

INTRODUCTORY RITES

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (Turn to the appropriate day)

GREETING

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

- 1 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit
be with you all.
And with your spirit.
- 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ.
And with your spirit.
- 3 The Lord be with you.
And with your spirit.

PENITENTIAL ACT

Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins,
and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries.

After a brief pause for silence, one of the following forms is used:

- 1 *I confess to almighty God
and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have greatly sinned,
in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done and in what I have failed to do,
(And, striking their breast, they say:)*

*through my fault, through my fault,
through my most grievous fault;
therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin,
all the Angels and Saints,
and you, my brothers and sisters,
to pray for me to the Lord our God.*

May almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us our sins,
and bring us to everlasting life.

Amen.

- ② Have mercy on us, O Lord.
For we have sinned against you.

Show us, O Lord, your mercy.
And grant us your salvation.

May almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us our sins,
and bring us to everlasting life.

Amen.

- ③ The celebrant makes the following or other invocations:

You were sent to heal the contrite of heart:
Lord, have mercy. **Or** Kyrie, eleison.
Lord, have mercy. Or Kyrie, eleison.

You came to call sinners:
Christ, have mercy. **Or** Christe, eleison.
Christ, have mercy. Or Christe, eleison.

You are seated at the right hand of the Father
to intercede for us:

Christ lights our darkness

Advent (literally, “at the coming”) prepares for the annual celebration of Jesus’ birth at Christmas and his revelation to the nations at Epiphany. The Church year moves in a cycle of promise–fulfillment–proclamation, often using the images of darkness and light to accentuate the movement. With Advent we enter the first part of the cycle—promise—as, in our northern hemisphere, the dark period of the solar year begins. God’s goodness gives us light, the light of the Messiah that dawns in the birth of Christ at Bethlehem and that will shine in its fullness at his coming again as King and Judge.

So in this Advent season as we begin a new Church year, we focus our attention on the demands of responding to the light of Jesus’ presence. We desire to let his vision and values enlighten us and transform the darkness of our lives so that we may become a light that will lead others to God.

The lectionary focus for this year on Matthew’s gospel is particularly suited to enhance our experience of enlightenment for following this way of commitment, conversion, and cooperation in the saving work of Jesus for our world today.

As we live through the seasons of the Church year, we will learn that the way of Christian discipleship always leads through the darkness of suffering to the experience of new life in Christ. Preparing the way is the first step to which our Advent experience is directed.

Praying and living the Advent season

An Advent wreath can help you and your household focus on waiting for Christ. Create a wreath from evergreen boughs and four candles (three purple and one rose or white for the joyful third week). Use the following format each week.

INVITATION TO PRAYER *As you light the candles (one for each week of Advent), invite all to share in the response.*

Leader: We look for light, and lo, darkness;
for brightness, but we walk in gloom! (*Isaiah 59:9*)

All: You, Lord, give light to my lamp;
you brighten the darkness about me. (*Psalms 18:28*)

SCRIPTURE READING *When the candles are lit, read aloud one of the Scripture readings from the day or Sunday. Either reflect quietly or invite each household member to respond to these questions:*

- How do I want Jesus to be my light this Advent (tonight)?
- How do the words of this reading help me to wait for Jesus to come?

CLOSING PRAYER (*adapted from Ephesians 5:1-2, 8-14*)

O God of light, help us be imitators of you and live in love.
For we were once darkness, but now we are light in the Lord.
Help us live as children of light,
for light produces every kind of goodness and truth.
Help us learn what is pleasing to the Lord.
We want to take no part in the works of darkness
but rather to expose them.
Christ will give us light! Amen.

November 29



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In this moment...

On the first Sunday of Advent, we as a Church enter a precious period of in-betweenness. It is a time of expectancy and longing, bated breath and watchful waiting. It is a time that calls us to explicitly reflect on the peculiarity of our position: our Lord has already come and we wait for him to come again. We return to the stories leading up to his birth each year, knowing that we are living in a kind of “already/not yet.” We know our Beloved and still we yearn to see his face.

In the gospel today, we are called to be watchful: “Be watchful. Be alert!” “You do not know when the time will come.” These

insistent passages call us to be attentive in our every moment. When we are alert, we become attuned to the vibrancy of all that surrounds us; any movement could signal the arrival of the Beloved. It’s a delightful kind of anticipation. Eighteenth-century Jesuit writer Jean Pierre de Caussade might invite us, in our anticipation, into what he called “the sacramentality of the present moment.” What if every moment were one in which we might meet our God? What might we notice, then? How might we act? Let us pray for the grace to be receptive to God in every moment.

