

Advent and Christmas Prayers

The feast day of your birth resembles You,
Lord
Because it brings joy to all humanity.
Old people and infants alike enjoy your day.
Your day is celebrated
from generation to generation.
Kings and emperors may pass away,
And the festivals to commemorate them soon
lapse.
But your festival
will be remembered until the end of time.
Your day is a means and a pledge of peace.
At Your birth heaven and earth were
reconciled,
Since you came from heaven to earth on that
day
You forgave our sins and wiped away our
guilt.
You gave us so many gifts on the day of your
birth:
A treasure chest of spiritual medicines for the
sick;
Spiritual light for the blind;
The cup of salvation for the thirsty;
The bread of life for the hungry.
In the winter when trees are bare,
You give us the most succulent spiritual fruit.
In the frost when the earth is barren,
You bring new hope to our souls.
In December when seeds are hidden in the
soil,
The staff of life springs forth from the virgin
womb
(St. Ephraim the Syrian (AD 306-373))

O sweet Child of Bethlehem,
grant that we may share with all our hearts
in this profound mystery of Christmas.
Put into the hearts of men and women this
peace
for which they sometimes seek so
desperately
and which you alone can give to them.
Help them to know one another better,
and to live as brothers and sisters,
children of the same Father.
Reveal to them also your beauty, holiness
and purity.
Awaken in their hearts
love and gratitude for your infinite goodness.

Join them all together in your love.
And give us your heavenly peace. Amen.
(Pope John XXIII)

Jesu, the Father's only Son,
whose death for all redemption won,
before the worlds, of God most high,
begotten all ineffably.

The Father's Light and Splendour Thou
their endless Hope to Thee that bow:
accept the prayers and praise today
that through the world Thy servants pay.

Salvation's author, call to mind
how, taking the form of humankind,
born of a Virgin undefiled,
Thou in man's flesh becamest a Child.

Thus testifies the present day
Through every year in long array,
that Thou, salvation's source alone
proceedest from the Father's Throne.

Whence sky, and stars, and sea's abyss,
and earth, and all that therein is,
shall still, with laud and carol meet,
the Author of thine Advent greet.

And we who, by Thy precious Blood
from sin redeemed, are marked for God,
on this, the day that saw Thy Birth,
sing the new song of ransomed earth.

All honour, laud, and glory be,
O Jesu, Virgin-born, to Thee;
whom with the Father we adore,
and Holy Ghost forevermore. Amen.
(6th Century Hymn; tr: John Mason Neale)

Let Your goodness Lord appear to us, that we
made in your image, conform ourselves to it.
In our own strength
we cannot imitate Your majesty, power, and
wonder
nor is it fitting for us to try.
But Your mercy reaches from the heavens
through the clouds to the earth below.
You have come to us as a small child,
but you have brought us the greatest of all
gifts,
the gift of eternal love

Caress us with Your tiny hands,
embrace us with Your tiny arms
and pierce our hearts with Your soft, sweet
cries.

(St. Bernard of Clairvaux - 1090-1153)

Loving Father, Help us remember the birth of
Jesus,
that we may share in the song of the angels,
the gladness of the shepherds,
and worship of the wise men.

Close the door of hate and open the door of
love all over the world. Let kindness come
with every gift and good desires with every
greeting. Deliver us from evil by the blessing
which Christ brings, and teach us to be merry
with clear hearts.

May the Christmas morning make us happy
to be thy children, and Christmas evening
bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts,
forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

(A Christmas Prayer by Robert Louis
Stevenson)

Give us, O God, the vision which can see
Your love in the world in spite of human
failure.

Give us the faith to trust Your goodness in
spite of our ignorance and weakness.
Give us the knowledge that we may continue
to pray with understanding hearts.
And show us what each one of us can do to
set forward the coming of the day of
universal peace.

