

Christmastide



**A Service of Meditation
St Paul's with St Augustine's**



Introduction

This is the second book of our meditations and prayers entitled Christmastide. It takes us from Meditations Around the Advent Wreath to Epiphany Following the Magi.

Our devotions have the following format:

- Opening Sentence
- Hymn
- Readings
- Meditation
- Prayers
- Dismissal

The book is designed for guidance and gives you a structure in which to follow the journey of the Christmas Season

Father, you make this holy night radiant with the splendour of Jesus Christ our light. We welcome Him as Lord, true light of the world. Bring us to eternal joy in the kingdom of heaven where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit one God, for ever and ever

We hope you find the service very uplifting and prayerful.

Christmas Day

Introduction

Hymn



1. The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
With wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame.
"All hail," said he, "O lowly maiden Mary,
Most highly favoured lady." Gloria!

2. "How blest among all women you shall be,
Whom ev'ry age will praise continually.
Your Son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold.
"Most highly favoured lady." Gloria!

3. Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head.
"To me be as it pleases God," she said.
"My soul shall laud and magnify God's holy name."
Most highly favoured lady. Gloria!

4. Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born
In Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn.
And Christian folk throughout the world will ever say:
"Most highly favoured lady." Gloria!

Reading

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news,
who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say
to Zion, "Your God reigns!"

Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices; together they shout for joy. When
the LORD returns to Zion, they will see it with their own eyes.

Burst into songs of joy together, you ruins of Jerusalem, for the LORD has
comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem.

The LORD will lay bare his holy arm in the sight of all the nations, and all the
ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God.

Isaiah 52: 7-10



In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. Children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 1: 1:14

Meditation

Do you remember your mother talking about your birth. Was it at Home, in a Hospital or somewhere else? Think about that situation and then consider what it would be like to be in Mary's shoes.

There was so much hope and promise at the stable - How has the birth of Jesus impacted on your life?

Christmas time is also about giving and receiving presents, think about the lonely, the people with no families, and people who are a lot less fortunate than you are. Give them the grace to know that Jesus is there for them and he will never give up on them.

The birth of Jesus brings hope and new life to us all, How will you celebrate the event this Christmas?

Prayers

Sit quietly with God, at rest in the presence of the One who loves you. Be still, trusting that the Holy Spirit is at work in the depths of your spirit deepening your faith. Allow the Word to move from your head to your heart to dwell there in peaceful silence.

The Lord Hears our Prayers. Thanks be to God.

Lord of all faithfulness, we pray for those who faithfully proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ, whose birthday we celebrate today. For those whose written and spoken words, touch hearts, change minds and point a new direction for those who receive them.

The Lord Hears our Prayers. Thanks be to God.

We pray for those whose faithful obedience to the call of Christ comes at great personal cost to themselves and to others.

The Lord Hears our Prayers. Thanks be to God.

Lord of all faithfulness, we pray for ourselves and the challenges and pressures we face in our walk with Christ: for this moments when we are brought face to face with our own mortality when our faithfulness to you is put to the ultimate test. Only you Lord and give us the strength to be faithful, even to the end.

The Lord Hears our Prayers. Thanks be to God.

Lord of all faithfulness, we pray for ourselves and we praise you for your faithful love that has renewed our lives and the Holy Spirit who equips us to be faithful disciples of the Lord in your faithfulness.

Holy One, hear our prayer and may our cries come to you.

Merciful father accept these prayers for the sake of your Son our saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen



DISMISSAL

Hymn

1. Little Jesus, sweetly sleep, do not stir
We will lend a coat of fur
We will rock you, rock you, rock you
We will rock you, rock you, rock you
See the fur to keep you warm
Snugly round your tiny form.

2. Mary's little baby, sleep, sweetly sleep
Sleep in comfort, slumber deep
We will rock you, rock you, rock you
We will rock you, rock you, rock you
We will serve you all we can

Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours. Now and for ever.

Amen

Hail Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death. Amen

The Grace

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore.

Amen



The First Sunday after Christmas

Introduction

Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. God of life and love, whose Son was victorious over sin and death make us alive also with his life, that the whole world will resound with your praise.

Hymn

1. The Virgin Mary had a baby boy,
The Virgin Mary had a baby boy,
The Virgin Mary had a baby boy,
and they said that his name was Jesus.

