



PREPARE

Our Hearts

Praying through Advent with the Saints

INTRODUCTION

An opening prayer from one of the Advent Masses nicely focuses the Advent season in this way:

Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ever faithful to your promises and ever close to your church: the earth rejoices in hope of the Savior's coming and looks forward with longing to his return at the end of time. Prepare our hearts and remove the sadness that hinders us from feeling the joy and hope which his presence will bestow, for he is Lord for ever and ever.

The prayers in this booklet reflect the thoughts and desires of many different saints through the ages that illustrate the Advent themes noted in this Mass prayer—anticipation of his coming and the hope and joy that this presence will bestow.

So find a quiet time and silent place each day to take a few minutes to pray with these saints. We also add a related scripture verse for your further reflection. Their prayers are brief, but don't just stop there. As you pray their words and appreciate their spiritual insights, let them help you deepen your hope and joy as you discover God's growing presence in yourself and in your life.

—Steve Mueller, Editor

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT (JOHN 1:4-5)
JESUS, COME TO US NOW

Come, our Light, and illumine our darkness. Come, our Life, and raise us from death. Come, our Physician, and heal our wounds. Come, Flame of divine Love, and burn up our sins. Come, our King, sit upon the throne of our hearts and reign there.

—*St. Dimitri of Rostov*

MONDAY, WEEK 1 (ISAIAH 43:2)

BE WITH US

© Christ Jesus, when all is darkness and we feel our weakness and helplessness, give us the sense of your presence, your love and your strength. Help us to have perfect trust in your protecting love and strengthening power, so that nothing may frighten or worry us, for, living close to you, we shall see your hand, your purpose, your will through all things.

—*St. Ignatius of Loyola*

St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556) was a Spanish priest and theologian who founded the Society of Jesus. His spiritual exercises and emphasis on discernment continue to impact Catholic spirituality and education.



TUESDAY, WEEK 1 (PSALM 79:9)

LET ME NOT WANDER AWAY

Lord, I sometimes wander away from you, not because I am deliberately turning my back on you, but because of the inconstancy of my mind. I weaken in my intention to give my whole self to you. I fall back into thinking of myself as my own master. When I wander from you, my life becomes a burden, and within me I find nothing but darkness, fear and anxiety. So I come back to you and confess that I have sinned. Forgive me, Lord.

—*St. Aelred of Rievaulx*

WEDNESDAY, WEEK 1 (JOB 22:21)

LET ME COME CLOSER TO YOU

As I hope in you, O Lord, permit me to come closer to you, that my whole soul may do homage to the greatness of your majesty; that my heart, with its tenderest affections, may acknowledge your infinite love; that my memory may dwell on the admirable mysteries here renewed every day, and that the sacrifice of my whole being may accompany you.

—*St. Clare of Assisi*



St. Clare of Assisi (1194-1253) was an Italian nun and follower of St. Francis of Assisi. She founded the Order of Poor Ladies and was known for her devotion, humility, and dedication to a life of poverty.

THURSDAY, WEEK 1 (PSALM 69:6)

GIVE US HOPE

Most high, glorious God, enlighten the darkness of our minds. Give us a right faith a firm hope and perfect love so that we may always and in all things act according to your perfect will.

—*St. Francis of Assisi*

St. Francis of Assisi (1182-1226) was an Italian friar and the founder of the Franciscan Order. Renouncing wealth, he lived a life of poverty, preaching love, simplicity, and harmony with nature.



FRIDAY, WEEK 1 (COLOSSIANS 2:2-3)

YOU ARE EVERYTHING

Spirit of truth, you are the reward to the saints, the comforter of souls, light in the darkness, riches to the poor, treasure to lovers, food for the hungry, comfort to the wanderer. To sum up, you are the one in whom all treasures are contained.

