

Prayers for Advent

The Season of Advent

OPENING PRAYER

The calendar of the Church year begins with Advent. Advent is the season of waiting for Jesus' birth. Have you ever waited with hope and joy along with a friend or family member who was expecting her first child? Mary was a little like that woman, but her wonder was even greater: an angel had announced that her child would be the Son of the Most High God. Mary expressed her great joy in the *Magnificat*, a hymn of praise found in the Gospel of Luke. We praise God, along with Mary, as we wait for the birth of the Savior of the world.

Let us pray:

We join together in praying Mary's hymn of praise in responsorial form. Our response will be "My soul rejoices in my God."

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord;
 my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
 for he has looked upon his lowly servant.
 From this day all generations will call me blessed: *R.*

The Almighty has done great things for me,
 and holy is his Name.

He has mercy on those who fear him
 in every generation. *R.*

He has filled the hungry with good things,
 and the rich he has sent away empty.

He has come to the help of his servant Israel
 for he has remembered his promise of mercy. *R.*

*(Lectionary for Mass, Third Sunday of Advent,
 Year B: Isaiah 61:10; Luke 1:46–48,49–50,53–54)*

Let us pray together for Mary's intercession:

Hail Mary . . .

CLOSING PRAYER

We often see images of Mary as Madonna: a young mother with a baby in her arms. But during Advent, we can picture her as a pregnant woman, waiting, like us, for Jesus to come into the world. In Advent, we wait for the season of Christmas and the birth of the Savior. We wait for Jesus to come more fully into our own lives. We also wait for the Lord's return, when he will fulfill God's plan once and for all. Saint Paul says that we are waiting for creation to "be set free from slavery to corruption and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God" (Romans 8:21). He goes on to say, "We know that all creation is groaning in labor pains even until now; and not only that, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, we also groan within ourselves as we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies" (8:22–23).

Let us pray:

God, we celebrate Advent each year, but we may not really understand what we are waiting for. We have a vague feeling that something more is coming: a deeper relationship with you, a greater faith in your promises, a firmer hope that all will be well. Bring all of these to birth in us. At the same time, we see that our world needs your justice and peace. We are not sure how it will happen, but we wait for you to bring your healing power into the whole world. Amen.