heaven and on
earth, visible and invisible.

**All things were created
through him and for him.
He is before all things,
and in him all things hold together.**

He is the head of the body, the Church;
he is the beginning,
the firstborn from the dead,
that in everything he might be pre-eminent.

**For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,
and through him to reconcile to himself all things,
whether on earth or in heaven,
making peace by the blood of his cross.**

Leader: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit

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

Everyone: The spirit of the Lord is upon me. He sent me to bring the
Good News to the poor.

SILENCE

GOSPEL READING AND REFLECTION: Luke 3: 10-18

The crowds said to John, "What then should we do?" In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." Even tax collectors came to be baptised, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages."

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, "I baptise you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

- What words or phrases in this passage do you like? What words disturb or console you?

Reread the Text

- Who is coming to John in this passage?

Reread the Text

- What response does John give to each of them?

Discussion: We read the passage again and reflect on some of the following:

1. “*Teacher, what should we do?*” To whom do we turn in our search? Who guides us?

2. “*...the people were filled with expectation...*” In whom do we mistakenly place our hopes? Who like John points us to the one who is coming?

3. “*Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none...*” What surplus coat are people sharing? What makes us resistant to sharing our surplus coat?

Prayers:

Leader: We have listened to the text and to our lives. What do you want to say to the Lord about what you have heard? What hope or prayer has this text stirred in your heart? I invite you to share any prayer of praise, thanksgiving or petition inspired by our reflection on the Gospel or by this Evening Prayer.

Short prayers from the group

Response: Come and visit your people!

Leader: Let us pray together our family prayer

Everyone: Our Father who art in heaven ...

Magnificat Antiphon

Leader: You are the one who is to come, Lord. We look to you to save your people.

Everyone: The Magnificat (see back cover)

Leader: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit

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

Everyone: You are the one who is to come, Lord. We look to you to save your people.

Concluding Prayer

Leader: Almighty God and Father,
by our celebration of the coming feast of your Son's birth
heal our present ills
and lead us to eternal joy.
We make this prayer through the same Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
Everyone: Amen.

Leader: The Lord bless us, and keep us from evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

Everyone: Amen.

EVENING PRAYER (Week 4)

Introduction

Leader: O God come to our aid.

Everyone: O Lord make haste to help us.

Leader: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit

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

HYMN (See back of booklet)

Psalmody

Leader: The Lord who is all-powerful will come from Sion to save his people.

Everyone: O Lord you search me and you know me,
you know my resting and my rising,
you discern my purpose from afar.
You mark when I walk or lie down,
all my ways lie open to you.

**Before ever a word is on my tongue
you know it, O Lord through and through.
Behind and before you besiege me,
your hand ever laid upon me.
Too wonderful for me, this knowledge,
too high, beyond my reach.**

O where can I go from your spirit,

or where can I flee from your face?
If I climb the heavens, you are there.
If I lie in the grave, you are there.

**If I take the wings of the dawn
and dwell at the sea's furthest end,
even there your hand would lead me,
your right hand would hold me fast.**

If I say: 'Let the darkness hide me
And the light around me be night,'
even darkness is not dark for you
and the night is as clear as the day.

Leader: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit

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

Everyone: The Lord who is all-powerful will come from Sion to save his
people

SILENCE

Leader: About Sion I will not be silent until her Holy One shines forth
like light.

Everyone: For it was you who created my being,
knit me together in my mother's womb.
I thank you for the wonder of my being,
for the wonders of all your creation.

**Already you knew my soul,
my body held no secret from you
when I was being fashioned in secret**

And moulded in the depths of the earth.

Your eyes saw all my actions,
they were all of them written in your book;
every one of my days was decreed
before one of them came into being.

**To me, how mysterious your thoughts,
the sum of them not to be numbered!
If I count them, they are more than the sand;
to finish, I must be eternal, like you.**

O search me, God, and know my heart.
O test me and know my thoughts.
See that I follow not the wrong path
and lead me in the path of life eternal.

Leader: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit

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

Everyone: About Sion I will not be silent until her Holy One shines forth
like light.

SILENCE

Leader: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me He sent me to bring the good
news to the poor

Everyone: Let us give thanks to the Father,
who has qualified us to share
in the inheritance of the saints in light.

He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness

**and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,
in whom we have redemption,
the forgiveness of sins.**

He is the image of the invisible God,
the firstborn of all creation,
for in him all things were created, in heaven and on
earth, visible and invisible.

