

# Advent Prayer Service For Renewal of our Church and our World

*(Before the service begins, light the Advent wreath and have available enough small tapers for each participant).*

**Opening Song:** *Oh Come O Come Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appear. Rejoice! Rejoice! O Israel. To thee shall come Emmanuel.*

*O Come thou Wisdom from on high, Who orders all things mightily; To us the path of knowledge show, And teach us in her ways to go. Rejoice! Rejoice! O Israel. To thee shall come Emmanuel.*

## First Antiphonal Prayer

*Antiphon (all) Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you; ' I have called you by your name, you are mine.*

**Side I:** But now, thus says Yahweh, who created you, Jacob and Rachel, who formed you, Israel: Do not be afraid, for I have saved you; ' I have called you by your name, you are mine.

**Side II:** Should you pass through the sea, I will be with you; or through rivers, they will not swallow you up. Should you walk through fire, you will not be scorched and the flames will not burn you. For I am Yahweh, your God, The Holy One of Israel, your saviour. Isaiah 43:1-3

**Side I:** No need to recall the past, no need to think about what was done before, See, I am doing a new deed, even now it comes to light' can you not see it? Yes, I am making a road in the wilderness, paths in the wilds. The wild beasts will honour me, jackals and ostriches, because I am putting water in the wilderness, rivers in the wild to give my chosen people drink. The people I have formed for myself will sing my praises. Is 43:18-21

**Side II:** For I will pour out water on the thirsty soil, streams on the dry ground. I will pour my spirit on your descendants, my blessing on your children. They shall grow like grass where there is plenty of water, like poplars by running streams. Isaiah 44: 3-5

**Side I:** Let anyone who fears Yahweh among you listen to the voice of his servant! Whoever walks in darkness, and has no light shining for them let them trust in the name of Yahweh, let them lean on their God. Isaiah 50: 10-11

*Antiphon (all): Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you; ' I have called you by your name, you are mine.*

**(Sung)** *O Come thou key of David, come, and open wide our heavenly home; Make safe the way that leads on high, And close the path to misery. Rejoice! Rejoice! O Israel. To thee shall come Emmanuel.*

**Reading I** *From Vatican II Gaudium et Spes (Joy and Hope), Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World .*

The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these too are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise and echo in their hearts ... United in Christ, they are led by the Holy Spirit in their journey to the kingdom ...and they have welcomed the news of salvation which is meant for everyone. (Preface)

Coming down to practical and particularly urgent consequences, this Council lays stress on reverence for humanity; everyone must consider their every neighbor without exception as another self, taking into account first of all his life and the means necessary to living it with dignity, so as not to imitate the rich man who had no concern for the poor man, Lazarus.(Art 27)

There must be made available to all people everything necessary for leading a life truly human, such as food, clothing and shelter; the right to choose a state of life freely and to found a family, the right to education, to employment, to a good reputation, to respect, to appropriate information, to activity in accord with the upright norm of one's own conscience, to protection of privacy and to rightful freedom in matters religious, too. (Art 26)

We do not know the time for the consummation of the earth and of humanity. Nor do we know how all things will be transformed. As deformed by sin, the shape of this world will pass away. But we are taught that God is preparing a new dwelling place and a new earth where justice will abide, and whose blessedness will answer and surpass all the longings for peace which spring up in the human heart. (Art 39, p.1)

Therefore, while we are warned that it profits us nothing if we gain the whole world and lose our very selves, the expectation of a new earth must not weaken but rather stimulate our concern for cultivating this one. For here grows the body of a new human family, a body which even now is able to give some kind of foreshadowing of the new age.(Art 39 p. 2)

(Time of Quiet)

**(Sung)** *O come thou dayspring, come and cheer; Our spirits by thine advent here; Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, And death's dark shadow put to flight. Rejoice! Rejoice! O Israel, to thee shall come Emmanuel.*

## Second Antiphonal Prayer (Isaiah 51: 1-8)

*Response (all) My integrity will remain forever, and my salvation for all generations.*

Side I Listen to me, you who pursue integrity, who seek Yahweh. Consider the rock you were hewn from, the quarry from which you were cut. Consider Abraham your father, and Sarah who gave you birth. For they were all alone when I called them, but I blessed and increased them. Yes, Yahweh has pity on Zion, has pity on all her ruins; turns her desolation into an Eden, her wasteland into the garden of Yahweh. Joy and gladness shall be found in her, thanksgiving and the sound of music.

Side II: Pay attention to me, you peoples, listen to me, you nations. For ... my justice shall be the light of the peoples, I will establish my integrity speedily, my salvation shall come like the light, my arm shall judge the peoples. The islands put their hope in me, put their trust in my strength.

Side I: Lift up your eyes to the heavens, look down at the earth, The heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth wear out like a garment, and its inhabitants die like vermin, but my salvation shall last forever and my justice have no end.

