

Roman Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth



ADVENT 2020

Join Bishop Philip on an Advent journey. Prayers and readings for you and your family to use throughout Advent as we prepare to welcome Jesus Christ into our homes this Christmas.

AN ADVENT MESSAGE

From Bishop Philip



Advent is a time of hope. It is a time when we joyfully prepare for Christmas. It is a time when we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus at Christmas and when we renew our desire for His second coming at the end of time. True, Advent can be busy. There's food to order, gifts to buy, cards to send. But spiritually, what should we be doing during this Advent season? We should be praying to God for the theological gift of hope and the renewal of that gift in our lives. We often pray to God for deeper faith and deeper charity but how often do we pray for stronger hope, the hope that comes from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in our hearts? Hope is essential to the Christian life. It's hope that gives us joy, energy, enthusiasm; it makes us smile; it puts a spring in our step; it assures us that with

God the impossible can be possible, that obstacles can be overcome, that the gloom can be transformed into light. More, it is hope that enables us to glimpse the joy of our true home in heaven.

“Why are you cast down my soul? Hope in God; I will praise Him still, my Saviour and my God” (Psalm 41).

This Advent, let us pray for the gift of hope.

2020, this last year, has been like no other in living memory; our lives have changed forever. The coronavirus pandemic has resulted in many lives being lost, in much sickness, suffering and hardship. Yet amidst the devastation, the Lord did not desert us. Indeed, He has been very much with us. We know that thanks to His victory on the Cross, ‘nothing can come between us and the love of Christ’ even if we have to suffer many trials (Rom 8: 31-39). It is thanks to God's grace that during the pandemic we have seen many acts of goodness and courage, a veritable rekindling of the commandment ‘Love thy neighbour’. Many people have engaged in works of selfless generosity. I think especially of the key workers who have risked their own health in order to help protect, assist and support others in their need.

During this Year of the Word, I find joy in the beauty and poetry of the Advent readings, especially those from Prophet Isaiah. I cannot help but be lifted up - my heart rejoices - when I read and reflect on Isaiah's beautiful words. They were meant to give the Israelites encouragement in the midst of the struggles and difficulties of life. My wish is that during these Advent days, you too will take the time to listen and to reflect on these encouraging words of scripture, to allow them to take root in your own heart and mind. Sursum corda 'Lift up your hearts' is the invitation from the priest in every Mass. May Isaiah lift you up and replenish you with God's gift of hope.

Here are four of my favourite verses from Prophet Isaiah. You could pick one for each week of Advent to add to your personal prayer and reflection.

“They shall beat their swords into ploughshares
and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation;
neither shall they learn war any more” (Isaiah 2:4).

“There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse
and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit
and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him” (Isaiah 11: 1-2)

“In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord;
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level
and the rough places a plain;
and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
and all flesh shall see it together” (Isaiah 40:3-5)

“He will tend his flock like a shepherd;
he will gather the lambs in his arms;
he will carry them in his bosom
and gently lead those that are with young” (Isaiah 40:11)

I invite you to join me in keeping this holy season of Advent amidst all the chaos, and the crisis – for the Lord is coming to save us.

In Corde Iesu

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Philip". The lettering is cursive and fluid, with a cross-like symbol at the beginning of the word.

Cover: Guido Reni, *The Adoration of the Shepherds*, about 1640.