**All things were created
through him and for him.
He is before all things,
and in him all things hold together.**

He is the head of the body, the Church;
he is the beginning,
the firstborn from the dead,
that in everything he might be pre-eminent.

**For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,
and through him to reconcile to himself all things,
whether on earth or in heaven,
making peace by the blood of his cross.**

Leader: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit

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

Everyone: The spirit of the Lord is upon me. He sent me to bring the
Good News to the poor.

SILENCE

GOSPEL READING AND REFLECTION: Luke 1:39-45

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? When I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

- What words or phrases in this passage do you like? What words disturb or console you?

Reread the Text

- Luke has filled this passage with sound and movement. What sounds do you notice in this passage? What movements are important?

Reread the Text

- What causes the child in Elizabeth's womb to leap for joy?

Discussion: We read the passage again and reflect on some of the following:

1. "*When I heard the sound of your greeting...*" What sounds from the world do we hear? What affect do they have on us?

2. "*...the child in my womb leaped for joy.*" Where have you felt unexpected and surprising joy?

3. “*When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting...*” God is working in the lives of these two women, Elizabeth and Mary. How is God working through the important women in our lives?

Prayers:

Leader: We have listened to the text and to our lives. What you do want to say to the Lord about what you have heard? What hope or prayer has this text stirred in your heart? I invite you to share any prayer of praise, thanksgiving or petition inspired by our reflection on the Gospel or by this Evening Prayer.

Short prayers from the group

Response: Father, may your Son bring us freedom.

Leader: Let us pray together in the words of Elizabeth’s greeting:

Everyone: Hail Mary, full of grace

Magnificat Antiphon

Leader: O Immanuel, you are our king and judge, the One whom the peoples await and their Saviour. O come and save us, Lord, our God.

Everyone: The Magnificat (see back cover)

Leader: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit

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

Everyone: O Immanuel, you are our king and judge, the One whom the peoples await and their Saviour. O come and save us, Lord, our God.

Concluding Prayer

Leader: Almighty God,
now that the birthday of your Son as man is drawing near,
we pray that your eternal Word,
who took flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary,
and came to dwell among women and men,
will show your unworthy people the greatness of his love and mercy.
We make this prayer through the same Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

Everyone: Amen.

Leader: The Lord bless us, and keep us from evil, and bring us to
everlasting life.

Everyone: Amen.

Advent Hymns

Hark! a herald voice is calling

1. Hark! a herald voice is calling;
'Christ is nigh!' it seems to say;
'Cast away the dreams of darkness,
waken, children of the day!'
2. Startled at the solemn warning,
let the earth-bound soul arise;
Christ her Sun, all sloth dispelling,
shines upon the morning skies.
3. Lo! the lamb so long expected,
comes with pardon down from heaven;
let us meet him with repentance,
pray that we may be forgiven.
4. So when next he comes with glory,
wrapping all the earth in fear,
may he then as our Defender
on the clouds of heav'n appear.
5. Honour, glory, praise and blessing,
to the Father and the Son,
with the everlasting Spirit,
while unending ages run.

O come, O Come Emmanuel

1. O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear:

Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

2. O come, thou Rod of Jesse, free
thine own from Satan's tyranny;

from depths of hell thy people save,
and give them vict'ry o'er the grave:

3. O come, thou dayspring, come and cheer
our spirits by thine advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadows put to flight:
4. O come, thou key of David, come
and open wide our heavenly home;
make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery:
5. O come, O come, thou lord of might,
who to thy tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times didst give the Law
in cloud and majesty and awe:

Creator of the stars at night

1. Creator of the stars of night
the people's everlasting light,
Redeemer, Saviour of us all
O hear your servants when they call.
2. As once through Mary's flesh you came
to save us from our sin and shame,
so now, Redeemer, by your grace,
come heal again our fallen race.
3. And when on that last judgement day
we rise to glory from decay,
then come again, O saviour blest,
and bring us to eternal rest.
4. To God the Father, God the Son,
and God the Spirit, three in one,
Praise, honour, might and glory be
from age to age eternally.

The Magnificat

My soul glorifies the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour.
He looks on his servant in her lowliness;
henceforth all ages will call me blessed.

The Almighty works marvels for me,
Holy his name!
His mercy is from age to age,
on those who fear him.

He puts forth his arm in strength
and scatters the proud-hearted,
He casts the mighty from their thrones
and raises the lowly.

He fills the starving with good things,
Sends the rich away empty.

He protects Israel, his servant,
remembering his mercy,
the mercy promised to our fathers,
to Abraham and his children for ever.