■ KATE MCGEE

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (*Cf. Psalm 25 [24]:1-3*)

To you, I lift up my soul, O my God. In you, I have trusted; let me not be put to shame. Nor let my enemies exult over me; and let none who hope in you be put to shame.

INTRODUCTORY RITES (*page 10*)**COLLECT**

Grant your faithful, we pray, almighty God,
the resolve to run forth to meet your Christ
with righteous deeds at his coming,
so that, gathered at his right hand,
they may be worthy to possess the heavenly Kingdom.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

FIRST READING (*Isaiah 63:16b-17, 19b; 64:2-7*)

You, **LORD**,⁺ are our father,
our redeemer you are named forever.
Why do you let us wander, O **LORD**, from your ways,
and harden our hearts so that we fear you not?
Return for the sake of your servants,
the tribes of your heritage.
Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down,
with the mountains quaking before you,
while you wrought awesome deeds we could not hope for,
such as they had not heard of from of old.
No ear has ever heard, no eye ever seen, any God but you
doing such deeds for those who wait for him.
Would that you might meet us doing right,
that we were mindful of you in our ways!

Behold, you are angry, and we are sinful;
 all of us have become like unclean people,
 all our good deeds are like polluted rags;
 we have all withered like leaves,
 and our guilt carries us away like the wind.
 There is none who calls upon your name,
 who rouses himself to cling to you;
 for you have hidden your face from us
 and have delivered us up to our guilt.
 Yet, O LORD, you are our father;
 we are the clay and you the potter:
 we are all the work of your hands.
 The word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (*Psalms 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19*)

R Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall
 be saved.

O shepherd of Israel, hearken,
 from your throne upon the cherubim,* shine forth.
 Rouse your power,
 and come to save us. **R**
 Once again, O LORD of hosts,
 look down from heaven, and see;
 take care of this vine,
 and protect what your right hand has planted,
 the son of man whom you yourself made strong. **R**
 May your help be with the man of your right hand,
 with the son of man whom you yourself made strong.
 Then we will no more withdraw from you;
 give us new life, and we will call upon your name. **R**

SECOND READING (*1 Corinthians 1:3-9*)

Brothers and sisters: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I give thanks to my God always on your account for the grace of God bestowed on you in Christ Jesus, that in him you were enriched in every way, with all discourse and all knowledge, as the testimony to Christ was confirmed among you, so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will keep you firm to the end, ir-reproachable on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, and by him you were called to fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

The word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

ALLELUIA (*Psalm 85:8*)

Alleluia, alleluia. Show us, Lord, your love; and grant us your salvation. *Alleluia, alleluia.*

GOSPEL (*Mark 13:33-37*)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus said to his disciples: "Be watchful! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come. It is like a man traveling abroad. He leaves home and places his servants in charge, each with his own work, and orders the gatekeeper to be on the watch. Watch, therefore; you do not know when the lord of the house is coming, whether in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning. May he not come suddenly and find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to all: 'Watch!'"

The Gospel of the Lord. *Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*

PROFESSION OF FAITH (*page 13*)

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

PREPARATION OF GIFTS (*page 16*)

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Accept, we pray, O Lord, these offerings we make,
gathered from among your gifts to us,
and may what you grant us to celebrate devoutly here below
gain for us the prize of eternal redemption.
Through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

PREFACE (*Advent 1, page 17*)

• TAKING A CLOSER LOOK •

✦ **LORD** The New American Bible, used for our Sunday Mass readings, uses Lord in small capital letters to indicate the sacred name of God revealed to Moses and the Israelites—*Yahweh*. This choice is appropriate for two reasons. First, Lord has the same number of letters as God's sacred name. Since the Hebrew language wrote only the consonants and not the vowels, God's name was written: YHWH (in English). Since God's name was so sacred, the Jews did not speak it aloud but would instead say *Adonai*, the Hebrew word for Lord. In the Bible, when God is addressed as "Lord Yahweh" (*Adonai YHWH*), God is put in small capital letters. So, when we see Lord or God in small capital letters in the text, we know that the original word is Yahweh, the unique personal name by which God wanted to be known.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (*Psalm 85 [84]:13*)

The Lord will bestow his bounty, and our earth shall yield its increase.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May these mysteries, O Lord,
in which we have participated,
profit us, we pray,
for even now, as we walk amid passing things,
you teach us by them to love the things of heaven
and hold fast to what endures.
Through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

SOLEMN BLESSING: ADVENT (*Optional, page 57*)

DISMISSAL (*page 57*) ✦

• RESPONDING TO THE WORD •

Isaiah asks why God lets us wander, and he yearns for God's return.