How to Make an Advent Wreath

You will need:

- A Styrofoam circle or an oasis ring backed with foam
- Some water
- A large plate or shallow bowl on which to stand your completed wreath
- Five candles (preferably three purple, one pink, one white)
- A candle holder for your central candle.
- 4 candle holders to be placed within the wreath (optional)
- Evergreen branches/leaves such as ivy, and holly
- Fir cones and ribbon can be used as trim but are not essential



1. Cover your working area; a plastic tablecloth and old newspapers works well.
2. Wreaths made with Oasis are best placed on a large plate or in a bowl.
3. Oasis will need to be soaked in warm water before you can insert the greenery. Follow the instructions on the packaging. For some tips on how to use oasis to make a wreath look at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y1qcYMtojds>. Note: brown oasis is for dried flowers/leaves and should NOT be soaked.
4. Mark out the where the candles will go before decorating the wreath. Imagining that the wreath is a compass, place one candle at north, one at south, one at east, and one at west. The fifth candle which will be lit on Christmas day will go in the centre of your wreath. For safety you will need either a candle holder, or a suitable jar that will hold the candle straight and secure.
5. Insert the shop bought candle holders, or cut a hole in the foam that your candle will fit snugly in. Should the hole be bigger than needed. Wrap the base of your candle with masking tape, so it fits snug and stands up straight.
6. Arrange the evergreens around the circle, attaching them to the Styrofoam with tape or wire. In the oasis push small groups of greenery until the oasis is covered. Remember to push the greenery of differing lengths in at an angle to the oasis, allowing some to droop forward and down, thus enabling all the oasis to be covered. Decorate with ribbons and fir cones if you want.
7. Whilst it might be tempting to wrap your ring in tinsel or similar remember it is highly flammable and therefore NOT a good combination with lit candles.
8. Once the wreath is covered in greenery insert the candles making sure they do not wobble and that their heads are above the greenery. If you want a few more tips before you get started then see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iq9mzyjfkvQ>



THE ADVENT WREATH

It's origin and symbolism

Ever since the 8th Century when St. Boniface first gave the wreath its Christian meaning, wreaths have been part of our Advent preparations. The circle of the wreath, which has no beginning or end, symbolises the eternity of God.

The ever-greens signifying life. Each of the four candles in the wreath represents one of the Sundays of Advent, and the fifth white candle in the centre represents the Light of the World, Christ. The purple candles represent the prayer, penance, preparation, and good works we are called to do during Advent. Their colour purple signifies the “royalty” of Jesus Christ. The pink candle, lit on the Third Sunday of Advent, reminds us to take time from our penance to rejoice in the fulfilled promises of God.

The actual light of the candles reminds us that Jesus comes into the darkness of our lives to bring newness, life, and hope. As the number of lit candles increase each Sunday bringing increasing levels of light into our homes, we are given a physical reminder of how we are drawing closer in our journey to our encounter with Jesus, our saviour. On Christmas day when we light all five candles, the dazzling brilliance of the fully lit wreath dramatically symbolises that Christ, the Light of the World, has arrived!



Catholic Digest, *Advent Wreath with Nativity.*

ADVENT WEEK 1

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Sunday 29th November 2020
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In the evening or once it is dark place your Advent wreath on a table and have the family gather around it. Lower or (if you can turn) off the lights to create an appropriate atmosphere for your prayers. Use these prayers, and readings to guide you as you begin your journey to welcome the Light of Christ into your home this Christmas.

One person begins your prayer by saying: This week we begin the season of Advent, when the days grow short and darkness closes in. We are preparing to celebrate at Christmas the birth of Jesus, who is the Light of the World. (Pause a few moments and then together pray the Sign of the Cross.) Lord God, bless this wreath and bless us as well. May this wreath remind us of the hope and joy that Jesus brings to the world. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **All: Amen.**

Light a single purple candle and sing the Chorus, Verse 1 and the Chorus of the Advent Hymn found on the back cover.

Pray Dear God, on this first Sunday in Advent, let this light shine brightly as the days grow shorter, so that we will be ready for your face to shine upon us at Christmas. In the Saviour's name we pray. Amen.

Read Mark 13:33-37. Jesus said to his disciples 'Be on guard, stay awake because you never know when the time will come. It is like a man travelling abroad: he has gone from home, and left his servants in charge, each with his own task; and he has told the door keeper to stay awake. So stay awake, because you do not know when the master of the house is coming, evening, midnight, cockcrow, dawn; if he comes unexpectedly, he must not find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Stay Awake!



