

Advent Prayers 2012

Sunday 2nd December

Day 1

Reading

'The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned' **Isaiah 9:2&Matthew 4:16**

Reflection

ad-vent/advent/ (noun) - from the Latin word adventus meaning 'coming'

1. The arrival of a notable person, thing, or event.
2. The first season of the church year, leading up to Christmas and including the four preceding Sundays.

Advent starts today - a 40 day season observed in many Western Christian churches as a time of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of the Nativity. In fact, Advent Sunday could be called the church equivalent of New Year's Day, so perhaps it can be useful as a time to make some new resolutions and change our habits. When someone important is coming of course there are preparations to make! Get ready - the Light is coming into the darkness! The great prophecy of Isaiah 9 is being fulfilled once more as the brightness of the morning star rises in our hearts again. People stumbling around unable to see, those dwelling under the shadow of death and despair - or as the version we so often hear read at Christmas puts it, "those who sat in darkness" have seen a great light. Those old words carry something of the weight, the apathy and powerlessness, unable to move for blindness. The Message puts it: 'People sitting out their lives in the dark saw a huge light; sitting in that dark, dark country of death, they watched the sun come up'. What a message of hope for our dark world!

Prayer

Jesus, may your light shine on, in and out through me this Advent.

Further reading: Luke 1: 67-79; 2 Peter 1:19

Monday 3rd December

Day2

Reading

'There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.' **John 1:6-8**

Reflection

John the Baptist was the witness to Jesus, the prophet who prepared the way -

as his father Zechariah had prophesied at his birth. John's testimony of Jesus went hand in hand with his actions - because there was something that had to be done to get ready and it was a "baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins". This cleansing act somehow prepared the hearts of the people to receive the good news - it softened their attitudes, provoked humility and - as John also insisted - produced the fruit of right behaviour. He preached a message of fire and judgement, warning them with strong words to turn from their sins and when we look at the bigger picture of Scripture we can see that he was also 'turning the hearts' of fathers and children to each other in the spirit of Elijah (Malachi 4:6). Our connectedness to one another is so important for our spiritual receptivity and wellbeing! So the crowd had their hearts prepared, and as a result were filled with expectation, ready to receive the Light. This was important because light shows up what is really there, hiding in the shadows! Who wants their secret sins brought into the light of His presence!

Prayer

Thank you, Lord, for the gift of repentance that prepares my heart to receive Your light. Shine your light on those things that I may have 'hiding in the shadows'.

Further reading: Luke 3; 1 John 1:8-11

Tuesday 4th December

Day 3

Reading

'In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.' **John 1:4-5**

Reflection

The darkness has not understood it - cannot comprehend it - doesn't have the ability to discern what it is - or sometimes we read instead, 'has not overcome it' The Amplified version puts verse 5 this way: 'the Light shines on in the darkness, for the darkness has never overpowered it [put it out or absorbed it or appropriated it, and is unreceptive to it]' - basically they are total opposites, like oil and water, or chalk and cheese. 'What fellowship has light with darkness?'' says Paul (2 Corinthians 6:14) - but 'God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all', says John (1John 1:5). The light is shining - a beacon of perfect truth, pure holiness and inextinguishable glory: the darkness cannot put it out! In fact, quite the opposite - once the light is shining, the darkness is driven away! Just as the sun gives life to our planet through its heat and light - positioned at the perfect distance from earth so that we have enough, but not too much of both - so the light shining in and through Jesus gives life to mankind. 'We have seen His glory - full of grace and truth' (John 1:14)

Prayer

Thank You, Lord, for your light that gives me life! May I walk in the fullness of the abundant life you have for me today.

Wednesday 5th December

Day 4

Reading

'This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God.' **John 3:19-21**

Reflection

Darkness is the hiding place of evil and night-time its playground: crimes are often committed 'under cover of darkness' to prevent detection and we all know it is the secret, undisclosed areas of our lives where we are most likely to fall into sin. As Paul writes to the Ephesians, 'It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret, but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for it is light that makes everything visible' (Ephesians 5:12-14). The Lord is in the business of exposing what is deliberately hidden - shouting it from the rooftops even! We have seen some of that happening in society recently, with various scandals and corruption becoming public knowledge. That's why the safest place for us to live is 'in the light' - both in the full light of God's presence and in honesty and full accountability with our brothers and sisters. In fact, we are not told to 'say sorry', but simply to confess and openly share the truth about our lives and failures without hiding or holding back - then we will have true fellowship and automatic cleansing and be healed!

