

THIRD WEEK OF ADVENT:
MARY THE MODEL OF CHRISTIAN PRAISE

INTRODUCTION

The Advent season is the time in the year when the Christian world prepares for the birth of the Saviour. It is a time when we are called to be more open, more human. May each of us this Advent find Emmanuel, and come to know that God is with us. In this prayer service, let us ask our God to bring light and peace to a broken world.

INVITATION TO PRAYER

Leader: May his love shine in our hearts.

All: And may the Lord's peace be with us all.

Leader: The Lord is our faith and our life.

All: Our hope is in the coming of the Lord.

OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray that we may grow in love for each other as the Lord comes to us.

Father in heaven, may we, your family who look forward to the birthday of Christ, experience the joy of your love and celebrate his birth with a new sense of love for each other. All around us there are signs of Your presence, signs of grace. During this Advent season, may our eyes be open to the many ways you visit us. Amen.



ADVENT WREATH

Reader: It is wintertime. Days are short nights are long. We need the light of Christ. We need Christ's warmth and love and joy. And so we gather around this wreath in hope. The circle of this wreath will remind us of the coming of Christ whose love for us has no end. The light of these candles will remind us of the coming of Christ, who is the light of the world.

Leader: The Spirit of the Lord moved over the darkness of earth and there was light and life. May the burning of these candles remind us of the Lord's coming.

All: Amen.

{Two purple candles and one pink candle are lit.}

Leader: Lord God, may we your people, who look forward to the coming of Christ, experience the joy of salvation and celebrate his coming with love and thanksgiving. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

All: Amen



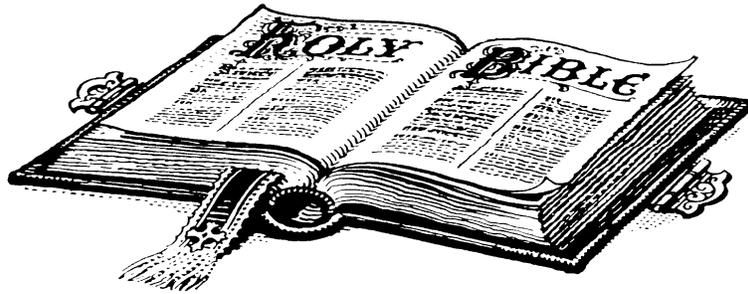
OLD TESTAMENT READING

A Reading from the book of Samuel.

And Hannah prayed and said,
 "My heart exults in the LORD;
 my strength is exalted in the LORD,
 because I rejoice in your salvation.
 "There is none holy like the LORD;
 there is none besides you;
 there is no rock like our God.
 For the LORD is a God of knowledge,
 and by him actions are weighed.

The bows of the mighty are broken,
 but the feeble bind on strength.
 Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread,
 but those who were hungry have ceased to hunger.
 The LORD makes poor and makes rich;
 he brings low and he exalts.
 He raises up the poor from the dust;
 he lifts the needy from the ash heap
 to make them sit with princes
 and inherit a seat of honor.

The Word of the Lord. All: Thanks be to God.



CHORAL READING

Reader: This is the world that God has made.

All: Let us walk in the light of the Lord.

Reader: God will teach us how to live.

All: Let us walk in the light of the Lord.

Reader: God's world was made for peace.

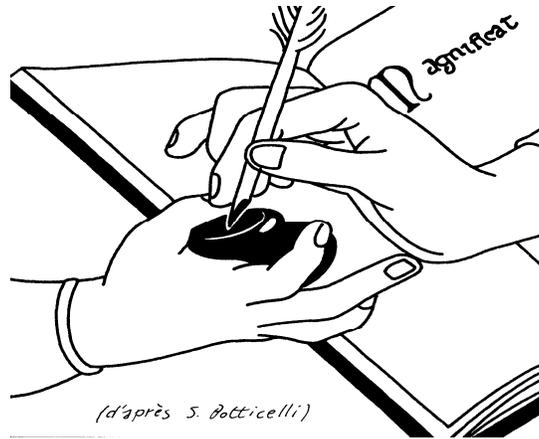
All: Let us walk in the light of the Lord.

Reader: Weapons will become the tools of peace.

All: Let us walk in the light of the Lord.

Reader: People will live in harmony.

All: Let us walk in the light of the Lord.



GOSPEL

A Reading from the Holy Gospel According to Luke.

And Mary said:

"My soul glorifies the Lord
 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
 for he has been mindful
 of the humble state of his servant.
 From now on all generations will call me blessed,
 for the Mighty One has done great things for me —
 holy is his name.

His mercy extends to those who fear him,
 from generation to generation.

He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;
 he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.

He has brought down rulers from their thrones
 but has lifted up the humble.

He has filled the hungry with good things
 but has sent the rich away empty.

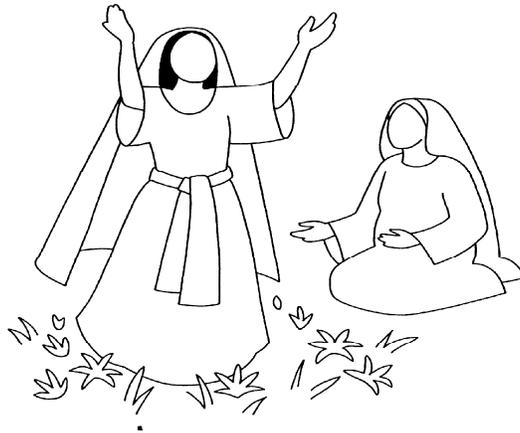
He has helped his servant Israel,
 remembering to be merciful
 to Abraham and his descendants forever,
 even as he said to our fathers."

Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned home.

The Gospel of the Lord. All: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

MEDITATION

Inspired by the Old Testament tradition, with the song of the *Magnificat*, Mary celebrates the marvels God worked in her. This song is the Virgin's response to the mystery of the Annunciation: the angel had invited her to rejoice and Mary now expresses the exultation of her spirit in God her Saviour. The words "henceforth all generations will call me blessed" (Lk 1:48) arise from the fact that Elizabeth was the first to proclaim Mary "blessed" (Lk 1:45). Not without daring, the song predicts that this same proclamation will be extended and increased with relentless momentum. At the same time, it testifies to the special veneration for the Mother of Jesus which has been present in the Christian community from the very first century. Filled with divine gifts, Mary does not limit her vision to her own personal case, but realizes how these gifts show forth God's mercy towards all his people. In her, God fulfils his promises with a superabundance of fidelity and generosity.



PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

The response to our intentions is "*Come, Lord Jesus.*"

1. That all our Christmas preparations will proclaim the joy of the Saviour, as Mary the model of Christian praise exemplifies. We pray to the Lord.
2. That we may always be ready to give to others the gifts of patience and understanding in unlimited measure. We pray to the Lord.
3. That we who profess the name of Jesus be heralds of the justice and peace of God. We pray to the Lord.
4. For the intentions we hold in our hearts...*(pause)*. We pray to the Lord.

CLOSING PRAYER

Your Word, O God, has given us life. May your Word light up this Advent season, dispelling the darkness of fear and mistrust; may your Word dwell among us always, awaking our hearts to your enduring love. Amen.

SIGN OF PEACE

Leader: This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you. You are my friends if you do the things I command you.

All: God is love and those who live in love, live in God and God in them.

Leader: My children, our love is not to be just words or mere talk, but something real and active; only by this can we be certain that we are children of the light.

All: God is love and those who live in love, live in God and God in them.

Leader: And as we take our leave of this place, let us offer each other a sign of peace.