—*St. Mary Magdalene de'Pazzi*

SATURDAY, WEEK 1 (I COR 6:19)

COME INTO MY HEART

Jesus, I believe you are present in the Blessed Sacrament. I love you above all things and I desire you in my soul. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come

at least spiritually into my heart. As though you were already there, I embrace you and unite myself wholly to you; permit not that I should ever be separated from you.

—*St. Alphonsus Liguori*

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT (PSALM 102:2)

LOOK ON US, JESUS

Look on us, Jesus, and let all the darkness of our souls disappear before the beams of your brightness. Fill us with your holy love, and open to us the treasures of your wisdom. You know all our desires, so bring to perfection what you have started, and what the Holy Spirit has awakened us to ask in prayer. We seek your face. Turn your face to us and show us your glory. Then our longing will be satisfied and our peace will be perfect.

—*St. Augustine of Hippo*



St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430) was an influential theologian and bishop. His writings, including *Confessions* and *City of God*, continue to shape Christian thought with his exploration of faith, grace, and the nature of evil.

MONDAY, WEEK 2 (PSALM 33:22)

SUSTAIN ME IN HOPE

I know too well that I am weak and changeable. I know the power of temptation against the strongest virtue.

While I hope in you, I am sheltered from all misfortune, and I am sure that my trust shall endure, for I rely upon you to sustain this unfailing hope.

—*St. Claude de la Colombière*

TUESDAY, WEEK 2 (MATTHEW 11:28)

LET ME REST IN YOU

Jesus, only Friend whom I love. To ravish my heart, you became human. You shed your blood, what a supreme mystery! And you still live for me on the altar. If I cannot see the brilliance of your face or hear your sweet voice, I can live by your grace, I can rest on your Sacred Heart!

—*St. Thérèse of Lisieux*

St. Thérèse of Lisieux (1873-1897) was a French Carmelite nun. Known as the “Little Flower,” she emphasized the simplicity of her approach to spiritual life. Pope Pius X called her “the greatest saint of modern times”



WEDNESDAY, WEEK 2 (PSALM 119:174)

WE LONG FOR YOU CONSTANTLY

Ⓞ eternal God, light surpassing all other light! O Fire, surpassing every fire. You consume whatever sin and selfishness you find in us. Yet your consuming does not distress us, but fills us with insatiable love, for though you satisfy us, we are never sated, but long for you constantly.

The more we possess you, the more we seek you, and the more we seek and desire you, the more we find and enjoy you, Eternal Fire and Abyss of Love.

—*St. Catherine of Siena*

THURSDAY, WEEK 2 (LUKE 1:78-79)

RENEW YOUR GIFT OF HOPE

☉ Christ, our Morning Star, Splendor of Light Eternal, shining with the glory of the rainbow, come and waken us from the grayness of our apathy and renew in us your gift of hope. Bring me into your presence, that I may listen to your voice, which is the source of all wisdom, and watch your face forever.

—*St. Bede the Venerable*



St. Bede the Venerable (673-735) was an English monk, theologian, and historian. His most famous work, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, is a valuable source for understanding early Christianity in Britain.

FRIDAY, WEEK 2 (PSALM 46:1)

YOU ARE OUR REFUGE

Eternal God, the refuge of all your children, in our weakness, you are our strength, in our darkness, you are our light, in our sorrow, you are our comfort and peace. May we always live in your presence, and serve you in our daily lives.

—*St. Boniface*

SATURDAY, WEEK 2 (PSALM 42:11)

IN YOU ALONE I HOPE

In you, O Lord Jesus, have I hoped; let me not be confounded forever. You alone are good. You alone are powerful. You alone are eternal. To you alone be honor and glory, love and thanksgiving forever and ever.

—*St. Peter Julian Eymard*

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT (1 JOHN 3:16)

HELP US UNDERSTAND YOUR MYSTERY

You who are most high, make us capable of understanding your amazing love and the wonderful things you have done for us. Help us understand the mystery of your incarnation. Blessed are you, O Lord, for coming to earth as a man. You were born that you might die, and in dying that you might procure our salvation. O marvelous and indescribable love!

