

ADVENT PRAYER CALENDAR 2022

Find some quiet space and time each day – five or ten minutes is enough – make the Sign of the Cross, read the short passage and simply think. Let your mind wander through the words you have read, thinking of what they say to you, how they awaken a response in your mind and heart. Don't worry if your mind wanders – simply read the passage again, and draw your mind back to God.

At the end say this prayer and then continue on your day!

“Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end, Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!”

	WEEK ONE	WEEK TWO	WEEK THREE	WEEK FOUR
Sunday	<p>27th November FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT</p> <p>“You must wake up now: our salvation is even nearer than it was when we were converted.” <i>Romans 13</i></p>	<p>4th December SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT</p> <p>“John the Baptist preached in the wilderness: ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.’” <i>Matthew 3</i></p>	<p>11th December GAUDETE SUNDAY</p> <p>“The eyes of the blind shall be opened, the ears of the deaf unsealed, the lame shall leap like a deer.” <i>Isaiah 35</i></p>	<p>18th December FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT</p> <p>“The Lord will give you a sign: the maiden is with child and will give birth to a son, whom she will call Emmanuel, which means ‘God-is-with-us’.” <i>Isaiah 7</i></p>
Monday	<p>28th November</p> <p>“Over all, the glory of the Lord will be a canopy and a tent, to give shade by day from the heat, refuge and shelter from the storm and the rain.” <i>Isaiah 2</i></p>	<p>5th December</p> <p>“Sing a new song to the Lord for he has worked wonders. His right hand and his holy arm have brought salvation.” <i>Psalms 97</i></p>	<p>12th December <i>Our Lady of Guadalupe</i></p> <p>“I see him – but not in the present, I behold him – but not close at hand: a star from Jacob takes the leadership, a sceptre arises from Israel.” <i>Numbers 24</i></p>	<p>19th December O RADIX IESSE</p> <p>“O Root of Jesse, set up as a sign to the peoples, come to save us and delay no more.”</p>
Tuesday	<p>29th November</p> <p>“The wolf lives with the lamb, the panther lies down with the kid ... the cow and the bear make friends, their young lie down together.” <i>Isaiah 11</i></p>	<p>6th December <i>Saint Nicholas</i></p> <p>“He is like a shepherd feeding his flock, gathering lambs in his arms, and leading to their rest the mother ewes.” <i>Isaiah 40</i></p>	<p>13th December <i>Saint Lucy</i></p> <p>“In your midst I will leave a humble and lowly people, and those left in Israel will seek refuge in the name of the Lord.” <i>Zephaniah 3</i></p>	<p>20th December O CLAVIS DAVID</p> <p>“O Key of David, who open the gates of the eternal kingdom, come to liberate from prison the captive who lives in darkness.”</p>
Wednesday	<p>30th November <i>Saint Andrew</i></p> <p>“The Lord God will wipe away the tears from every cheek. We exult and rejoice that he has saved us.” <i>Isaiah 25</i></p>	<p>7th December <i>Saint Ambrose of Milan</i></p> <p>“Jesus exclaimed: ‘Come to me, all you who labour and are heavy burdened, and I will give you rest.’” <i>Matthew 11</i></p>	<p>14th December <i>Saint John of the Cross</i></p> <p>“Send victory like a dew, you heavens, and let the clouds rain it down!” <i>Isaiah 45</i></p>	<p>21st December O ORIENS</p> <p>“O Morning Star, radiance of eternal light, sun of justice, come and enlighten those who live in darkness and in the shadow of death.”</p>
Thursday	<p>1st December</p> <p>“Jesus said: ‘Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a sensible person who built their house on rock.’” <i>Matthew 7</i></p>	<p>8th December <i>The Immaculate Conception</i></p> <p>“I, the Lord your God, I am holding you by the right hand; I tell you ‘Do not be afraid, I will help you.’” <i>Isaiah 41</i></p>	<p>15th December</p> <p>“See, I am going to send my messenger before you: he will prepare the way before you.” <i>Luke 7</i></p>	<p>22nd December O REX GENTIUM</p> <p>“O King of the peoples and cornerstone of the Church, come and save humanity, whom you made from the dust of the earth.”</p>
Friday	<p>2nd December</p> <p>“The Lord is my light and my help; whom shall I fear? I am sure I shall see the Lord’s goodness in the land of the living.” <i>Psalms 26</i></p>	<p>9th December <i>Saint Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin</i></p> <p>“If only you had been alert to my commandments, your happiness would have been like a river, your integrity like the waves of the sea.” <i>Isaiah 48</i></p>	<p>16th December</p> <p>“Let the nations be glad and exult, for you rule the world with justice, you guide the nations on earth.” <i>Psalms 66</i></p>	<p>23rd December O EMMANUEL</p> <p>“O Emmanuel, our King and lawgiver, come and save us, Lord our God.”</p>
Saturday	<p>3rd December <i>Saint Francis Xavier</i></p> <p>“People of Zion, you will live in Jerusalem and weep no more. He will be gracious to you when he hears your cry.” <i>Isaiah 30</i></p>	<p>10th December <i>Our Lady of Loreto</i></p> <p>“We shall never forsake you again: give us life, that we may call upon your name.” <i>Psalms 79</i></p>	<p>17th December O SAPIENTIA</p> <p>“O Wisdom of the Most High, ordering all things with strength and gentleness, come and teach us the way of truth.”</p>	<p>24th December CHRISTMAS EVE</p> <p>“Tomorrow there will be an end to the sin of the world, and the saviour of the world will be our King!”</p>

