

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 18, 2016



*Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord,
your grace into our hearts, that we, to whom
the Incarnation of Christ your Son was made known
by the message of an Angel, may by his Passion and Cross
be brought to the glory of his Resurrection.
Who live and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

Collect for the Fourth Sunday of Advent

Graduation is over and most of our students are gone. We know that during this year we are called to reflect on the gospel of Matthew. When we have the story of the Incarnation we see this through the eyes of Joseph rather than Mary. Like Joseph in the Old Testament, as the son of Jacob (Israel), much is revealed to Joseph through dreams. This is a reminder to each of us that we need to pay attention to what is happening in our dreams. The words of the angel, *“Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary, your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”*

These words are filled with much theology.

- † *Through the Old Testament prophecies, we are told that the Messiah will be born of the house of David.*
- † *Throughout all of Scripture we are directed not to be afraid.*
- † *Jewish marriages began through the espousal and when the home of the husband is completed he takes her into his home.*
- † *The conception of Jesus happened through the power of God, the Holy Spirit.*
- † *The name Jesus, means “God saves”.*

Having one more week of Advent, these truths are valuable for our growth in faith, as we pray and reflect on them. Furthermore, from last Saturday, December 17th, we are given the “O” Antiphons that date back to the eighth century, on which we may reflect and pray. They are the Antiphons that are used in the Liturgy of the Hours for the Magnificat and also used for the Gospel each day. They are drawn from the ancient biblical imagery of the Hebrew Testament (Old Testament). With our Jewish brothers and sisters, it points to the hope of the coming of the Messiah.

December 17

O Wisdom of our God Most High, guiding creation with power and love:
come to teach us the path of knowledge!



December 18

O Leader of the House of Israel, giver of the Law to Moses on Sinai:
come to rescue us with your mighty power!

December 19

O Root of Jesse’s stem, sign of God’s love for all his people:
come to save us without delay!

December 20

O Key of David, opening the gates of God’s eternal Kingdom:
come and free the prisoners of darkness!

December 21

O Radiant Dawn, splendor of eternal light, sun of justice:
come and shine on those who dwell in darkness
and in the shadow of death.

December 22

O King of all nations and keystone of the Church:
come and save man, whom you formed from the dust!

December 23

O Emmanuel, our King and Giver of Law:
come to save us, Lord our God!

—From *Catholic Household Blessings & Prayers*

The antiphons beg God with mounting impatience to come and save His people. The order of the antiphons climb climatically through our history of Redemption. In the first, *O Sapientia*, (Wisdom), we take a backward flight into the recesses of eternity to address Wisdom, the Word of God. In the second, *O Adonai*, (Leader), we have leaped from eternity to the time of Moses and the Law of Moses (about 1400 B.C.). In the third, *O Radix Jesse*, (Root of Jesse), we have come to the time when God was preparing the line of David (about 1100 B.C.). In the fourth, *O Clavis David*, (Key of David), we have come to the year 1000. In the fifth, *O Oriens* (Radiant Dawn), we see that the line of David is elevated so that the peoples may look on a rising star in the east, and hence in the sixth, *O Rex Gentium*, (King of all nations), we know that He is king of all the world of man. This brings us to the evening before the vigil, and before coming to the town limits of Bethlehem, we salute Him with the last Great O, *O Emmanuel, God-with-US* (from *He Cometh* by Fr. McGarry).

Lord, we walk in darkness, and our land is in gloom. As we struggle to welcome You, I am reminded of Thomas Merton's prayer: "I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. . . . Nor do I really know myself."

Lord, when David prayed, he questioned You. Let me do the same, for Merton's words fit me, as they do thousands of American Christians, anguished as myself.

Lord, what is the yoke that burdens us, that keeps us fearful and irascible? Is it jingoism? whiteness? property? Or is it simply unfaith? Smash our yoke.

Lord, when will we burn the boots that tramped in battle, and the cloaks that rolled in blood? When will we stop pulverizing those we see as enemies, stop arms sales to the poor, stop engineering doomsday weapons? War is death to others; spiritual death to us. Be life to us.

Lord, Isaiah called You Wonder-Counselor, peerless in Your wisdom and prudence. Why does our wisdom trade peace for comfort, why does our prudence oppress the weak? Convert us to true wisdom and prudence.

