

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

To you, I lift up my soul, O my God.

In you, I have trusted; let me not be put to shame.

Nor let my enemies exult over me;
and let none who hope in you be put to shame.

COLLECT

Grant your faithful, we pray, almighty God, the resolve to run forth to meet your Christ with righteous deeds at his coming, so that, gathered at his right hand, they may be worthy to possess the heavenly Kingdom.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

FIRST READING

Jeremiah 33:14-16

A reading from the prophet Jeremiah.

See, the days are coming – it is the Lord who speaks – when I am going to fulfil the promise I made to the House of Israel and the House of Judah:

“In those days and at that time,
I will make a virtuous Branch grow for David,
who shall practise honesty and integrity in the land.
In those days Judah shall be saved
and Israel shall dwell in confidence.
And this is the name the city will be called:
The Lord-our-integrity.”

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 24

Response:

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

1. Lord, make me know your ways.
Lord, teach me your paths.
Make me walk in your truth, and teach me:
for you are God my saviour. (R.)
2. The Lord is good and upright.
He shows the path to those who stray,
he guides the humble in the right path;
he teaches his way to the poor. (R.)
3. His ways are faithfulness and love
for those who keep his covenant and will.
The Lord's friendship is for those who
revere him;
to them he reveals his covenant. (R.)

SECOND READING Thessalonians 3:12-4:2

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Thessalonians.

May the Lord be generous in increasing your love and make you love one another and the whole human race as much as we love you. And may he so confirm your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless in the sight of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus Christ comes with all his saints.

Finally, brothers, we urge you and appeal to you in the Lord Jesus to make more and more progress in the kind of life that you are meant to live: the life that God wants, as you learnt from us, and as you are already living

it. You have not forgotten the instructions we gave you on the authority of the Lord Jesus.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

Let us see, O Lord, your mercy
and give us your saving help.

Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Luke 21:25-28:34-36

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

Jesus said to his disciples: “There will be signs in the sun and moon and stars; on earth nations in agony, bewildered by the clamour of the ocean and its waves; men dying of fear as they await what menaces the world, for the powers of heaven will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to take place, stand erect, hold your heads high, because your liberation is near at hand.

“Watch yourselves, or your hearts will be coarsened with debauchery and drunkenness and the cares of life, and that day will be sprung on you suddenly, like a trap. For it will come down on every living man on the face of the earth. Stay awake, praying at all times for the strength to survive all that is going to happen, and to stand with confidence before the Son of Man.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with
the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,

(all bow during the next three lines)

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the
Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored
and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church.

I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness
of sins

and I look forward to the resurrection of the
dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Accept, we pray, O Lord, these offerings we make,
gathered from among your gifts to us,
and may what you grant us to celebrate
devoutly here below,
gain for us the prize of eternal redemption.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

The Lord will bestow his bounty,
and our earth shall yield its increase.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May these mysteries, O Lord,
in which we have participated,
profit us, we pray,
for even now, as we walk amid passing
things,
you teach us by them to love the things of
heaven
and hold fast to what endures.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.



STAND UP STRAIGHT!

(LUKE 21:25-28.34-36)

Intricately carved frieze inside Notre Dame Cathedral depicting Jesus' appearance to the disciples in Galilee

Today, the First Sunday of Advent, we begin a new cycle of readings from the Gospel, this time from the account presented to us by Luke.

The text for today concerns the coming of the Son of Man at the end of time, an event heralded by fearful signs which engulf the natural world. The effect on the human world will be one of confusion and panic. When this will happen is unknown, so how should the disciples of Jesus live in the meantime?

We find the figure of the coming of the Son of Man in glory in the Book of Daniel, which speaks about the final victory of God over the forces which oppose God's rule, God's vision of what human life should be. In the Gospel story, these forces are identified with Satan, and with anything which endangers or adversely affects human life: for example, Luke earlier has described the plight of a crippled woman, "whom Satan has bound" for 18 years and is unable "to stand up straight". Jesus delivers her from this condition, and in this way illustrates the universal deliverance from evil which the Son of Man will bring. The disciples must hold themselves ready to meet the Lord whenever this event takes place. Jesus has warned them about the dangers facing the likes of the complacent house manager who imagines that he or she has plenty of time to indulge in self-centred abuses of their position. There is also the risk that disciples may allow their awareness of the Word of God to be drowned out by the daily concerns of life. Such an attitude will mean that the arrival of the Son of Man will cause panic, guilt and shame.

But this need not be so. Jesus tells the disciples to be alert, constantly praying, and then they will be ready to greet him joyfully. Like the woman whom Jesus has liberated from her suffering, they should stand up straight, knowing that their deliverance from all the evil which threatens them is imminent. Then his coming will be a source of joy, good news indeed. ■

SAY

To you, Lord, I lift up my soul.

DO

Use the frantic advertising for Christmas as a reminder of what is really important to you as a Christian person. Imagine it all as froth on the surface and find a quiet place in your heart to reflect on the place which Jesus occupies in your life today.

REFLECT

Advent is the period of the four weeks leading up to the celebration of the Feast of the Nativity, or the Birth, of Christ. During this time we are invited to reflect not simply on the historical event which took place in Bethlehem, but also, and more importantly, on what that event should mean to us personally today. How would I feel if I realised that Jesus was arriving later today? Would this be good news?

Each time we pray "Thy Kingdom come", we are in fact praying that God's rule (or God's will) should be established in our world: so, we ought to live our lives believing that this is in fact a reality. We might also consider our daily cares and concerns in this light, so that when we celebrate Christmas, we will be welcoming Christ into our lives today as a real and living presence, in a spirit of deep joy. ■

LEARN

The word 'Advent' means 'coming' or 'approach'.

The biblical posture for speaking to God in prayer is standing, not kneeling.

The term 'Son of Man' is taken from the Book of Daniel.

The Book of Daniel is apocalyptic writing, which describes events at the end of time.