*He came from the glory,
he came from the glorious kingdom.
he came from the glorious kingdom.
Oh yes, believer. Oh yes, believer.
He came from the glory,
he came from the glorious kingdom.*

2. The angels sang when the baby was born,
The angels sang when the baby was born,
The angels sang when the baby was born,
and proclaimed him the Saviour, Jesus.

Refrain

3. The wise men saw where the baby was born,
The wise men saw where the baby was born,
The wise men saw where the baby was born,
and they saw that his name was Jesus.

Refrain



Reading

But Samuel was ministering before the Lord a boy wearing a linen ephod. Each year his mother made him a little robe and took it to him when she went up with her husband to offer the annual sacrifice. Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, saying, "May the Lord give you children by this woman to take the place of the one she prayed for and gave to the Lord." Then they would go home. And the Lord was gracious to Hannah; she gave birth to three sons and two daughters. Meanwhile, the boy Samuel grew up in the presence of the Lord. Now Eli, who was very old, heard about everything his sons were doing to all Israel and how they slept with the women who served at the entrance to the tent of meeting. So he said to them, "Why do you do such things? I hear from all the people about these wicked deeds of yours. No, my sons; the report I hear spreading among the Lord's people is not good. If one person sins against another, God may mediate for the offender; but if anyone sins against the Lord, who will intercede for them?" His sons, however, did not listen to their father's rebuke, for it was the Lord's will to put them to death.

And the boy Samuel continued to grow in stature and in favour with the Lord and with people.

1 Samuel 18-26.

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise the child, he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he was conceived.

Luke 2: 15-21

Meditation

What made the shepherds go to Bethlehem? Imagine you were one of the shepherds what did you expect to find?

When you arrived all you saw was a filthy stable, a man and a woman inside with a little baby lying in a manger.

What are your impressions, did you think you had made a mistake or was there something else that grabs your attention?

Jesus lying there, Joseph just a bystander and Mary who wonders why the shepherds appeared. What did they want, the Angels had told them to go and see the baby.

Mary's devotion and trust in God was boundless and she remembered all that had happened and kept it all in her heart. It was a very wonderful thing to her. Can you recall the wonderful things that have happened in your life and spend time thanking God for his gifts he has bestowed on you.





Prayers

Sit quietly with God, at rest in the presence of the One who loves you. Be still, trusting that the Holy Spirit is at work in the depths of your spirit deepening your faith. Allow the Word to move from your head to your heart to dwell there in peaceful silence.

Holy One, hear our prayer and may our cries come to you.

Lord we pray for all who search for your goodness. As the shepherds travelled to see Jesus, give us the hope and courage to follow their footsteps and make us shepherds so that we may tend our sheep and live our lives as you ordained.

Holy One, hear our prayer and may our cries come to you.

We pray for mothers everywhere and especially those with new born children, give them the courage and strength to nurture them and to make them grow in mind body and spirit.

Holy One, hear our prayer and may our cries come to you.

We pray for all people who work on the land, for farmers everywhere, giving us all our food. We pray for those who have no food and all the hungry and homeless at this time. Show them your compassion and help us to be able to share all the gifts that you have given us.

Holy One, hear our prayer and may our cries come to you.

We pray for all the angels in heaven watching over us and help us to sing with them and praise your name endlessly, Pray for our guardian angels that they keep watch over us and keep us safe. Praise God for ever; Holy, Holy, Holy lord God of Hosts, Heaven and earth are filled with your Glory. Hosanna in the Highest

Holy One, hear our prayer and may our cries come to you.

Merciful father accept these prayers for the sake of your Son our saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen

DISMISSAL

Hymn

1. See him a-lying on a bed of straw:
a draughty stable with an open door;
Mary cradling the babe she bore
the Prince of Glory is his name.

*Oh, now carry me to Bethlehem
to see the Lord appear to men!
Just as poor as was the stable then,
the Prince of Glory when he came.*

2. Star of silver, sweep across the skies,
show where Jesus in the manger lies;
shepherds swiftly from your stupor rise

3. Angels, sing again the song you sang,
bring God's glory to the heart of man;
sing that Bethl'hem's little baby can
be salvation to the soul.

Refrain

4. Mine are riches, from your poverty,
from your innocence, eternity;
mine, forgiveness by your death for me,
child of sorrow for my joy.

Refrain

Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours. Now and for ever.

Amen

Hail Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death. Amen

The Grace

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore.

