

# THOUGHTS FOR PRAYER AND REFLECTION

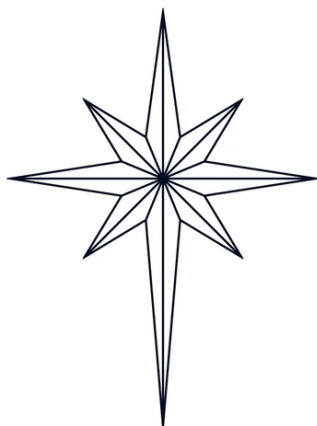
*December 2024*

Long lay the world in sin and error pining,  
'til he appeared and the soul felt its worth.

A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices,  
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.

*O Holy Night*

*Adolphe Adam, 1847*



<b>1</b>	<b>First Sunday of Advent:</b> Life in a prison cell may well be compared to Advent; one waits, hopes, and does this, that, or the other- things that are of no real consequence - the door is shut, and can be opened only from the outside. <i>Dietrich Bonhoeffer</i>
<b>2</b>	<b>Frances Perry, Founder of the Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne (d.1892):</b> Nation shall not life up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. <i>Isaiah 2:4</i>
<b>3</b>	<b>Francis Xavier, priest and missionary (d.1552):</b> It is not the actual physical exertion that counts towards one's progress, nor the nature of the task, but by the spirit of faith with which it is undertaken. <i>Francis Xavier</i>
<b>4</b>	<b>Nicholas Ferrar, deacon, man of prayer (d.1637):</b> Praise the Lord! How good it is to sing praises to our God; for he is gracious and a song of praise is fitting. <i>Psalm 147:1</i>
<b>5</b>	Not to know that any Christian spirit working kindly in its little sphere, whatever it may be, will find its mortal life too short for its vast means of usefulness. <i>Charles Dickens, A Christmas Carol, 1843.</i>
<b>6</b>	<b>Nicholas of Myra, bishop and philanthropist (d.c.342):</b> Charity never humiliated him who profited from it, nor ever bound him by the chains of gratitude, since it was not to him but to God that the gift was made. <i>Antoine de Saint-Exupery (1900-1944)</i>
<b>7</b>	<b>Ambrose of Milan, bishop and teacher (d. 397):</b> Through your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way. <i>Psalm 119:104</i>
<b>8</b>	<b>Second Sunday of Advent:</b> Paul gives us an astonishing understanding of waiting in the New Testament book of Romans, as rendered by Eugene Peterson, "Waiting does not diminish us, any more than waiting diminishes a pregnant mother. We are enlarged in the waiting. We, of course, don't see what is enlarging us. But the longer we wait, the larger we become, and the more joyful our expectancy." With such motivation, we can wait as we sense God is indeed with us, and at work within us, as he was with Mary as the child within her grew. <i>Luci Shaw (b.1928)</i>
<b>9</b>	Lord, grant me such a willing heart like Mary's, that I may say yes to Your before a reason to say no even occurs to me. May my life always align with Your words. <i>Amen.</i>
<b>10</b>	I have blotted out your transgressions like a cloud and your sins like mist; return to me, for I have redeemed you. <i>Isaiah 44:22</i>
<b>11</b>	Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, as I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. <i>Matthew 11:28-30</i>
<b>12</b>	Shalom is a state of spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being that resembles the abundant life Jesus promised. <i>Chris Tiegreen</i>
<b>13</b>	<b>Lucy, Martyr and Virgin (d.304):</b> I will study the way that is blameless. When shall I attain it? I will walk with integrity of heart within my house. I will not set before my eyes anything that is base. <i>Psalm 101:2-3</i>
<b>14</b>	<b>John of the Cross, Mystic and Teacher (d.1591):</b> Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. <i>James 3:1</i>