(Frank Borman, Apollo 8 space mission,
1968)

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was filled with
sorrow at the tragic death of his wife in a fire
in 1861. The Civil War broke out the same
year, and it seemed this was an additional
punishment. Two years later, Longfellow was
again saddened to learn that his own son had
been seriously wounded in the Army of the
Potomac.

Sitting down to his desk, one Christmas Day,
he heard the church bells ringing. It was in
this setting that Longfellow wrote these lines:

I heard the bells on Christmas Day
Their old familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet
The words repeat
Of peace on earth, good will to men!

And thought how, as the day had come
The belfries of all Christendom
Had rolled along
The unbroken song
Of peace on earth, good will to men!

Till, ringing, singing on its way,
The world revolved from night to day,
A voice, a chime,
A chant sublime
Of peace on earth, good will to men!

Then from each black, accursed mouth
The cannon thundered in the South,
And with the sound
The carols drowned
Of peace on earth, good will to men!

It was as if an earthquake rent
The hearth-stones of a continent,
And made forlorn
The households born
Of peace on earth, good will to men!

And in despair I bowed my head;
"There is no peace on earth," I said;
"For hate is strong
And mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good will to men."

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep.
"God is not dead, nor doth he sleep!
The wrong shall fail,
The right prevail,
With peace on earth, good will to men!"

(Pulpit Helps, 12-92, p. 23)

Loving mother of the Redeemer,
gate of heaven, star of the sea,
assist your people who have fallen
yet strive to rise again.
To the wonderment of nature you bore your
Creator,
Yet remained a virgin after as before.
You who received Gabriel's joyful greeting,
have pity on us poor sinners.

(Marian Antiphon Traditionally Said from
Advent to Candlemas)

Let the just rejoice,
for their justifier is born.
Let the sick and infirm rejoice,
For their saviour is born.
Let the captives rejoice,
For their Redeemer is born.
Let slaves rejoice,
for their Master is born.
Let free men rejoice,
For their Liberator is born.
Let All Christians rejoice,
For Jesus Christ is born.
(St. Augustine of Hippo - AD 354-440)

Father
You make this holy night radiant
with the splendor of Jesus Christ our light
We welcome Him as Lord, true light of the
world.
Bring us to eternal joy in the kingdom of
heaven
where he lives and reigns with you and the
Holy Spirit
one God, for ever and ever.
(International Committee on English in the
Liturgy (ICEL))

God of love, Father of all,
the darkness that covered the earth
has given way to the bright dawn of your
Word made flesh.
Make us a people of this light.
Make us faithful to your Word
that we may bring your life to the waiting
world.
Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.
(International Committee on English in the
Liturgy (ICEL))

O God, who hast caused this holy night to
shine
with the illumination of the true Light:
Grant us, we beseech thee,
that as we have known the mystery of that
Light upon earth,
so may we also perfectly enjoy him in
heaven;
where with thee and the Holy Spirit
he liveth and reigneth, one God,
in glory everlasting. Amen
(1979 Book of Common Prayer)

Almighty God and Father of light,
a child is born to us and a Son is given to us.
Your eternal Word leaped down from heaven
in the silent watches of the night,
and now your Church is filled with wonder
at the nearness of her God.
Open our hearts to receive His life
and increase our vision with the rising of
dawn,
that our lives may be filled with His glory and
His peace,
who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
(International Committee on English in the
Liturgy (ICEL))

Your nativity, O Christ our God,
has shed the light of knowledge upon the
world.
Through it,
those who had been star-worshippers
learned through a star to worship you,
O Sun of Justice,
and to recognize in you the one who rises
and who comes from on high.
O Lord, glory to you!
(Feast of the Nativity Liturgy)

Lord God
we praise you for creating man,
and still more for restoring him in Christ.
Your Son shared our weakness:
may we share his glory,
for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy
Spirit, one God
for ever and ever. Amen.
(Liturgy of the Hours, Fridays in Advent)

The Great "O" Antiphons - seven brief
prayers that are traditionally chanted or sung
on successive evenings starting on December
17. The precise origin of these texts is
unknown. However, by the 8th and 9th
centuries, the church in Rome and monastic
communities throughout Western Europe
were using them at evening worship services
during the season of Advent.