Geertgen tot Sint Jans, *The Nativity at Night*, possibly about 1490.

Pause for a moment of reflection then offer some prayers of intercession these can be offered as exemptory prayers each in turn or as written here.

We pray that the hope of eternal life will strengthen and encourage those who are experiencing their own personal darkness. We pray that your light will shine upon them.

Lord, in your mercy...

All: Hear our prayer.

We pray for Pope Francis, Bishop Philip and all the clergy that as they support us in our time of need that they too will feel safe and secure.

Lord in your mercy...

All: Hear our prayer.

We pray for world leaders, and especially our Prime Minister that they will follow your light and be guided by the wisdom of the Holy Spirit as they make decisions that affect all our lives.

Lord, in your mercy...

All: Hear our prayer.

We pray for all those in our schools and parish communities who are sick or lonely or who need to know God's love that they will recognize your presence in the World and find comfort in doing so.

Lord, in your mercy...

All: Hear our prayer.

Pray together Hail Mary full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Final Prayer Jesus, as we wait for your coming, help us not to be afraid and to trust in you. As we gather round this wreath, we remember that you bring the light of hope into our lives. May your Word be always in our minds, on our lips, and in our hearts? Amen.

Conclude by singing together either the chorus of our Advent Hymn on the back cover, or the traditional Advent Hymn - O come O Come Emmanuel. (which can be found on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qcllZpnZPgo> the lyrics are on page 8.

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

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.

O come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free
Thine own from Satan's tyranny;
From depths of hell Thy people save,
And give them victory o'er the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Dayspring, from on high,
And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Key of David, come
And open wide our heav'nly home; Make
safe the way that leads on high, And
close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Adonai, Lord of might,
Who to Thy tribes, on Sinai's height,
In ancient times didst give the law
In cloud and majesty and awe.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.



Philippe de Champaigne,
The Dream of Saint Joseph, 1642-3.

ADVENT WEEK 1

Daily Prayers

Use these prayers to guide your reflections throughout the week.

Begin by making and praying the sign of the cross then lighting one purple candle. (*Remember to light the same candle as yesterday*). As you do so sing the Advent Hymn found on the back cover. This week sing the Chorus, Verse 1 and the Chorus.

Pray Jesus, you are light even in the darkest places. Help us to trust in you when we are lost or lonely. Shine hope into our hearts we pray. Amen.

Read Romans 15:13. May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Pray the Lords Prayer, Our Father

Then offer prayers of intercession

Lord, this is such a busy time, we have much to do preparing to celebrate Christmas and observing all the rules around Covid-19 we are not sure how we will be ready for the day of your coming. Help us to see what is important: to be who you want us to be, and to do what you would have us do.

Lord in your mercy.

All: Hear our prayer.

Final Prayer Jesus, as we wait for your coming, help us not to be afraid and to trust in you. As we gather round this candle, we remember that you bring the light of hope into our lives. May your Word be always in our minds, on our lips, and in our hearts? Amen.

Conclude by either singing a Chorus of our Advent Hymn, or the Hymn - O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, which can be found on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qcllZpnZPgo> the lyrics are on page 8.

ADVENT WEEK 2

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Sunday 6th December 2020
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Begin by praying the Sign of the Cross and then singing our Advent Hymn found on the back cover.

Chorus, Verse 1, Chorus, Verse 2 and the Chorus

Light two purple candles while saying

We light the first Advent candle to remind us to keep awake and be ready. (*Pause while the first candle is lit.*) We light the second Advent candle to remind us to change our ways.

Pray Merciful God, who sent the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, so that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer. Amen.