Make Room at the Inn – an Advent Reflection

Recently I came across an American TV series called “Hoarders”. It deals, in a remarkably compassionate way, with the psychological problem of hoarding. This is not just keeping a few boxes of bits and pieces under the stairs or in the garage, but a real mental illness, where sufferers are unable to part with anything, resulting in all the rooms of their homes being filled, floor to ceiling, with boxes, bags and piles of all sorts of items. One of the problems that flows from this situation is alienation of family and friends: often the children and grandchildren of sufferers are unable to call round, simply because there is no room in the house for anyone to visit or stay.

It was at this point that a familiar scriptural phrase popped into my head: “... *because there was no room for them at the inn.*” In the chaos of the emperor’s census, Bethlehem was packed with people, and when Joseph and Mary arrived there, despite their desperate need as the birth of the child was fast approaching, there was literally no room for them.

The combination of these two thoughts led me to think about what Advent is for. We are told that it is a season of preparation and hope – not for the birth of Jesus, which is something that has already happened (we don’t look forward to things that happened in the past!) – but for his return, whether that is at the end of time, at the end of our lives, when we receive Holy Communion, or in the normal daily encounters that we have in our prayer, worship and acts of charity. And the question that posed itself to me was this: is there room in *my* inn for Jesus?

We can view our lives as a house: our hearts, souls, spirits or minds are the rooms that we fill with many things – memories, worries, hopes, dreams, passions, hobbies, interests and so on – as well as the idle clutter of our age: our social media obsessions, our Netflix and YouTube binges. Is it possible that I am a “spiritual hoarder”? That I have filled up my life to such an extent that there is “no room at the inn” when Jesus comes knocking?

This, in many ways, is a problem unique to our age. The technological and communications revolution that we have seen since the 1950s has had as much, if not more impact than the industrial revolution of the late 18th and 19th centuries. Our lives have become busier, fuller: we have hundreds of TV channels to occupy ourselves, the constant presence of social media and email accounts, a wealth of distracting information and entertainment on the internet. Our lives have become relentless – seven-day weeks, shift work at all times of the day and night. And the information revolution has opened us up to anxieties that we were unaware of fifty or sixty years ago – wars and conflicts, disasters and catastrophes around the world. The result can be that the house which is my mind, my spirit, can be so cluttered that there is no room for anything else – including the Lord Jesus.

Advent’s main theme – the coming of Jesus – can be challenging. Sometimes we can think of it in terms of threat – rather like the unannounced visit from Ofsted, or an audit by the Inland Revenue, or the unwelcome knock on the door that signifies any unpleasant experience! I am sure you have all seen the T-shirts saying, “Jesus is coming! look busy!” This is not how we are to view the coming of Jesus. We are to *hope* in his coming. And this returns me to the idea of the uncluttered house.

When you *want* a guest to come to your home – your children or grandchildren, a close friend – you make sure there is a place for them. Even if you do not know when they might visit, you keep a room ready – fresh linen and towels, everything tidied, cleaned and prepared – in the *hope* of a visit. When your longing for such a visit is stronger, you will do even more to make sure there is a place for them – that there is room in your inn. This is so often the sadness and suffering that can motivate hoarders to change: because the fact that there is no space in their house means they cannot have any visitors.

So my Advent thought this year is this: how can I show my longing for Jesus, my hope in his visit, by making sure there is room in *my* inn!

We are also taught that Advent is a “sort-of-Penitential” Season – not as penitential as Lent, but with elements in common with it. Repentance, or change of heart and mind, is often about “letting go” – letting go of our sins and guilt, our bad habits, traits, patterns of behaviour which do not belong in the life of a follower of Jesus. In this it is similar to the help offered to hoarders – the hardest thing for them to do is “let go” of possessions, and sometimes their struggle is to go through every item, one by one, being helped and encouraged to “let go”. This is also how we make room in our inn for Jesus: we look at the clutter that fills our lives, and ask “Can I let go of this?” Can I walk away from dependency on TV, internet, worries and all the other things that “fill up” my day?

This is not easy – changing patterns of life that we have become accustomed to never is. But Advent is a little season given to us to think about this. While we are not looking forward to the *birth* of Jesus, we are looking forward to the *celebration* of his birth. The Church gives us that celebration so that we can each be open once more to the mystery of his presence in our world and in our lives. Remember the words of a hymn we will probably sing at Christmas: “*Where meek hearts will receive him, still the dear child enters in.*”

In Advent, let us prepare a room for Jesus in our busy lives, filled with longing and a desire for his company, so that when he comes to visit us, we do not turn him away because there is “*no room in our inn.*”

Father James Manock