

Christmas Eve

Guided Daily Prayer • December 24, 2023

Opening Sentences:

We believe as Joseph did the message of your presence whispered by an angel, and offer our prayers for your world, confident of your care and mercy for all creation. ^{ff}

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered...All went to their own towns... Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child...she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. (Luke 2:1-7)



Praying Together:

Lord, open our lips.

Our mouth shall proclaim your praise. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Confession:*

Jesus, Emmanuel, you are coming again, and we are not ready:

We meant to build a royal nursery, but we find you in a stall. We came to sing you festive carols, but you listen to the song of doves. We want to bring you food and gifts, but you ask for our hearts and minds.

Forgive us for being distracted and dazzled by other lights.

Forgive us for false cheer when you are our only hope and joy. Forgive us for overlooking you among the poor and outcast. Come with us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel. Amen.

From Psalm 97:

The heavens proclaim his righteousness; and all the peoples behold his glory...Zion hears and is glad, and the towns of Judah rejoice...

For you, O Lord, are most high over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods.

[Silent Prayer; or Music may be listened to; or a Hymn is sung.]

Prayers of the People:*

God of Life...come to us with your power to change and heal. Make us new creations in Christ Jesus, ready to reveal your grace and truth.

Lord for your goodness and grace, we give you thanks and praise. [Silent Prayer]

Jesus our Brother, God's own Son...Bring your light to those in the shadow of death.

Bring your hope to those in despair. Bring your peace to those in trouble of any kind.

Lord for your goodness and grace, we give you thanks and praise. [Silent Prayer]

Holy Spirit, ever present Comforter and Guide: Fill us with your love...Bless our celebration of Christ's gracious coming; give us songs of praise that we may sing like the angels: "Glory to God in the highest heaven' peace and goodwill to all the earth."

Lord for your goodness and grace, we give you thanks and praise. [Silent Prayer]

We thank you, O God, that you make your home with us...Give us grace to welcome the Holy Child, born to reign in us today. Give us hope that we may show your glory to the nations. Give us joy that we may proclaim the name of Jesus, our risen Savior.

Lord for your goodness and grace, we give you thanks and praise. [Silent Prayer]

Redeeming God, hear us now as we pray together:

The Lord's 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. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Closing prayer:

As we close, O God, prepare us and equip us to share these glad tidings of great joy to all people! Glory to God in the highest! ***Amen***

^{ff} From Revised Common Lectionary Prayers, Consultation on Common Texts.

*Blair Gilmer Meeks, *Season of Light and Hope*, p. 36-39

Image Copley, John Singleton, 1738-1815. Study for the Head of the Virgin, from Art in the Christian Tradition, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN.

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