Read Mk 1:1-8. This is the beginning of the good news about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It is written in the book of the prophet Isaiah:

Look I am going to send my messenger before you.
He will prepare your way.
A voice cries in the wilderness:
Prepare a way for the Lord.
Make his paths straight,

and so it was that John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. All Judea and all the people of Jerusalem made their way to him, and as they were baptised by him in the river Jordan they confessed their sins. John wore a garment of camel skin, and he lived on locusts and wild honey. In the course of his preaching he said, "Someone is following me, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to kneel down and undo the strap of his sandals. I have baptised you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit."

Next page: Jan Gossaert,
The Adoration of the Kings, 1510-15.
Page 12: Workshop of Goossen
van der Weyden, *The Flight into Egypt*,
about 1516.

After a moment of reflection pray together the Lord's Prayer. Our Father who....

Then offer some prayers of intercession these can be offered as exemplary prayers each in turn or as written here.

We pray for the Church that guided by the Holy Spirit it will continue to prepare a way amongst its peoples so that they will be ready to greet you.

Lord, in your mercy...

All: Hear our prayer.

God, we carry many burdens and worries. Help us to hear this Advent your promise of salvation and rejoice in it.

Lord in your mercy...

All: Hear our Prayer.

Pray together Hail Mary full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Final Prayer Lord, tonight we have been reminded that you bring the light of service into our lives. May your Word be always demonstrated in our actions and in our minds, on our lips, and in our hearts. Amen.

Conclude tonight's prayers by either:

- Listening to the song Prepare ye the Way of the Lord on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qzLrs3eKbXk>
- Singing together a chorus of our Advent Hymn
- Singing/listening to O Come O Come Emmanuel see YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qcllZpnZPgo> the lyrics are on page 8.



ADVENT WEEK 2

Daily Prayers

Use these prayers to guide your reflections throughout the week.

Begin by making and praying the sign of the cross then lighting two purple candles. (*Remember to relight the same candles as yesterday*). As you do so sing the Advent Hymn found on the back cover. This week sing the Chorus, Verse 1, Chorus, Verse 2 and the Chorus.

Pray Jesus, you are light even in the darkest places. Help us to trust in you when we are lost or lonely. Shine hope into our hearts we pray. Amen.

Read John 1:14. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Pray the Lords Prayer, Our Father

Then offer prayers of intercession

E.g. We pray for families especially those who are separated and unable to be near each other. May they know your love and be strengthened by it so they can participate in this season with joy. Lord in your mercy... **All: Hear our prayer.**

Final Prayer Jesus, as we wait for your coming, help us not to be afraid and to trust in you. As we gather round this candle, we remember that you bring the light of hope into our lives. May your Word be always in our minds, on our lips, and in our hearts? Amen.

Conclude by either singing a Chorus of our Advent Hymn, or the Hymn - O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, which can be found on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qcllZpnZPgo> the lyrics are on page 8.



ADVENT WEEK 3

===== Gaudete Sunday 13th December =====

Begin by praying the Sign of the Cross and singing our Advent Hymn found on the back cover: Chorus, Verse 1, Chorus, Verse 2, Chorus, Verse 3 and the Chorus

Light two purple candles and one pink candle while saying We light the first to remind us to keep awake and be ready. (Pause) We light the second to remind us to change our ways. (Pause) We light the pink Advent candle to remind us of the Good News that Jesus Christ is on his way to greet us.

Pray Lord as we gather here tonight the light from our candles grows stronger and so too we pray will our relationship with you and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Read John 1:6-8, 19-28. God sent John as his messenger, to speak for the Light, so that everyone might believe through him that the Messiah was to arrive. The Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him who he was, he declared quite openly, “I am not the Christ.” “Well then,” they asked “Are you Elijah?” “I am not” he said. “Are you the Prophet?” he answered, “No.” So they said to him “Who are you? We must take back an answer to those who sent us. What have you to say about yourself?” So John said, “I am, as Isaiah prophesied:

A voice that cries in the wilderness: Make a straight way for the Lord.”