Prayer

Jesus, thank you that not only do You expose what is hidden, but You always cover what is vulnerable and exposed - and You know the difference.

Further reading: Ephesians 5:1-21; Luke 12:1-3; 1 John 1:5-10

Thursday 6th December

Day 5

Reading

Then Jesus told them, "You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. The man who walks in the dark does not know where he is going. Put your trust in the light while you have it, so that you may become sons of light." **John 12:35-36**

Reflection

Jesus has already referred to Himself as the Light of the world who gives the light of life (John 8v:12): a few chapters later, He is warning them there is a time limit on it. He has come to give clarity and direction to Israel, but they are in danger of missing it. He knows His time is very short, less than a week left, but His hope is

that those who do believe will become 'sons of light' themselves, catching it from Him: he promises that no-one who believes in Him will stay in darkness(v46)! In Matthew's gospel (5:14-16) those same believers are called to be a city set on a hill, a light on a stand, giving glory to God by their good deeds. These are the ones who can see where they are going, no longer stumbling around in the dark, blind and lost. Instead we can know God's word and the voice of the Good Shepherd as 'a lamp to our feet and a light to our path' (Psalm 119:105) leading us home - and even shining on the path for others to see the way as well. But it is no credit to us at all! Our Father's good pleasure was to replace the old 'blind guides' with foolish little children (Luke 10:21) - it is all grace.

Prayer

Lord, as I walk this path with you, may I let my light shine brightly in front of the people around me, directing them to You.

Further reading: John 12:27-50; Matthew 5:12-14

Friday 7th December

Day 6

Reading

*No one lights a lamp and puts it in a place where it will be hidden, or under a bowl. Instead he puts it on its stand, so that those who come in may see the light. Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eyes are good, your whole body also is full of light. But when they are bad, your body also is full of darkness. See to it, then, that the light within you is not darkness. Therefore, if your whole body is full of light, and no part of it dark, it will be completely lighted, as when the light of a lamp shines on you. **Luke 11:33-36***

Reflection

I have a friend who always reminds us that the problems we face in society cannot simply be blamed on the darkness: he says it is not the quality of the darkness - however black and sinful it is - that is the issue, but the quality of the light! Which is true - when a strong light shines, darkness is dispersed, whether it is very black or just a gloomy grey: the more brightly the people of God shine with His love the more the darkness will be driven back. Yes, good works are part of that shining light, as we saw in Matthew 5 yesterday, and as Paul tells us in Ephesians 5:9, 'the fruit of the light is whatever is good, right and true'. But John the apostle gives an even more acid test in his first letter, telling his readers that actually, light and love are the same thing! He is very clear that it is impossible to either be in the light while hating your brother or sister or to be in darkness while loving them. Hatred and bitterness against another believer 'brings on blindness' and leads us astray. It ties in with what Jesus said about not bothering to bring your offering to God if there is anything wrong between you and someone else (Matthew 5:23-24) and that there is no forgiveness for us unless we have first forgiven others all their debts (Matthew 6:14-15).

Prayer

Lord, If I love you I will keep your commands: help me to see clearly so I can be full of love and give no room for darkness.

Further reading; 1 John 2:3-1; John 13:34-35

Saturday 8th December

Day 7 - Hannukah: the festival of lights

Reading

'The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness" made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us'. 2 Corinthians 4:4-7

Reflection

Hannukah starts today: it is a Jewish festival commemorating the rededication of the 2nd Temple in 2BC and over the 8 days that it lasts the lights of the Menorah candelabrum are gradually lit. This symbol of light in darkness is a powerful universal image, especially in the winter months; the Hindus also celebrate their festival of lights, Diwali, at this time of year. The long, dark nights provide a perfect backdrop for these symbolic lamps. Even more so, when the light we are celebrating at Christmas is heaven's splendour breaking through, the baby who is the image of God, begotten, not made - the true light that lightens every man. The world, wrapped in darkness, cannot see it, but our very hearts have been set on fire. Paul likens us to earthen vessels, cracked pots, made to hold flames: the purity of the fire is in contrast to the clay jars, just as our human weakness only serves to show off God's power more. Here we are, shining 'like stars in the universe, holding out the word of life' (Philippians 2:15-16) - 'declaring the praises of him who called us out of darkness into his wonderful light'. (1 Peter 2:9)!

