

**THOUGHTS FOR  
PRAYER AND REFLECTION  
DECEMBER 2017**

**Solitude acquaints us  
with ourselves,  
with what we really think  
and deeply feel.**

*Joan Chittister*



1 <sup>st</sup>	O let the earth bless the Lord; bless the Lord you mountains and hills, bless the Lord all that grows in the ground, who is worthy to be praised and exalted for ever. <i>From A Song of Creation</i>
2 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>Frances Perry, founder of the Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne (d.1892):</b> Bless the Lord all you of upright spirit, bless the Lord you that are holy and humble in heart, bless the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, who is worthy to be praised and exalted for ever. <i>From A Song of Creation</i>
3 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>First Sunday of Advent:</b> Father, in the wilderness of the Jordan you sent a message to prepare people's hearts for the coming of your Son. Help me to hear his words and repent of my sins, so that I may clearly see the way to walk, the truth to speak, and the life to live for Him, our Lord Jesus Christ. <i>Amen</i>
4 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Nicholas Ferrar, deacon and man of prayer (d.1637):</b> As I begin these early days of Advent, help me to believe that you know what I need. Give me the courage to listen to your voice and the freedom to open my heart to the graces you are offering me to place my trust in you.
5 <sup>th</sup>	A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. <i>Isaiah 11:1-3</i>
6 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Nicholas of Myra, bishop and philanthropist (d.c.342):</b> In each of my friends there is something that only some other friend can fully bring out. By myself I am not large enough to call the whole man into activity; I want other lights than my own to show all his facets. Hence true friendship is the least jealous of loves. Two friends delight to be joined by a third, and three by a fourth, if only the newcomer is qualified to become a real friend. They can then say, as the blessed souls say in Dante, "Here comes one who will augment our loves." For in this love "to divide is not to take away". <i>C S Lewis: The Four Loves</i>
7 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Ambrose of Milan, bishop and teacher (d.397):</b> Trust in the Lord forever, for in the Lord God you have an everlasting rock. <i>Isaiah 26:4</i>
8 <sup>th</sup>	<b>The Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary; Richard Baxter, pastor and spiritual writer (d.1691):</b> Keep up a humble sense of your own faults, and that will make you compassionate to others. <i>Richard Baxter</i>
9 <sup>th</sup>	Help me to be a peacemaker this Advent and to give special love to those who disagree with me. Give me the strength and courage to forgive those who have hurt me. Help me to free my heart from the prison of my anger and hurt.
10 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Second Sunday of Advent:</b> Lord, to belong to you is to find my home only in the journey that leads into your mystery. Please give me the courage to embrace the challenge of that journey.
11 <sup>th</sup>	Just remaining quietly in the presence of God, listening to Him, being attentive to Him, requires a lot of courage and know-how. <i>Thomas Merton (1915-1968)</i>
12 <sup>th</sup>	"Know that the Lord is God. It is he that made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him, bless his name." <i>Psalms 100:3-4</i>
13 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Lucy, martyr and virgin (d.304):</b> "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. <i>Matthew 11:28-20</i>
14 <sup>th</sup>	<b>John of the Cross, mystic and teacher (d.1591):</b> Whenever anything disagreeable or displeasing happens to you, remember Christ crucified and be silent. <i>John of the Cross</i>
15 <sup>th</sup>	Bless the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, you are very great. <i>Psalms 104:1</i>