Sent by the Pharisees, they asked a further question, “Why are you baptising if you are not the Christ, and not Elijah, and not the prophet?” John replied “I baptise with water, but there stands among you—unknown to you—the one who is coming after me; and I am not fit to undo his sandal strap.” This happened at Bethany, on the far side of the Jordan where John was baptising.

Pause to reflect then pray together the Lords Prayer, Our Father

Offer your own prayers of intercession

E.g. Jesus, you are joy even in the saddest times. Help us to praise you when we are upset or grieving. Shine joy into our hearts we pray.

Lord in in your mercy...

All: Hear our Prayer. Amen.

Complete your prayers of intercession by praying together the Hail Mary, Hail Mary full of grace, The Lord is with thee....

Conclude by either singing a Chorus of our Advent Hymn, or by listening to the Kings Singers on YouTube sing Gaudete at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2KSxg9lj5r8>

ADVENT WEEK 3

Daily Prayers

Begin by praying the Sign of the Cross and singing our Advent Hymn found on the back cover Chorus, Verse 1, Chorus, Verse 2, Chorus, Verse 3, Chorus, Verse 4 and the Chorus

Light three candles (2 purple and 1 pink) while saying We light the first candle to remind us to keep awake and be ready. (Pause) We light the second to remind us to change our ways. (Pause) We light the third to remind us of the Good News that our saviour is near.

Pray Jesus, we gather here as a family to dedicate our lives to you, as John the Baptist did. Help us to know, love, and serve you. As we light our candles, we remember that you bring the light of joy into our lives. May your Word be always in our minds, on our lips, and in our hearts. Amen.

Read Luke 2:10. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.

After time to reflect Pray the Lords Prayer, Our Father

Then offer your prayers of intercession

E.g. Loving God, You have poured such love into your world. Show us how to help make it a more loving place.

Lord in your mercy.

All: Hear our prayer.

Finally pray together Hail Mary full of grace The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Conclude by singing together either the Chorus of our Advent Hymn on the back cover, Or the traditional Advent Hymn - O come O Come Emmanuel, see Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qcllZpnZPgo> (lyrics on page 8).

ADVENT WEEK 4

Sunday 20th December 2020

Begin by praying the Sign of the Cross and singing our Advent Hymn found on the back cover Chorus, Verse 1, Chorus, Verse 2, Chorus, Verse 3, Chorus, Verse 4 and the Chorus

Light four candles (3 purple and 1 pink) while saying We light the first to remind us to keep awake and be ready. (Pause) We light the second to remind us to change our ways. (Pause) We light the third candle to remind us of the Good News that our Saviour is near. (Pause) We light the fourth Advent candle to remind us that God is with us!

Pray Jesus, your mother, Mary, is “blessed among women.” We are happy that she said “Yes!” to being your mother, Mother of the Church and our mother. As we light this candle, we remember that you bring the light of love into our lives. May your Word be always in our minds, on our lips, and in our hearts. Amen.

Read Luke 1:26-38. The angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary. He went in and said to her, ‘Rejoice, so highly favoured! The Lord is with you.’ She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, but the angel said to her, ‘Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God’s favour. Listen! You are to conceive and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David; he will rule over the House of Jacob for ever and his reign will have no end.’ Mary said to the angel, ‘But how can this come about, since I am a virgin?’ ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you’ the angel answered, ‘and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. And so the child will be holy and will be called the Son of God. Know this too: your kinswoman Elizabeth has, in her old age, conceived a son, and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month, for nothing is impossible to God.’ ‘I am the handmaid of the Lord,’ said Mary, ‘let what you have said be done to me. And the angel left her.

Pause to reflect then pray the Lords Prayer,

Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Then offer your prayers of intercession

E.g. For all who are waiting for a birth of a child, may they be given patience and strength.

Lord in your mercy.

All: Hear our Prayer.

For all who work in maternity units and with parents, may they always recognise and cherish the gift of life.

Lord in your mercy.

All: Hear our Prayer.