➔ *Where has my spiritual wandering taken me this past year?*

Paul thanks God, who has given many spiritual gifts.

➔ *Which spiritual gift stands out for me recently?*

Jesus warns us to "watch" and be alert.

➔ *What makes me less attentive to God's presence than I want?*

Praying and Living the Eucharist

Praying with the Scriptures

The Bible's message is that God desires to be with us in our world for a relationship. God invites us into a relationship that will not end with death but will go on forever. Building and nurturing this relationship is what living with Christ is all about.

Each week our Sunday Scripture readings help us to deepen our relationship with Jesus. Through Scripture, we learn who God is and who we are. We also discover ways to grow in our relationship with God and with others. By reading, reflecting, and discussing the meaning of these readings, we find keys to imitating Jesus' example, making his vision and values our own and discovering what a relationship with God demands.

A EUCHARISTIC FORMAT: PATTERN FOR OUR SPIRITUALITY

In our Eucharist and also in our preparation for the Eucharist, we imitate Jesus' actions at the Last Supper—*take, bless, break, share*. Jesus' command to *do this in his memory* characterizes not just our worship but our very lives and mission as Christians.

Participating in the eucharistic liturgy and living eucharistic lives is our way of thanking Jesus and of celebrating and nurturing his continual presence with us, not only in church but in all the moments and situations of our daily lives. Through our deepening experience of Christ in word and sacrament, we announce and celebrate the good news of God's presence among us.

The elements of the simple eucharistic format—*take, bless, break,*

The Liturgical Calendar:

UNFOLDING THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST

One way the Church tells the story of God's saving activity is by its calendar. "Within the cycle of a year, she unfolds the whole mystery of Christ. Recalling thus the mysteries of redemption, the Church opens to the faithful the riches of her Lord's powers and mercies, so that they are in some way made present at all times, and the faithful are enabled to lay hold of them and become filled with saving grace" (Vatican II, *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, #102). During this yearly cycle, we remember our story and deepen our understanding of its meaning for us.

The Church year is anchored by two segments: **Advent–Christmas–Epiphany** and **Lent–Holy Week–Easter. Pentecost** and the **Sundays in Ordinary Time** fill out the rest of the year. The overall pattern highlights the transitions from darkness to light to manifestation, and from promise to fulfillment to proclamation.

ADVENT, CHRISTMAS, AND EPIPHANY

Advent, the time of preparation for Christmas, begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas. As December's darkness and short days permeate our lives, the Church proclaims that Christ comes as the light of the world. Christmas celebrates the mystery of God's incarnation—God-with-us as one of us in human flesh.

Christmas is followed by the Epiphany, celebrating the visit of the magi who traveled from afar to worship the babe in Bethlehem. They represent all the nations of the world searching for their savior. The revelation of God's light and the fulfillment of God's promise in Jesus lead to the proclamation of this good news. In the season after Epiphany, we share the news that God's love is available for every person, for all of creation!

A Treasury of Prayers

PRAYERS FROM THE BIBLE

The Lord's Prayer: found in Matthew 6:9-13 and in Luke 11:2-4, it is also used in our eucharistic liturgy (page 53)

Song of Moses: from Exodus 15 (page 307)

Paul's Prayers: from 1 Corinthians 1 (page 70), Ephesians 1 (page 441) and Romans 15 (page 90)

Canticle of Zechariah (Benedictus): Luke 1:68-79

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,
for he has visited
and brought redemption to his people.
He has raised up a horn for our salvation
within the house of David his servant,
even as he promised through the mouth
of his holy prophets from of old:
salvation from our enemies
and from the hand of all who hate us,
to show mercy to our fathers
and to be mindful of his holy covenant
and of the oath he swore to Abraham our father,
and to grant us that,
rescued from the hand of enemies,
without fear we might worship him
in holiness and righteousness