Prayer

Thank you for your light in my heart, Father, and your strength in my weakness: I praise you for your Son!

Further reading Philippians 2:1-18; 1 Peter 2:9-10; 2 Corinthians 3:5-18

Sunday 9th December

Day 8

Reading

*A voice of one calling: "In the desert prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the Lord will be revealed' and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken. **Isaiah 40:3-5***

Reflection

It has been said that Advent is a time of expectant waiting, of hopeful anticipation, of cheerful preparation and getting ready for God to break into our lives at all moments in all places at all times. Today's scripture speaks of a voice calling. What is the voice saying? Listen – 'In the desert prepare the way for the Lord '. Why do we need to listen and prepare – because God promises to break into and transform those desert and wilderness places in us; in our lives, and he wants to reveal His Glory! This should stir our hearts with hope and with joy. Take some time to reflect and think - What are the dry, lifeless, desert places in your life, what are the mountains you are facing at the moment that leave you tired and worn out, what are the rough and difficult circumstances you are walking through? Bring them before the Lord and allow him to break in and reveal His Glory – you will never be the same again!

Prayer

Father God thank You that we are not without hope! Thank You that every day You desire to break into our lives at all moments, in all places at all times. Father I recognise there are areas in my life both internal and external that I need You to break into in this advent season. In this recognition and confession of need I prepare the way for you to come, please reveal Your Glory! Amen

Monday 10th December

Day 9

Reading

*When the Lord brought back the captives to Zion, we were like men who dreamed. Our mouths were filled with laughter our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the nations, "The Lord has done great things for them." The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy. Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like streams in the Negev. Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy. He who goes out weeping, carrying seeds to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him. **Psalms 126***

Reflection

As I read this psalm in the context of Advent and with the thought of God

breaking in to our lives at all times and in all places and all moments, I was reminded with a sense of great thankfulness and joy at how several years ago during advent season our family saw God break in and bring healing and restoration to one of my brothers who was at the point of death. We were indeed like those who dreamed!

Often we can look at our situations or our lives compared to those of others and our response at times can be 'God has done great things for them but what about me'! However if we take time to reflect each one of us will have to confess with joy – The Lord has done great things for us! The Lord has done great things for me! His very breaking into our lives with His love and our relationship as his sons and daughters is a great and awesome thing. Take time to reflect on that!

Prayer

Heavenly Father we are thankful for Your love, for Your presence, Your peace, for your provision, for Your kindness, Your mercy & grace, for your forgiveness, compassion and healing. You are faithful in all your ways and your goodness endures always. Our hearts are warmed and filled with joy as we think on how you have touched and transformed our lives. Father in prayer we bring all those that are seeking healing, comfort or peace, or seeking direction, we bring in prayer those that are lonely and grieving – may they encounter you afresh today and as you break in to their lives may they say 'We are like those who dreamed, the Lord has done great things for me!' Amen

Tuesday 11th December

Day 10

Reading

*At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. The wise, however took oil in jars along with their lamps. The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep. At midnight the cry rang out: 'Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!' Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.' 'No' they replied, 'there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.' But while they were on their way the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door shut. Later the others came. 'Sir! Sir! they said. Open the door for us!' but he replied, 'I tell you the truth I don't know you.' Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour. **Matthew 25:1-13***

Reflection

Are we in living the days of 'At that Time'? Is the Lord returning soon? I chose this reading because not only does Advent prepare us to welcome God into our everyday lives and prepares us as we commemorate the birth of Jesus but it also reminds us that we are waiting and need to be prepared for Christ's return and this parable Jesus told is about being ready, being prepared.