For all mothers to be, may they safely deliver a healthy child to be numbered among your family, to serve you in all things, and to gain eternal life.

Lord in your mercy.

All: Hear our Prayer.

Pray together Hail Mary full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Conclude by singing together either the Chorus of our Advent Hymn on the back cover, Or the traditional Advent Hymn - O come O Come Emmanuel, see Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qcllZpnZPgo> (lyrics are on page 8). Or by listening to the hymn Angel Gabriel (most highly favoured Lady) on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yHuokdjT4UY>



ADVENT WEEK 4

Daily Prayers

During this last week of Advent our daily reading will be different each day, they will not always be the reading of the day. Please have available a bible from which to read the reading or use an online Bible such as Bible Gateway <https://www.biblegateway.com/> . Each day a different theme has been suggested for your prayers of intercession.

Begin by praying the Sign of the Cross and singing our Advent Hymn found on the back cover Chorus, Verse 1, Chorus, Verse 2, Chorus, Verse 3, Chorus, Verse 4 and the Chorus

Light four candles (3 purple and 1 pink) while saying

We light the first to remind us to keep awake and be ready. (Pause) We light the second to remind us to change our ways. (Pause) We light the third candle to remind us of the Good News that our Saviour is near. (Pause) We light the fourth Advent candle to remind us that God is with us!

Pray Jesus, in these last few days of our Advent journey when there is much to do finalising our arrangements to celebrate your birth help us to not loose sight of what is truly important, help us to find quite moments to ponder on the story of your birth and our relationship with you. Amen

Please read

Monday 21st December; Luke 1:39–45 (Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord?)

Tuesday 22nd December; Matthew 1:1b-24 (Joseph learns through an angel of Mary's conception) (Nb. Not the reading of the day.)

Wednesday 23rd December; Luke 2:1-5 (Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem) (Nb. Not the reading of the day.)

Thursday 24th December; Luke 1:67–79 (Zechariah prophesies the birth of the Messiah and the role his son will have in preparing the people to welcome Him.)

Pause for a moment of reflection after the reading of the day then pray together the Lords prayer Our Father followed by your own prayers of intercession.

Monday 21st December; Pray for an openness to the Word of God

E.g. For our openness to the Word, so that we may hear God speaking to us each day. Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

For all called to proclaim the word that they may communicate God's message to all. Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Tuesday 22nd December; Pray for a willingness to do God's Will and be obedient to his teaching

E.g. Lord Jesus Christ, we pray that You will help our family to do your will. We want to follow your teaching but sometimes find ourselves being distracted. Help us to discern your will and act accordingly. Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Wednesday 23rd December; Refugees

E.g. Lord, no one is a stranger to you and no one is ever far from your loving care. In your kindness watch over refugees and exiles, those separated from their loved ones, young people who are lost, and those who have left or run away from home. Bring them back safely to the place where they long to be and help us always to show your kindness to strangers and those in need. Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Thursday 24th December; Zechariah was afraid—so pray for those who are afraid.

E.g. Jesus, you are light even in the darkest places. Help us to trust in you when we are lost or lonely. Shine hope into our hearts we pray. Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Jesus, you are love even if we are afraid. Help us to pray to you when we are scared or fearful. Bring love into our hearts we pray. Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Finish your prayers of intercession by praying the Hail Mary....

Conclude your prayers by praying Lord, during this Advent journey we have with humble hearts approached and drawn near to you. We pray that with your help we will be open to acting upon your message. Help us as we go through the day, to be peacemakers, wise influencers, and doers of good. Lord we pray that through our actions we will help your light flood the world and that at all times you will keep us humble in what we do. In the name of the Father Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

CHRISTMAS DAY

Begin by praying the Sign of the cross and singing joyfully the whole of our Advent Hymn found on the back cover. While Lighting ALL five of the candles on the wreath.