December 17:
O Wisdom,
O Holy Word of God,
You govern all creation with your strong, yet

tender care.
Come, and show your people the way to salvation.

December 18:

O Sacred Lord of ancient Israel,
who showed yourself to Moses in the burning bush,
who gave him the holy law on Sinai mountain:
Come, stretch out your mighty hand to set us free

December 19:

O Flower of Jesse's stem,
You have been raised up as a sign for all peoples;
Kings stand silent in your presence;
the nations bow down in worship before you.
Come, let nothing keep you from coming to our aid

December 20:

O Key of David,
O Royal Power of Israel
Controlling at your will the gate of heaven:
Come, break down the prison walls of death
for those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death;
and lead your captive people into freedom

December 21:

O Radiant Dawn,
Splendor of eternal light,
Sun of justice:
Come, shine on those who dwell in darkness
and the shadow of death

December 22:

O King of all the nations,
the only joy of every human heart;
O Keystone of the mighty arch of man,
Come and save the creature you fashioned
from the dust

December 23:

O Emmanuel,
King and Lawgiver
Desire of the nations,
Saviour of all people,
Come and set us free, Lord, our God!
Catholic Prayer For Christ's Triple Coming

Lamb of God,
You once came to rid the world of sin;
cleansing me now from every stain of sin.
Lord, you came to save what was lost;

come once again with Your salvific power
so that those You redeemed will not be punished.

I have come to know You in faith;
may I have unending joy
when You come again in glory.

(New Saint Joseph People's Prayer Book)

Come, Sun and Saviour, to embrace Our gloomy world,
its weary race,
As groom to bride, as bride to groom:
The wedding chamber, Mary's womb.
At your great Name, O Jesus, now
All knees must bend, all hearts must bow;
All things on earth with one accord,
Like those in heaven, shall call you Lord.
Come in your holy might, we pray,
Redeem us for eternal day;
Defend us while we dwell below,
From all assaults of our dread foe.

(Advent Evening Hymn (8th Century))

Father, in the wilderness of the Jordan
you sent a messenger to prepare people's hearts
for the coming of your Son.
Help me to hear his words and repent of my sins,
so that I may clearly see the way to walk,
the truth to speak, and the life to live for Him,
our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

(Advent Prayer to be Freed from Sin and Death)

God our Father,
you loved the world so much
you gave your only Son to free us
from the ancient power of sin and death.
Help us who wait for his coming
and lead us to true liberty.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ,
your Son
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen
Liturgy of the Hours, Fridays in Advent

(Advent Prayer for Hope in Christ's Coming)

All-powerful God,
help us to look forward in hope
to the coming of our Savior.
May we live as he taught,
ready to welcome him with burning love and
faith.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ,
your Son
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy
Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen
(Liturgy of the Hours, Fridays in Advent)

Catholic Collect for the 1st Sunday in Advent

Stir up thy power, O Lord, and come,
that by thy protection we may be rescued
from the dangers that beset us through our
sins;
and be a Redeemer to deliver us;
Who livest and reignest with God the Father
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
ever one God, world without end.
**(May be said while lighting the first Advent
Candle)**

Catholic Collect for the 2nd Sunday of Advent

Stir up our hearts, O Lord,
to prepare the paths of thine Only-begotten
Son:
that we may worthily serve thee
with hearts purified by His coming:
Who livest and reignest with God the Father
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
ever one God, world without end. Amen.
**(Often said while lighting the second Advent
Candle)**

Catholic Collect for the 3rd Sunday in Advent

We beseech thee to listen to our prayers,
O Lord,
and by the grace of thy coming enlighten our
darkened minds:
Thou who livest and reignest with God the
Father
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God
forever and ever. Amen.
**(May be said while lighting the third advent
candle)**