As I read this familiar passage what struck me this time was that they ALL had lamps, they ALL were looking forward to the return of the bridegroom, they ALL became drowsy and fell asleep, they ALL got tired waiting and dozed off. In fact until the point of crisis came it would have been very difficult to tell the difference between them, but when it came what made the difference was the preparation five of them made in bringing the oil. We need to take care that we are not complacent in our being ready for the Bridegroom's return – so how do we? David Pawson in his book, 'When Jesus Returns', encourages us that the hope of Christ's coming is a major motive for godly living now and that the only time we have to get ready for the future is the present. He encourages us that there are ways to be ready for Christ's return - through our individual faith and love for God, our love for our neighbours, our faithful service and personal holiness, through communal fellowship and unity in the church, through reaching the lost and our loyal endurance.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank you that we can know you in our lives and know your grace and love and be ready for your coming again. Help us this day to live every moment in anticipation of your return. Give us grace to be ready. Amen

Wednesday 12th December

Day 11

Reading

*And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ – to the glory and praise of God. **Philippians 1:9-11***

Reflection

'Be pure and blameless until the day of Christ!' Over the last three days our Advent focus has been about being prepared and getting ready for Jesus to break into our everyday lives at all moments, at all times and in all places and as I have been putting them together the words from a song keep singing in my head – 'I shall prepare Him my heart'. God is passionate for our hearts, His desire is that we have undivided hearts and hearts that are open and totally committed to Him, hearts that are pure and blameless, hearts that are flexible, not

hard but hearts that can accommodate His love abounding more and more within us! Why not take some time in quiet and offer your heart afresh to Him, ask Him to show you areas that you may have been compromising on, ask for His help to change and invite His Holy Spirit to break in and bring a fresh revelation of God's love for you. Then consider how you might respond to the following:

Today 12.12.12 many people in schools, churches, ministries and as individuals from across the world will take part in a Global Day of Worship celebrating Jesus the Messiah. Today there has also been a call to pray for the future of our nation – people being encouraged to pray for 12 minutes on 12.12.12 at 12 noon! Today we have seen another night of protests in various places across our province and we need to see God break in!

Prayer

Father thank you that you are Love and you are loving toward all you have made! Come O come Emmanuel and fill my heart afresh today with Your love and as you do may my love abound in knowledge and depth of insight, may I have wisdom to make right choices and be pure and blameless today.

Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your Kingdom come, Your 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. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom the power and the glory, forever and ever Amen!

13 December 2012

Day 12

Reading

*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this. **Isaiah 9:6&7***

Reflection

On this day at the beginning of the 4th Century a courageous young girl called Lucy died as a martyr for Christ in the persecution of Diocletian. Her name, which is derived from "lux", meaning light, reminds us that every follower of Christ is called to be a light of the Gospel in the world. Her emblem in Christian art has usually been her eyes, pointing us to her spiritual sight, the fact that she could see beyond the pain and destruction to the triumph of Christ. We're approaching the shortest and therefore the darkest day in the year. Some will be going through dark passages in their life, perhaps because of bereavement, a broken relationship, the loss of a job, anxiety about how to make ends meet, guilt or some form of depression. There is much darkness in the wider world in the form of conflict and war, hunger and homelessness, religious fanaticism and indeed persecution. We all long for light in the darkness and many hearts are cheered by

the decorative lights we see in the streets and in individual homes. However, it is good to be reminded at this time of the year of some spiritual truths. The Son has been given to us; Christ the light has come and is in perfect control of the world and all its happenings, enfolding us in his loving, reassuring arms, never giving up on us despite all our failures and deliberate sins. The greatest gift at Christmas is the gift we may well cast aside, leave unwrapped: it's the gift of His justice and His righteousness, made perfect through the shedding of His blood on the cross, in which he dealt completely with our sin, with those parts of our past of which we are now ashamed, and established His kingdom of peace. May this time of Advent help us prepare our hearts for that gift of gifts!

Prayer

Loving Father, we await the healing power of Christ your Son. Let us not be discouraged by our weaknesses as we prepare for his coming. Keep us steadfast in your love. Amen.

Friday 14 December 2012

Day 13

Reading

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope - the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. Titus 2:13&14

Reflection

The grace of God is a gift almost impossible for the human mind to grasp. Our human love is so conditional, so calculated and our human pride is so unwilling to accept pure, unconditional, undeserved love, which is what the grace of God is. To receive the grace of God calls for total poverty of spirit and such poverty of spirit is impossible without suffering. The suffering may be a direct result of sin or it may be undeserved. It may be physical, emotional or spiritual, but it must lead us to a true conviction of the gravity of our sin and an awareness of our total dependence on God if we are to open our hearts to the grace of God. Juan de Yepes, later known as John of the Cross, who died on this day in 1591, was brought up by his widowed mother in great poverty in Toledo. Later he became a Carmelite Friar and spiritual reformer. Like many reformers he was to suffer mostly at the hands of his co-religionists. He was the victim of much abuse and injustice, yet it was precisely through his undeserved suffering that he discovered intimacy with Jesus Christ and knew the grace of God. His deep relationship with the Lord was expressed in poetry. In one of his poems, Christ is compared to a shepherd and the church to a shepherdess: A shepherd lad was mourning his distress, /Far from all comfort, friendless and forlorn. / He fixed his thought upon his shepherdess/ Because his breast by love was sorely torn./He did not weep that love had pierced him so,/ Nor with self-pity that the shaft was shot,/ Though

