



Sunday, November 30

FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

Marvel now, O heav'n and earth, that the Lord chose such a birth.

We begin our Advent by remembering that God moves toward us first. As much as we want to begin this season with a concerted effort to make room in our lives for Christ, we acknowledge that even this desire is a response to his presence stirring in our hearts.

Jesus is everything God wants to say to us, and through his birth, he tells us that *God comes to us*. Even in this moment as you read these words, God is reaching for you. You are here on this page with other believers because God sent his only Son for you in order to draw you near. The Lord of heaven and earth chose to enter our humanity as a trembling baby in Bethlehem, and he is here with us now as we begin this Advent journey together.

Prayer for the Morning

Lord Jesus, you came to reveal the fullness of God's love. As I begin this Advent, increase my awareness of your presence, for you are already here with me, drawing me to yourself. Jesus, Our Brother, be near me today.

Ponder for the Day

As I ponder the birth of Jesus, how might I draw near and share life with someone today?

Prayer for the Evening

Lord Jesus, you make your home in our humanity not to rule over us but to reign within us. Grant me perseverance and attentiveness this Advent season that I might find my home in you. Jesus, Our Brother, I marvel at your love for me.

To listen to "Savior of the Nations Come," scan the QR code or visit www.avemariapress.com/pages/away-in-a-manger-music.





Monday, December 1

FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

O wondrous Child . . . tho' by all the world disowned,
still to be in heav'n enthroned.

Not only does Jesus reveal that God comes to share life with us, but his appearance proves that God is willing to be rejected by humanity for the sake of love. God became human in Christ Jesus, knowing that he would be renounced by many. Such is the sign and wonder of God's love. And yet still he comes to us, relentlessly and passionately.

God knows that we are fallen and sinful and broken and imperfect, and these are the very reasons he came to live among us. God, in Jesus, reaches for us knowing our limitations, and in the mystery of his abundant and unending love, raises us up through them. What do we have to fear from him? What more could we ask?

Prayer for the Morning

Jesus, God-with-us, you give us all. Help me to step into your transformative love that I might reflect your presence to others today. Emmanuel, help me share your generosity.

Ponder for the Day

What are the habits through which you sometimes turn away from God's love? What can you do to change these?

Prayer for the Evening

Jesus, God-with-us, you pursue us despite our inadequacies. May my gratitude and wonder increase as I come to welcome your embrace. Emmanuel, enlarge my heart.



To listen to "Savior of the Nations Come," scan the QR code or visit



Tuesday, December 2

FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

Boundless shall thy kingdom be; when shall we its glories see?

We know the world is not right—that we're meant for more. We are here, praying through Advent, because we want to see God's glory more fully. We yearn for God's reign in the world and in our own hearts.

The Church gives us this season of preparation to change our vision—to train our eyes and hearts to recognize the ways God's kingdom is breaking forth in our lives. Yes, the kingdom of God will break through in glory at the end of time, but it is also happening now. God is waiting to meet us in the small and ordinary moments of our lives—even the ones that unfold today—for nothing is beyond God's reign.

Prayer for the Morning

O God, Ruler of All, you created us with a driving desire to seek you and the order you bring to the world. Increase my desire for you and hone my attentiveness that I might recognize you when you appear in the circumstances of my life. Almighty One, I trust in you.

Ponder for the Day

What is one small way in which I can further God's kingdom in the unfolding of my day?

Prayer for the Evening

God, Ruler of All, your kingdom is boundless. Reach into the darkest and most hidden corners of my life, and bring me peace and rest with the light of your love. Almighty One, I long to see your glory.



Wednesday, December 3

FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

Keep your lamps trimmed and burning; the day is drawing nigh.

In the parable of the ten virgins (Mt 25:1–13), Jesus invites us to imagine a group of bridesmaids who take their lamps and go out to wait for the bridegroom's arrival. Five bring oil for their lamps; five do not. When the bridegroom finally arrives, those who did not prepare resources to welcome him miss the feast. "Therefore, stay awake," Jesus tells us, "for you know neither the day nor the hour."

The tradition of African American spirituals has taken this call to "keep your lamps trimmed and burning" and created a song to encourage endurance and hope. This is a steady march born from a people who know suffering, and who also know how to wait in that darkness with confidence that light is coming. Let's bring that same steady confidence to our Advent journey today.

Prayer for the Morning

Lord Jesus, you come to us like daylight scattering darkness. Preserve me in hope and grant me confidence that you will break into my life like the morning sun. Jesus, help me stay alert to your presence today.

Ponder for the Day

How can I bring intentionality and preparation to my spiritual life so that my lamp stays trimmed and burning?

Prayer for the Evening

Lord Jesus, you come to bring us into the feast of God's kingdom. My heart is burning to welcome you into my life. Through my prayer, draw me closer to you. Jesus, Our Bridegroom, I wait for you.



To listen to "Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning," scan the QR



Thursday, December 4

FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

Children, don't get weary till your work is done.

We are only at the very start of our Advent journey and have a long way to go. There is much to do between now and Christmas, and we don't want to neglect what's most important: preparing to celebrate Jesus as God's love made flesh.

It is easy to get weary with all the extra tasks of this season that stack on top of daily life. Many of us are also carrying grief or wrestling with despair, and these burdens get magnified when the world tells us we should be feeling joy and holiday cheer.

Yet here we are, showing up to reflect and pray together with a song that is sturdy enough to have carried generations of people through hardship to hope. We may feel tired, but we're not weary, because Jesus promised to be with us in our togetherness.

Prayer for the Morning

God Our Father, you do not leave us to carry our burdens alone. Help me be faithful to the work I have today, and may the faith that you are with me keep me from growing weary. Heavenly Father, give me strength.

Ponder for the Day

Who else in my life might be carrying a burden in this season—and how might we walk together?

Prayer for the Evening

God Our Father, you sent your Son to walk with us through every darkness and bring us into life. Grant me perseverance and a steady heart that I might be faithful to my Advent preparation—and bring me true joy in our Christmas feast. Heavenly Father, give me hope.

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