<b>15</b>	<b>Third Sunday of Advent:</b> May my journey through December be not too hectic, but rather fruitful and reflective. When I arrive at Christmas Day, may it be lit by your enduring and loving light. <i>Amen.</i>
<b>16</b>	And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. <i>1 John 3:23-24</i>
<b>17</b>	Jesus, thank You that You came for real people, wherever and however we are. Shepherd us well. <i>Amen.</i>
<b>18</b>	"Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land." <i>Jeremiah 23:5</i>
<b>19</b>	For lo! the days are hastening on by prophets seen of old, when with the ever-circling years shall come the time foretold. <i>Edmund Sears (b.1810)</i>
<b>20</b>	Truly He taught us to love one another; His law is love and His Gospel is Peace. <i>Adolphe Adam (b.1803)</i>
<b>21</b>	<b>Thomas, Apostle and Martyr:</b> The world is not divided into the strong who care and the weak who are cared for. We must each in turn care and be cared for, not just because it is good for us, but because it is the way things are. <i>Sheila Cassidy (b.1937)</i>
<b>22</b>	<b>Fourth Sunday of Advent:</b> Advent is both a beginning and an end, an alpha and an omega of the church's year of grace. Too often considered merely a season of preparation for the annual commemoration of Christ's birth, this rich and many-layered season is actually designed to prepare the Christian for the glorious possibilities of the parousia. It is a season of longing expectation - "Come, Lord Jesus". <i>William G Storey (d.2014)</i>
<b>23</b>	"But for you who fear me name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall." <i>Malachi 4:2</i>
<b>24</b>	So, God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heav'n. <i>Phillip Brooks (b.1868)</i>
<b>25</b>	<b>The Birth of our Lord/Christmas Day:</b> The light that came into the darkness is not just the light of the Messiah; it's ours. The closer we come to Christ, the more we take on His radiance. <i>Chris Tiegreen</i>
<b>26</b>	<b>Stephen, Deacon and First Martyr:</b> If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me. <i>Psalms 139: 9-10</i>
<b>27</b>	<b>John, Apostle and Evangelist:</b> This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. <i>1 John 1:5</i>
<b>28</b>	<b>Holy Innocents:</b> Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth. <i>Psalms 124:8</i>
<b>29</b>	<b>First Sunday after Christmas:</b> And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. <i>John 1:14</i>
<b>30</b>	<b>Josephine Butler, social reformer (d.1905):</b> Whoever has a heart full of love always has something to give. <i>Pope John XXIII</i>
<b>31</b>	<b>John Wyclif, teacher and reformer (d.1384):</b> The natural world is the larger sacred community to which we belong. To be alienated from this community is to become destitute in all that makes us human. To damage this community is to diminish our own existence. We lose our souls if we lose the experience of the forest, the butterflies, the song of the birds, if we can't see the stars at night. <i>Thomas Berry (1914-2009)</i>

# Prayers & Thoughts

<b>Sunday</b>	Lord, show me what it means to embody heaven and earth, to live in both spiritual and material realms, to walk here and now in the light of eternity. Renew me, recreate me from within, fill me daily with Your divine life. <i>Amen.</i>
<b>Monday</b>	Almighty God, as your blessed Son Jesus Christ first came to seek and to save the lost; so may he come again to find in us the completion of his redeeming work; for he is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. <i>Amen.</i>
<b>Tuesday</b>	Creator God, You are in all things. You are in the wind through the trees, the call of the birds, the crash of the waves. You are in the feel of a hug, the taste of nourishing food and the smell of rain. Help us to see You in all that we experience today. <i>Amen.</i>
<b>Wednesday</b>	Holiness is a call to live differently, to stand apart from the ways of the world while still being present in it. It is about being in communion with others, bringing God's compassion to those in need and being peacemakers in a world that often seeks division.
<b>Thursday</b>	O God of hope and peace, we bring before you the needs of our broken and hurting world. Protect the vulnerable, strengthen the fearful and comfort the grieving. <i>Amen.</i>
<b>Friday</b>	God, help me to receive Your love daily so that I can give it away when it is needed most. <i>Amen.</i>
<b>Saturday</b>	Lord of all creation great and small, as we traverse the changes and challenges of this life, help us to not lose sight of the beauty and wonder of Your creation. <i>Amen.</i>
<b>Sunday</b>	When we let God's love shine from us onto others, the world will look at us and think: <i>There's something different about that person.</i> Something others will want, so much.



*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.**