deep into his heart had sunk the blow,/ It grieved him more that he had been forgot. (Translated from the Spanish by Roy Campbell). Such intimate knowledge of Christ inevitably gives us the longing for purity of heart and makes us eager to do what is good. May the gift of this Advent time help us grow in intimacy with our Saviour!

Prayer

Father, you filled John of the Cross with a love for Christ crucified and a spirit of self-denial. By following his example may we come to the eternal vision of your glory. Amen.

Saturday 15 December 2012

Day 14

Reading

*You who bring good tidings to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, "Here is your God!" See, the Sovereign Lord comes with power, and his arm rules for him. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. **Isaiah 40:9-10***

Reflection

People often ask me if I am looking forward to Christmas. I usually reply that I am currently enjoying Advent. It's easy to look forward to some future event so eagerly that we miss the good things on the way and when that happens we are often disappointed with what we were so looking forward to. All the anticipated "Christmas" dinners and "Christmas" Carol concerts can mean that we miss out on Advent altogether. Advent is a time to remember the coming of the Son of God in time, to ask ourselves anew why he came, to take stock of our lives and see where we've messed things up, where we are vulnerable and liable to fall into sin, in short, why we need a Saviour. The "good tidings" to his people are only good to those who know their need, to those who are poor in spirit, and Advent is a good opportunity to get in touch with our deepest need. We do that not by focusing on our failures and sin, but on God's goodness, revealed through the prophets, especially the prophet Isaiah, and realised through the incarnation, the Word made flesh. And as we allow the Holy Spirit to purify our hearts and minds, so we gradually start to look forward, not to a passing material feast, but to the God who comes with power and with his reward with him - a reward infinitely greater than anything we can imagine!

Prayer

Loving Father, help us to look forward in hope to the coming of our Saviour. May we live as He taught, ready to welcome Him with burning love and faith. Amen

Sunday 16 December 2012

Day 15

Reading

*(Christ) has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. Just as a man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. **Hebrews 9:26b-28.***

Reflection

At this time of the year our thoughts are primarily of the first coming of Christ, his birth in humble surroundings in Bethlehem. Many people have a crib as part of their Christmas decorations. The crib is a visual reminder of the Son of God taking human flesh and the principal characters involved in that drama. Yet our extract today from the Letter to the Hebrews takes us straight to the other end of Jesus' earthly life, his crucifixion. It shows us how the wood of the crib is intimately linked with the wood of the cross. The Son of God came into this world to offer himself in sacrifice, the perfect sacrifice to deal with the sins of the world, replacing the animal sacrifices of the old dispensation, which could never cleanse the guilty conscience. Christ's sacrifice of himself, whilst completed on the cross, began in the womb of his mother and continued through his birth, childhood, manual labour, gathering of his first disciples, teaching and healing. Christ's whole life and death was a self-sacrifice to the Father - on our behalf. Christ has done what we could never do for ourselves. When we put our faith and trust in him, rather than in ourselves, we need have no fear of death and judgment. Christ ushered in the end of the ages, the last times in which we are now living. Advent reminds us that we should be waiting in hope for the glorious, second coming of Christ, which will wind up history. But it's not a passive waiting. Christ died on our behalf to free us from the fear of death, but he also showed us how to live, how to offer our lives to the Father (Romans 12:1), and that is a life-long agenda!

Prayer

Father, let your glory dawn to take away our darkness. May we be revealed as the children of light at the coming of your Son. Amen.

Monday 17th December

Day 16

From 17 -23 December we will be using the 'O Antiphons'. Since the 4th century, these are prayers that have been used to call upon the Christ – the Messiah to come with healing and forgiveness so that we may joyfully celebrate his birth at Christmas. Traditionally they are sung!

Although these prayers are short they are rich in meaning - each highlights a Messianic title, each refers to the prophecies of Isaiah concerning the coming Messiah and each ends with a heartfelt plea for His coming.

