

THOUGHTS FOR PRAYER AND REFLECTION

December 2022

Leave me alone with God
as much as may be.
As the tide draws the waters
close in upon the shore,
make me an island, set apart,
alone with you, God,
holy to you.

Then with the turning of the tide
prepare me to carry your presence
to the busy world beyond,
the world that rushes in on me
till the waters come again
and fold me back to you.

*The Northumbria Community,
Celtic Daily Prayer,
Book 1*



1 st	This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. <i>Psalm 118:24</i>
2 nd	Frances Perry, founder of the Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne (d.1892): If you suddenly and unexpectedly feel joy, don't hesitate. Give in to it. <i>Mary Oliver (1935-2019)</i>
3 rd	Francis Xavier (d.1552): When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest." <i>Matthew 10:36-37</i>
4 th	Second Sunday of Advent: Loving God, may the light of your love always shine in our hearts. As Christmas draws closer, we marvel at your great love for us. Let your love transform every aspect of our lives and touch everyone we encounter. <i>Amen</i>
5 th	Let all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you. Let those who love your salvation say evermore, "God is great!" But I am poor and needy; hasten to me, O God! You are my help and my deliverer; O Lord, do not delay. <i>Psalm 70:4-5</i>
6 th	Nicholas of Myra, bishop and philanthropist (d.c.342): Love is the most universal, the most tremendous and the most mystical of cosmic forces. Love is the primal and universal psychic energy. Love is a sacred reserve of energy; it is like the blood of spiritual evolution. <i>Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955)</i>
7 th	Ambrose of Milan, bishop and teacher (d.397): "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>Mark 11:28-30</i>
8 th	The Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary/Richard Baxter, pastor and spiritual writer (d.1691): The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. The Lord is good to all, and his compassion is over all that he has made. <i>Psalm 145:8-9</i>
9 th	A blessed thing it is for any man or woman to have a friend, one human soul whom we can trust utterly, who knows the best and worst of us, and who loves us in spite of all our faults. <i>Charles Kingsley (1819-1875)</i>
10 th	Restore us, O Lord God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved. <i>Psalm 80:19</i>
11 th	Third Sunday of Advent: Help me to learn the grace of humility, and give me the courage to say "yes" to you without always knowing where it will lead.
12 th	The eternal destiny of human beings will be measured by how much or how little solidarity we have displayed with the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, and the oppressed. In the end we will be judged in terms of love. <i>Leonardo Boff (b.1918)</i>
13 th	Lucy, martyr and virgin (d.304): We need to fall, and we need to be aware of it; for if we did not fall, we should not know how weak and wretched we are of ourselves, nor should we know our Maker's marvellous love so fully. <i>Julian of Norwich (1342-1416)</i>
14 th	John of the Cross, mystic and teacher (d.1591): If you purify your soul of attachment to and desire for things, you will understand them spiritually. If you deny your appetite for them, you will enjoy their truth, understanding what is certain in them. <i>John of the Cross</i>
15 th	I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart; I will tell of all your wonderful deeds. I will be glad and exult in you; I will sing praise to your name, O Most High. <i>Psalm 9:1-2</i>
16 th	May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, that your way may be known upon earth, your saving power among all nations. Let the peoples praise you, O God, let all the peoples praise you. <i>Psalm 67:1-3</i>

17 th	We must learn to measure ourselves, not by our knowledge about God, not by our gifts and responsibilities in the church, but by how we pray and what goes on in our hearts. Many of us, I suspect, have no idea how impoverished we are at this level. Let us ask the Lord to show us. <i>J I Packer (1926-2020)</i>
18 th	Fourth Sunday of Advent: Father, just as you sent John the Baptist to prepare the way for Jesus, help me to clear the path in my heart. Show me the distractions in my life that block me from unreserved worship of you this Advent. Help me to live my life where I am constantly seeking your presence. Give me the strength to ask for forgiveness and to then change my ways. <i>Amen</i>
19 th	He does not believe that does not live according to his belief. <i>Thomas Fuller (1608-1662)</i>
20 th	What shall I return to the Lord for all his bounty to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord, I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people. <i>Psalms 116:12-14</i>
21 st	Thomas, Apostle and Martyr: the Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life. The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time on and forevermore. <i>Psalms 121:7-8</i>
22 nd	He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. Then he called his disciples and said to them, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For all of them have contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on." <i>Mark 12:41-44</i>
23 rd	And when night comes, and you look back over the day and see how fragmentary everything has been, and how much you planned that has gone undone, and all the reasons you have to be embarrassed and ashamed: just take everything exactly as it is, put it in God's hands and leave it with Him. <i>Edith Stein (1891-1942)</i>
24 th	I will sing of your steadfast love, O Lord, forever; with my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations. I declare that your steadfast love is established forever; your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens. <i>Psalms 89:1-2</i>
25 th	The Birth of our Lord/Christmas Day: For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. <i>Isaiah 9:6</i>
26 th	Stephen, Deacon and First Martyr: Christ has turned all our sunsets into dawns. <i>Clement of Alexandria (c.150-c.215)</i>
27 th	John, Apostle and Evangelist: Let my prayer be counted as incense before you, and the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice. <i>Psalms 141:2</i>
30 TH	Holy Innocents: Teach me your way, O Lord, that I may walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart to revere your name. <i>Psalms 86:11</i>
29 th	To be poor does not mean you lack the means to extend charity to another. You may lack money or food, but you have the gift of friendship to overwhelm the loneliness that grips the lives of so many. <i>Stanley Hauerwas (b.1940)</i>
30 TH	Josephine Butler, social reformer (d.1905): Grant us, Lord God, a vision of your world as your love would have it: a world where the weak are protected, and none goes hungry or poor.
31 st	John Wyclif, teacher and reformer (d.1384): In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness does not overcome it. <i>John 1:1-5</i>

PRAYER THOUGHTS



- Sunday** Loving God, by whose power we are created and by whose love we are redeemed: guide and strengthen us by your Spirit, that we may give ourselves to your service, and live this day in love to one another and to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen*
- Monday** 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.
- Tuesday** Father, fill our hearts with the fire of your love and the desire to ensure justice for all our brothers and sisters. By sharing the good things you give us may we secure justice and equality for every human being, an end to all division, and a human society built on love and peace.
- Wednesday** Lord, make that possible to me by grace which seems impossible to me by nature.
- Thursday** Loving, caring Lord, you know the secrets of our hearts and the burdens which we carry. You are never too busy to hear our prayers. Be with us and comfort us all through our times of trial.
- Friday** 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.
- Saturday** 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.

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

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