—*St. Angela of Foligno*

St. Angela of Foligno (1248-1309) was an Italian mystic and Franciscan tertiary. Her spiritual writings, including *The Book of Divine Consolation*, reflect her deep experiences of divine love and union with God.



MONDAY, WEEK 3 (JOHN 13:14-16)

MAKE US MORE LIKE JESUS

God, make us more like Jesus. Help us to bear difficulty, pain, disappointment and sorrow knowing that in your perfect working and design you can use such bitter experiences to shape our characters and make us more like Christ. We look with hope for that day when we shall be wholly like Christ, because we shall see him as he is.

—*St. Ignatius of Antioch*

TUESDAY, WEEK 3 (SIRACH 24:19-22)

SATISFY OUR HUNGER FOR YOU

My Lord and my God, the words of your Spirit are laden with delights. As often as I hear them, my soul seems to absorb them and they enter the heart of my body like the most delicious food, bringing unbounded joy and unspeakable comfort. After hearing your words, I remain both satisfied and hungry—satisfied, for I desire nothing else, but hungry for I crave more of your words.

—*St. Bridget of Sweden*



St. Bridget of Sweden (1303-1373) was a Swedish mystic, visionary, and founder of the Bridgettine Order. Her revelations and writings, such as *Revelations of St. Bridget*, are esteemed for their spiritual insight and devotion.

WEDNESDAY, WEEK 3 (EZEKIEL 36:26)

GIVE ME A NEW HEART

© Lord, you have mercy on all, take away from me my sins, and mercifully set me ablaze with the fire of your Holy Spirit. Take away from me the heart of stone, and give me a human heart, a heart to love and adore you, a heart to delight in you, to follow and enjoy you, for Christ's sake.
—*St. Ambrose*

THURSDAY, WEEK 3 (JOHN 20:21)

HELP US BRING YOU TO OTHERS

*M*ake us worthy, Lord, to serve our fellow human beings throughout the world who live and die in poverty and hunger. Give them through our hands this day their daily bread, and by our understanding love, give peace and joy.

—*St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta*

St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta (1910-1997) was an Albanian-Indian nun and missionary. Devoted to serving the poor, she founded the Missionaries of Charity, inspiring countless individuals with her selfless love and compassion.



FRIDAY, WEEK 3 (JEREMIAH 10:23-24)

DIRECT OUR STEPS

*H*ere we are in front of you, Holy Spirit. We feel the burden of our infirmities, but we are united all together

in your name: come to us, help us, enter into our hearts: teach us what we should do, the path to follow, do for us what you ask us to do. Be the only one to propose and guide our decisions so that all we do may be in harmony with you.

—*St. Isidore of Seville*

SATURDAY, WEEK 3 (PSALM 150:4)

SHOW YOURSELF IN OUR HECTIC LIVES

How is it, my God, that you have given me this hectic busy life when I have so little time to enjoy your presence. I know that you are constantly beside me, yet I am usually so busy that I ignore you. If you want me to remain so busy, please force me to think about and love you even in the midst of such hectic activity.

—*St. Teresa of Avila*



St. Teresa of Avila (1515-1582) was a Spanish mystic, writer, and reformer. Known for her spiritual writings, she revitalized the Carmelite Order and emphasized the importance of deep prayer and contemplation.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT (PSALM 27:7-9)

TEACH US YOUR DANCE

I cannot dance, O Lord, unless you lead me. If it is your will, I can leap with joy. But you must show me how to dance and sing by dancing and singing yourself! With you

I leap towards love, and from love I will leap to truth, and from truth I will leap to joy, and then I shall leap beyond all human senses. There I will remain and dance for evermore!