16 <sup>th</sup>	Listen to me, O Jacob, and Israel, whom I called: I am He; I am the first, and I am the last. My hand laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand spread out the heavens; when I summon them, they stand at attention. <i>Isaiah 48:12-13</i>
17 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Third Sunday of Advent:</b> Loving God, help me to be a person of peace; to speak about it in an uneasy world, and to live it among the people you have put into my life every day. Light in me a desire to prepare for your coming; to stand, waiting, eager and filled with joy.
18 <sup>th</sup>	Lord, I do not attempt to comprehend your sublimity, because my intellect is not at all equal to such a task. But I yearn to understand some measure of your truth, which my heart believes and loves. For I do not seek to understand in order to believe but I believe in order to understand. For I believe even this: that I shall not understand unless I believe. <i>Gustavo Gutiérrez: We Drink from Our Own Wells - The Spiritual Journey of a People (20th Anniversary Edition)</i>
19 <sup>th</sup>	Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time on and forevermore. From the rising of the sun to its setting the name of the Lord is to be praised. <i>Psalms 113: 2-3</i>
20 <sup>th</sup>	Let the heavens praise your wonders, O Lord, your faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones. For who in the skies can be compared to the Lord? Who among the heavenly beings is like the Lord, a God feared in the council of the holy ones, great and awesome above all that are around him? <i>Psalms 89:5-7</i>
21 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Thomas, Apostle and Martyr:</b> Your life as a Christian should make non-believers question their disbelief in God. <i>Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945)</i>
22 <sup>nd</sup>	My heart exults in the Lord; my strength is exalted in my God. My mouth derides my enemies; because I rejoice in your salvation. There is no Holy One like you, O Lord; nor any Rock like you, our God. For you are a God of knowledge; and by you our actions are weighted. <i>From the Song of Hannah (APBA 429)</i>
23 <sup>rd</sup>	See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight – indeed, he is coming says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. <i>Malachi 3:1-4</i>
24 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Fourth Sunday of Advent:</b> Lord, please give us the grace to see beyond our own reflection to all that is "other", the wisdom to recognise you in the "other", and the courage to enter lovingly into what we see. <i>Amen</i>
25 <sup>th</sup>	<b>The Birth of our Lord – Christmas Day:</b> And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. <i>Luke 2:7</i>
26 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Stephen, Deacon and First Martyr:</b> We must develop and maintain the capacity to forgive. He who is devoid of the power to forgive is devoid of the power to love. There is some good in the worst of us and some evil in the best of us. When we discover this, we are less prone to hate our enemies. <i>Martin Luther King, Jr.</i>
27 <sup>th</sup>	<b>John, Apostle and Evangelist:</b> The Lord is king! Let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad! <i>Psalms 97:1</i>
28 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Holy Innocents:</b> Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth. <i>Psalms 124:8</i>
29 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Thomas Becket, archbishop of Canterbury, martyr (d.1170):</b> Forgiveness says you are given another chance to make a new beginning. <i>Desmond Tutu</i>
30 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Josephine Butler, social reformer (d.1905):</b> Wisdom, compassion, and courage are the three universally recognised moral qualities of men. <i>Confucius</i>
31 <sup>st</sup>	<b>First Sunday after Christmas:</b> Who is wise and understanding among you? Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom. <i>James 3:13</i>

# PRAYER THOUGHTS



- Sunday I pray for a deep love of the Gospels and for the wisdom and courage to make them my agenda for action.
- Monday Loving God, inspire me to share with others the treasures you have poured into my life. Teach me how to give – and how to give away – and to live with open hands and open heart.
- Tuesday Loving God, we open ourselves to you as we approach this Christmas season. Show us the creative power of hope. Teach us the peace that comes from justice. Fill us with the kind of joy that cannot be contained, but must be shared. Magnify your love within us. Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you that we may walk in the light of Christ.
- Wednesday We pray that we may live not by our fears but by our hopes, not by our words but by our deeds.
- Thursday Through the dark hours of this night protect and surround us, Father, Son and Spirit, Three. Forgive the ill that we have done. Forgive the pride that we have shown. Forgive the words that have caused harm that we might sleep peaceably, and rise refreshed to do your will. Through the dark hours of this night protect and surround us, Father, Son and Spirit, Three.  
*John Birch*
- Friday Lord Jesus, it has been said that you have no hands for your work and caring on earth today except our hands. Please use mine. *Amen*
- Saturday While we read the ancient stories of his birth yet again, may we worship with the joy of an angel chorus, feel the eager excitement of shepherds who heard their song, and bring the Blessed Son a gift more precious than Magi could offer.

***Thoughts for Prayer & Reflection***  
for our *city on a hill...* and beyond.

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**Our church is open every day,  
providing a sacred space for contemplation and prayer.**

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