Amen



The Second Sunday after Christmas

Introduction

The LORD reigns, he is robed in majesty; the LORD is robed in majesty and armed with strength; indeed, the world is established, firm and secure. Your throne was established long ago;

Hymn

1. Fill Your Hearts With Joy And Gladness,
Sing And Praise Your God And Mine!
Great The Lord In Love And Wisdom,
Might And Majesty Divine!
He Who Framed The Starry Heavens
Knows And Names Them As They Shine

2. Praise The Lord, His People, Praise Him!
Wounded Souls His Comfort Know.
Those Who Fear Him Find His Mercies,
Peace For Pain And Joy For Woe;
Humble Hearts Are High Exalted,
Human Pride And Power Laid Low.

3. Praise The Lord For Times And Seasons,
Cloud And Sunshine, Wind And Rain;
Spring To Melt The Snows Of Winter
Till The Waters Flow Again;
Grass Upon The Mountain Pastures,
Golden Valleys Thick With Grain.

4. Fill Your Hearts With Joy And Gladness,
Peace And Plenty Crown Your Days!
Love His Laws, Declare His Judgements,
Walk In All His Words And Ways;
He The Lord And We His Children,
Praise The Lord, All People, Praise!

Reading

The Lord said to Moses, "Come up to me on the mountain and stay here, and I will give you the tablets of stone with the law and commandments I have written for their instruction."

Then Moses set out with Joshua his aide, and Moses went up on the mountain of God. He said to the elders, "Wait here for us until we come back to you. Aaron and Hur are with you, and anyone involved in a dispute can go to them."

When Moses went up on the mountain, the cloud covered it, ¹⁶ and the glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai. For six days the cloud covered the mountain, and on the seventh day the Lord called to Moses from within the cloud. To the Israelites the glory of the Lord looked like a consuming fire on top of the mountain. Then Moses entered the cloud as he went on up the mountain. And he stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights.





John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, “This is the one I spoke about when I said, ‘He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’”) Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known. Now this was John’s testimony when the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, “I am not the Messiah.”

They asked him, “Then who are you? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” He answered, “No.” Finally they said, “Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, “I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way for the Lord.’”

Now the Pharisees who had been sent questioned him, “Why then do you baptize if you are not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?” “I baptize with water,” John replied, “but among you stands one you do not know.

John 1: 15-26

Meditation

John proclaimed the good news of Jesus Christ to the Pharisees and told them about the one who is to come.

What would your reaction be if you met Jesus by the river and he asked you to baptise him. Would it be astonishment or elation or would you be very fearful

Why was Jesus baptised? Try to remember your baptism and think how that action has impacted on your life. Think about all those who have not been baptised and are waiting for the day when they see the joy of God's greatness.

Prayers

Sit quietly with God, at rest in the presence of the One who loves you. Be still, trusting that the Holy Spirit is at work in the depths of your spirit deepening your faith. Allow the Word to move from your head to your heart to dwell there in peaceful silence.

Let us pray to Christ our Saviour
Christ born in a stable give courage to all who are homeless.

Jesus, Saviour. Hear our Prayer

Christ, for who the angels sang, give the song of the kingdom to all who weep.

Jesus, Saviour. Hear our Prayer

Christ, for who the angels sang, give the song of the kingdom to all who weep.

Jesus, Saviour. Hear our Prayer

Christ, worshipped by the shepherds, give peace on earth to all who are oppressed.

Jesus, Saviour. Hear our Prayer

Christ, before whom the wise men knelt, give humility and wisdom too all who govern.

Jesus, Saviour. Hear our Prayer

Christ, whose radiance filled a lowly manger, give the glory of the resurrection to all who rest in you.

Jesus, Saviour. Hear our Prayer

Jesus, Saviour, Child of Mary, you know us and love us, you share our lives and hear our prayer. Glory to you for ever.

Merciful father accept these prayers for the sake of your Son our saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen



DISMISSAL

Hymn

1. What Child is this, who, laid to rest
on Mary's lap is sleeping;
whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
while shepherds watch are keeping?

*This, this is Christ the king
whom shepherds seek and angels sing:
haste, haste to bring him praise,
the babe, the son of Mary.*

2. Why lies he in so poor a place,
where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christians fear for God is here,
and for our peace is pleading.

Refrain

3. So bring him incense, gold and myrrh,
come humbly to revere him:
the King of kings salvation brings
let faithful hearts draw near him.

Refrain

Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours. Now and for ever.

Amen

Hail Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death. Amen

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Amen