Lord, You are God-Hero—in You God and humanity met. Why do we fear You in ourselves; why do we shrink from Your summons to others? Help us to see You in the suffering. Lord, You are Father-Forever, devoted irrevocably to people. Why do we abandon people to specialists and bureaucrats, or to the sluggish impersonality of the State? Teach us compassion and service.

You are the Prince of Peace, the embodiment of reconciliation. Why is inner peace so elusive to us, community so strange, nonviolence so foreign? Why do we enthrone ourselves; why do we idolize the State? Give us Yourself; give us peace.

Lord, Your judgment is upon us because we do not accept Your justice. You judge us through the enemies, through poor and black people, through our control of half of the world's wealth, through our sterile, unhappy lives. Be justice to us.

Lord, You stood up in the synagogue of Nazareth to apply the words of Isaiah to Yourself (and to us). "The Spirit of the Lord has been given me, for he has anointed me. He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free, to proclaim the Lord's year of favor." (Luke 4: 18, 19; Isaiah 61: 1, 2)

Lord, why do we resist Your Spirit: why do we defile Your anointing? How can we announce Your good news to the poor when we don't believe it ourselves? How can we free captives when we are captive to delusion and indulgence? How can we free the downtrodden when our lives keep them downtrodden? How can we proclaim Your year of favor when we systematize war, bomb insanely, indict patriots, reward war criminals, jail resisters, reject amnesty, idolize power, and resist resistance as "self-righteous," "impractical" and "violent"?

Lord, will You help us to find room for You to banish the gloom and darkness in our hearts and in our land? "There shall be no harm or ruin on all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as water covers the sea." (Isaiah 119)

*"Lord, we have no idea where we are going. We do not see the road ahead of us. We cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do we really know ourselves."
"So be it. Come Lord Jesus!" (Revelation 22:20)*

Adapted from a prayer by Rev. Philip Berrigan, from the Federal Penitentiary, 1972

Kiernan	Babcock
Claire	Bradford
Anthony	Brechtling
Antonio	DiCicco
Kathleen	Draves
Vincent	Druschke
Kirk	D'Souza
David	Falish
Martin	Gargaro
Alex	Gill
Peter	Gorecki
Mitchel	Jacqmain
Peter	Kueffner
Hailey	LaFleur
Joseph	Lawinger
Luke	McCloskey
Tracy	Mulka
Megan	Rady
Kristina	Rushlau
Alec	Sauter
Anthony	Strzalkowski
David	Swanson
Brian	Szaroletta
Michael	Theoret
Brent	Vuglar
Joshua	Vandenhouten
Libby	Welton
Rachelle	Wiegand
Gabriel	Witner

*Congratulations
to our 2016
Fall Graduates.
Be assured
of our prayers.*

*God of joy and hope,
we thank you for this time of graduation.
Your spirit of wisdom
has empowered our hard work and discipline
in such a way that our hunger for learning
has been nourished with knowledge, discovery,
creativity, and determination.
As we prepare to walk across the stage
to receive our diplomas,
let us walk in prayerful gratitude
for the many blessings
that have made this moment real
and filled with great potential.
In gratitude, we pray for our families
and the many who have sacrificed
and worked to see us to this hopeful moment.
In gratitude,
we pray for the professors and administrators who have
challenged, cared, and crafted us
along this academic journey.
In gratitude,
we pray for fellow students who have taught us more
about friendship, collaboration, and sharing.
God, even as we have faced challenges
and accomplished much,
we understand that our lives move
into a new chapter
where there will be more challenges to face
and more will be demanded of us
in order to accomplish good things.
May your grace cover our anxieties and fears
so that we may stay encouraged about the future.
Give us patience and hope
to energize our search for work that is just
and makes proper use of our gifts.
Give us courage to face
the challenges of carving out a place in society where
we might live in peace, service, and gratitude.
Give us strength to resist
the temptations of greed, laziness, pride, and envy as we
strive to do and be our best.
May your spirit guide us as we unfold
the next chapters of our lives.
Help us to enliven hope in the world
and bring good things to Your Kingdom.
And, may this celebration be a reflection of the blessings
that we find in knowing and loving you.
For this is the day that the Lord has made.
We are glad and rejoice in it! Amen.
<http://bustedhalo.com/ministry-resources/a-prayer-for-college-graduates>*