Side II: Listen to me, you who know what integrity means, people who take my laws to heart: do not fear the taunts of people, nor be dismayed by their insults, for the moth shall eat them like garments, the grub devour them like wool, but my integrity will remain forever, and my salvation for all generations.

*Antiphon : My integrity will remain forever, and my salvation for all generations.*

(Sung) O come O come Thou Lord of might, Who to thy tribes on Sinai's height In ancient time didst give the law, In cloud and majesty and awe. Rejoice! Rejoice! O Israel. To thee shall come Emmanuel.

**Reading II** *From Vatican II Dignitatis Humanae (Human Dignity) The Document on Religious Freedom*

...This Vatican Synod declares that the human person has a right to religious freedom. This freedom means that all people are to be immune from coercion on the part of individuals or of social groups and of any human power, in such wise that in matters religious no one is to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his or her own beliefs. Nor is anyone to be restrained from acting in accordance with his or her own beliefs ... This Synod further declares that the right to religious freedom has its foundation in the very dignity of the human person, as this dignity is known throughout the revealed Word of God and by reason itself.(Art. 2)

It is in accordance with their dignity as persons -- that is, beings endowed with reason and free will and therefore privileged to bear personal responsibility -- that all people should be at once impelled by nature and also bound by a moral obligation to seek the truth, especially religious truth. They are also bound to adhere to the truth, once it is known, and to order their whole lives in accord with the demands of truth. (Art 2)

God calls people to serve in spirit and in truth...This truth appears at its height in Christ Jesus...who bore witness to the truth, but refused to impose the truth by force on those who spoke against it. Not by force of blows does His rule assert its claims. Rather it is established by witnessing to the truth and by hearing the truth, and it extends its dominion by the love whereby Christ ...draws all people to Himself. (Art 11)

(Time of Quiet)

(Sung) O come Desire of nations, bind In one the hearts of all humankind; Bid thou our sad divisions cease, And be thyself our prince of peace. Rejoice! Rejoice! O Israel. To thee shall come Emmanuel.

## Prayer for the Synod on the Eucharist

*Antiphon: "I have made you a light for the nations, so that my salvation may reach the ends of the earth." (Acts 13: 47)*

Jesus, we bring to you our love and concern for the worldwide Church. We bring especially our love for the Eucharist, your body and blood. You are our Emmanuel, "God with us" who nourishes and strengthens our Catholic community. We bring too our mourning and our repentance. Too many of your people are deprived of your sacramental presence because of the human failures of a wounded Church. In many places of the world there are too few priests or no priests at all. People celebrate Eucharist only once once a month or once a year or never.

Jesus, we know that you are with us always, even where there are no priests. But we also know you are the good shepherd who yearns to feed your people with your own substance through the ministry of those you call to be priestly shepherds. You have called many men and women to minister to your people as priests and deacons and pastoral ministers. Many calls are not recognized by the institutional church because the candidate is married or female. Our leaders have been slow to recognize the rich diversity of your summons to "feed my lambs...feed my sheep."

As our Cardinals and Bishops prepare to meet in Rome for the International Synod on the Eucharist, we ask the guidance of your Spirit on them and on us, the people of the Church. May the worldwide hunger for your Eucharistic presence be the first concern of church leaders attending the synod. Give them eyes to see the

abundant calls the Spirit is pouring out on women and men, married and single to serve the Church as priests and deacons. Give us, as people who love the Eucharist, courage and grace to share our concerns and perspectives with our Bishop leaders. Give our Bishops the wisdom to listen.

May your Spirit lead us to that time of Eucharistic abundance so become once again your body and blood, poured out for the life of the world.

*Antiphon: "I have made you a light for the nations, so that my salvation may reach the ends of the earth." (Acts 13: 47)*

**Time of Shared Reflection** (*Prayer leaders invite individual thoughts, reflection, discussion*)

**Individual Prayers and Intercessions** *As each person offers their prayer he or she lights a taper from the Advent candle while the assembly responds :Come Beloved Savior Bring Your Renewing Light to our World and to Our Church Some may choose to pray silently while they light their candle. Prayer leader should make sure they are comfortable with this option too. Participants are invited to stay gathered around the Advent wreath after lighting their candles and when all have finished sing this closing song:*

**Closing Song:** *Christ Be Our Light* (Bernadette Farrell c 2001 Oregon Catholic Press In Today's Missal Music Issue # 560)

*Service created by Christine Schenk csj who has master's degrees in midwifery and theology for **The Corpus Christi : Fewer Priests, Fewer Parishes Campaign** developed by **FutureChurch** ([www.futurechurch.org](http://www.futurechurch.org)) in partnership with **Call to Action** ([cta-usa.org](http://cta-usa.org)) Feel free to make copies for others.*