—*St. Mechtild of Magdeburg*

MONDAY, CHRISTMAS WEEK (JOHN 1:14)

LET ME FIND YOU

Lord, as I read the psalms let me hear you singing. As I read your words, let me hear you speaking. As I reflect on each page, let me see your image. As I seek to put your precepts into practice, let my heart be filled with joy.

—*St. Gregory Nazianzen*

St. Gregory Nazianzen (329-389) was a theologian, archbishop, and Doctor of the Church. His eloquent sermons and theological writings, such as *The Five Theological Orations*, greatly influenced the development of Christian doctrine.



TUESDAY, CHRISTMAS WEEK (PSALM 40:16)

BLESSED ARE YOU WHO BECAME HUMAN

© Lord Jesus Christ, make me worthy to understand the profound mystery of your holy incarnation, which you have worked for our sake and for our salvation. Truly there is nothing so great and wonderful as this, that you, my God, should become a creature so that we could become like God. You have humbled yourself and made

yourself small, that we might be made mighty. Blessed are you, O Lord, who came to earth as one of us.

—*St. Angela of Foligno*

WEDNESDAY CHRISTMAS WEEK (ROMANS 15:13)

GIVE PEACE TO ALL PEOPLES

Let all nations come to know you, the one God, with your Son Jesus Christ, and us your people. Help us walk in holiness of heart and do what is good and pleasing in your eyes. Let your face shine on us and grant us every good in peace, protect us by your powerful hand, and deliver us from every evil. Grant us, and all who dwell on this earth, peace and harmony.

—*Pope St. Clement I*



Pope St. Clement I (1st century AD) was an early Christian leader and the fourth Pope of Rome. He is known for his pastoral letters and promoting unity and order within the Church.

THURSDAY, CHRISTMAS WEEK (ISAIAH 9:6)

IN YOUR WEAKNESS IS MY STRENGTH

© Lord Jesus, I will embrace you who became a little child for me. In my weakness, I clasp you who became weak for me. A mere human, I embrace God made human, the God who became a person as poor as I am. I embrace you Lord, because your lowly state is my greatness, and your

weakness is my strength. The foolishness of God is my wisdom.
—*St. Aelred of Rievaulx*

FRIDAY, CHRISTMAS WEEK (MATTHEW 1:23)

STAY WITH US

Lord Jesus, who was born for us in a stable, lived for us a life of pain and sorrow, and died for us upon a cross. Dear Savior, leave us not, forsake us not. We thirst for you, fountain of living water. Our days pass quickly along, soon all will be consummated for us. To your hands we commend our spirits, now and forever.

—*St. Elizabeth Ann Seton*

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton (1774-1821) was the first native-born American saint. She founded the Sisters of Charity and established the first Catholic parochial school system in the United States. Her life exemplified dedication to education and service to the poor.



SATURDAY, CHRISTMAS WEEK (1 CORINTHIANS 3:16)

LIVE IN MY HEART

Here is my heart, O God, here it is with all its secrets. Look into my thoughts, O my hope, and take away all my wrong feelings. Let my eyes be ever on you and release my feet from the snare. I ask you to live with me, to reign in me, to make this heart of mine a holy temple, a fit dwelling for your divine majesty.

—*St. Augustine of Hippo*

CHRISTMAS DAY (PHILIPPIANS 4:5-7)

SHARING IN THE MYSTERY OF CHRISTMAS

Child of Bethlehem, grant that we may share with all our hearts in this profound mystery of Christmas. Put into our hearts the peace which we sometimes seek so desperately and which you alone can give. Help us know one another better and live as brothers and sisters, children of the same Father. Reveal to us your beauty, holiness and purity. Awaken in our hearts love and gratitude for your infinite goodness. Join us together in your love, and give us your heavenly peace.

—*Pope St. John XXIII*



Pope St. John XXIII (1881-1963) was the 261st Pope of the Catholic Church. Known for his efforts to promote dialogue and reconciliation, he convened the historic Second Vatican Council, ushering in significant reforms within the Church.