The initials of each Latin title - Sapientia, Adonai, Radix, Clavis, Oriens, Rex, Emmanuel combine to form SARCORE. When this is arranged backwards, it spells **ERO CRAS**, which means "Tomorrow, I will come" This coincidence has fascinated Christians since the Middle Ages because Christ seems to answer the cries of the O Antiphons by promising to come to His people.

Reading

The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him - the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD - and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. Isaiah 11:2-3
All of those insights come from the LORD who rules over all. His advice is wonderful. His wisdom is glorious .Isaiah 28:29

Prayer

O Sapientia - O Wisdom, O holy Word of God, you govern all creation with your strong and tender care. Come and show your people the way to salvation.

Tuesday 18th December

Day 17

Reading

He will always do what is right when he judges those who are in need. He'll be completely fair when he makes decisions about poor people. When he commands that people be punished, it will happen. When he orders that evil people be put to death, it will take place. He will put godliness on as if it were his belt. He'll wear faithfulness around his waist. Isaiah 11:4-5 NIR

For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver the LORD is our king; it is he who will save us. Isaiah 33:22 NIR

Prayer

O Adonai - O sacred Lord of ancient Israel, who showed yourself to Moses in the burning bush, who gave him the holy law on Sinai Mountain: come stretch out your mighty hand to set us free.

Wednesday 19th December

Day 18

Reading

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him...Isaiah 11:1-2 NIR

At that time the man who is called the Root from Jesse's family line will be like a banner that brings nations together. They will come to him. And the place where he rules will be glorious. Isaiah 11:10 NIR

Prayer

O Radix Jesse – O Flower of Jesse’s stump, you have been raised up as a sign for all peoples: kings stand silent in your presence; nations bow down in worship before you. Come, let nothing keep you from coming to our aid.

Thursday 20th December

Day 19

Reading

Of the increase of His government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from the latter time forth, even forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this. Isaiah 9:7

I will place on his shoulder the key to the house of David; what he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. Isaiah 22:22

Prayer

O Clavis David – O Key of David, O royal Power of Israel controlling at your will the gate of Heaven: Come, break down the prison walls of death for those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death; and lead your captive people to freedom.

Friday 21st December

Day 20

The timing of today’s antiphon is perfect: the mid-winter solstice is the day with the longest period of darkness when the sun is furthest away from the northern hemisphere – it is into this time of darkness that we cry out for O Oriens - Radiant Dawn, Rising Sun to come and shine on us.

Reading

But in the midst of judgment there is the promise and the certainty of the Lord’s deliverance and there shall be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time the Lord brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time He will make it glorious, by the way of the Sea of Galilee, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great Light; those who dwelt in the land of intense darkness and the shadow of death, upon them has the Light shined. Isaiah 9:1&2

I the Lord have called You the Messiah for a righteous purpose and in righteousness; I will take You by the hand and will keep You; I will give You for a covenant to the people [Israel], for a light to the nations Gentiles, to open the eyes of the blind, to bring out prisoners from the dungeon, and those who sit in darkness from the prison. Isaiah 42:6&7

Prayer

O Oriens – O Radiant Dawn, splendour of eternal light, sun of justice: come, shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death.

Saturday 22 December

Day 21

Reading

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.

The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this. Isaiah 9:6&7

He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.

Isaiah2:4

Prayer

O Rex Gentium: 'O King of all the nations, the only joy of every human heart; O Keystone that makes all of us one, the stone rejected by the builder who has become the cornerstone: Come and save every living creature you fashioned from the dust.

Sunday 23rd December

Day 22

Today we finish the O Antiphons with a call to Emmanuel to come and be with us and as mentioned before the initials of each Latin title - Sapientia, Adonai, Radix, Clavis, Oriens, Rex, Emmanuel combine to form SARCORE. When this is arranged backwards, it spells ERO CRAS, which means "Tomorrow, I will come". So the O Antiphons not only bring intensity to our Advent preparation, but they bring it to a joyful conclusion!

Reading

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Emmanuel (God with us). Isaiah 7:14

Prayer

O Emmanuel: 'O Emmanuel, king and lawgiver, desire of the nations, Saviour of all people, come and set us free, Lord our God.



Celebrating His Birth
Happy Christmas
& Every Blessing
For the New Year
From Transformations Ireland