Pray Bathed in this glorious light of our Advent Wreath we humbly recognise that as a helpless babe, Lord, you came into our world. That from the moment of your birth you experienced poverty, were hounded by others and suffered untold pain. Today we gather round our wreath, uniting ourselves with those who gathered at the foot of your crib, to welcome you into our lives and rejoice in your unconditional love. We love you Lord Jesus and pray that your steadfast love will shine brightly in us and through us, so that all may give you praise and glory. Amen.

Read Luke 2:8-20. The Birth of Jesus Christ is announced to the Shepherds who have been keeping watch and they visit his crib. NB not reading of the day.

After a moment of reflection pray together the Lords Prayer followed by some prayers of intercession

E.g Lord Jesus, you were born into an ordinary family: and so today we pray for families everywhere, but especially for those who are unhappy. We pray that they will know the love of their neighbour.

Lord, in your mercy.

All: Hear our prayer.

Lord Jesus, We pray for those in need: those who are ill, those who are feeling sad or lonely, those who are afraid, or grieving. We pray especially for.....
Let them know that you came here to be near them, and that you will never leave them.

Lord, in your mercy.

All: Hear our prayer.

Pray together Hail Mary full of grace

Finally pray Lord today our Advent journey is over and we pray that your Word will be always in our minds, on our lips, and in our hearts. In the Name of the Father Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Conclude by singing Away in a Manger see YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-NMJuH4-Zil>

Advent hymn

Sung to the tune of Christmas is coming by John L Bell

Chorus
Christmas is coming
the Church is glad to sing
and let the advent candles
brightly burn in a ring.

The first is for God’s promise
to put the wrong things right,
and bring to earth’s darkness
the hope of love and light.

Chorus

The second is for the Prophet
Who said that Christ would come.
With good news for many
And angry words for some.

Chorus

The third is for the Baptist,
Who cried ‘Prepare the way,
be ready for Jesus,
Both now and every day’

Chorus

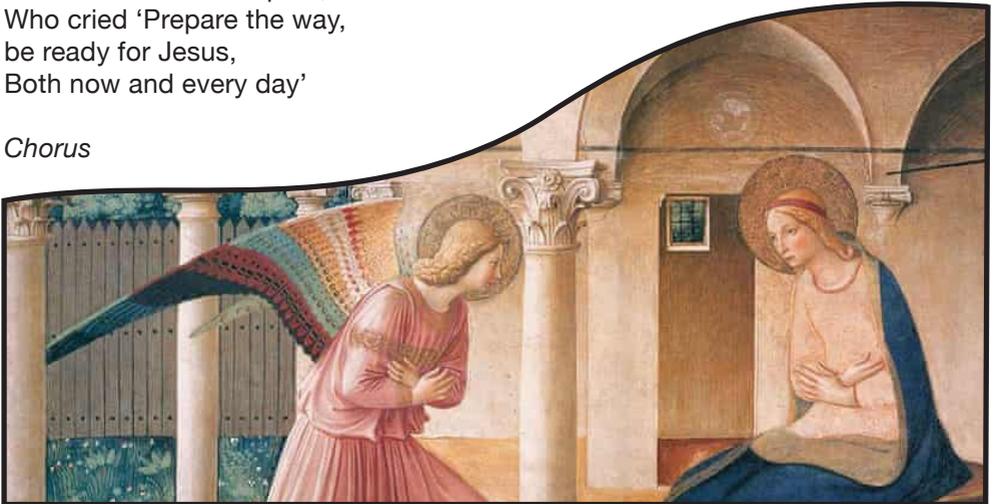
The fourth is for the virgin,
Who mothered God’s own Son,
And sang how God’s justice
Was meant for everyone.

Chorus

At last we light the candle,
Kept new for Christmas Day,
This shines bright for Jesus,
New born, and here to stay.

Final Chorus

Christ is among us
the candles in a ring
remind us that our saviour
will light up everything.



Fra Angelico, *Annunciation*, 1440-45.