Catholic Collect for the 4th Sunday in Advent

Pour forth thy power, O Lord, and come:
Assist us by that mighty power,
so that by thy grace and merciful kindness
we may swiftly receive the salvation that our
sins impede:
Who livest and reignest with thee
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
ever one God, world without end. Amen.
**(May be said while lighting the fourth Advent
Candle)**

Advent Prayer for Forgiveness and Mercy

Father,
We contemplate the birth of your Son.
He was born of the Virgin Mary
and came to live among us.
May we receive forgiveness and mercy
Through Our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy
Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

Liturgy of the Hours, Dec. 23rd

Advent Prayer to Follow God's Will

God of love and mercy,
help us to follow the example of Mary,
always ready to do your will.
At the message of an angel
she welcomed your eternal Son
and, filled with the light of your Spirit,
she became the temple of your Word,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy
Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
(Liturgy of the Hours, Dec. 20th)

**Opening Catholic Mass Prayer: Advent One
Father in heaven,**

our hearts desire the warmth of your love
and our minds are searching for the light of
your Word.
Increase our longing for Christ our Saviour
and give us the strength to grow in love,
that the dawn of his coming
may find us rejoicing in his presence
and welcoming the light of his truth.
We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord.
**(International Committee on English in the
Liturgy (ICEL))**

Advent Prayer to Jesus

You are our eternal salvation,
The unfailing light of the world.
Light everlasting,
You are truly our redemption.
Grieving that the human race was perishing
through the tempter's power,
without leaving the heights
You came to the depths in your loving
kindness.
Readily taking our humanity by Your gracious
will,
You saved all earthly creatures, long since
lost,
Restoring joy to the world.
Redeem our souls and bodies, O Christ,
and so possess us as Your shining dwellings.
By Your first coming, make us righteous;
At your second coming, set us free:
So that, when the world is filled with light
and you judge all things,
We may be clad in spotless robes
and follow in Your steps, O King,
Into the heavenly hall.
(Unknown Author, 10th century)

Alma Redemptoris Mater (Loving Mother of the Redeemer)

Loving mother of the Redeemer,
gate of heaven, star of the sea,
assist your people who have fallen
yet strive to rise again.
To the wonderment of nature you bore your
Creator,
Yet remained a virgin after as before.
You who received Gabriel's joyful greeting,
have pity on us poor sinners.
(Marian Antiphon Traditionally Said from
Advent to Candlemas)

Anglican Collect for First Sunday of Advent

Almighty God,
give us grace that we may cast away
the works of darkness, and put upon us the
armor of light,
now in the time of this mortal life
in which thy Son Jesus Christ came
to visit us in great humility;
that in the last day, when he shall come
again
in his glorious majesty to judge both the
quick and the dead,
we may rise to the life immortal;

through him who liveth and reigneth with
thee and the Holy Ghost,
one God, now and for ever.
(1979 Book of Common Prayer)

Anglican Collect for The Second Sunday of Advent

Merciful God,
who sent thy messengers the prophets to
preach repentance
and prepare the way for our salvation:
Give us grace to heed their warnings
and forsake our sins,
that we may greet with joy
the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer;
who liveth and reigneth with thee and the
Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
(1979 Book of Common Prayer)

Anglican Collect for the Third Sunday in Advent

Stir up thy power, O Lord,
and with great might come among us;
and, because we are sorely hindered by our
sins,
let thy bountiful grace and mercy speedily
help and deliver us;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost,
be honor and glory, world without end.
(1979 Book of Common Prayer)

Anglican Collect for the Fourth Sunday of Advent

Purify our conscience, Almighty God,
by your daily visitation, that Thy Son Jesus
Christ,
at his coming, may find in us a mansion
prepared for himself;
who liveth and reigneth with thee and the
Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
(1979 Book of Common Prayer)