



COME, LORD JESUS!

Reflections for
the Season of
Advent

In His Own Words ...
POPE FRANCIS



“Religious man strives to see the signs of God in the daily experiences of life, in the cycle of the seasons, in the fruitfulness of the earth and in the movement of the cosmos. God is light and can be found also by those who seek him with a sincere heart.”

— *Lumen Fidei*, 35

Are You the One Who Is to Come?

Matthew 11:2-11



How do we wrestle with uncertainty in parish life? Are we bold enough to ask questions? Are we willing to listen to answers?

2 Jesus' answer is just as surprising: he simply points to his actions and directs the disciples to tell John what they see and hear. Jesus offers no eloquent words about himself: his life is his message.

What message does my life send? What message does our communal/parish life send? How do my words reflect who I am called to be?

3 In the third act of this Gospel passage, Jesus affirms and acknowledges John the Baptist as a great prophet. With another surprising twist, he declares that greatness in this life does not measure up in the kingdom of heaven.

How do I affirm others? How do we as a community acknowledge the contributions of those outside of our immediate faith community?

ADVENT PRAYER

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light! (Isaiah 9:1)

God of blessings,
we celebrate your good gifts
and rejoice at the gift of
your son, Jesus.
Amen.



1 John the Baptist is imprisoned. He sends his disciples to seek out Jesus and ask him directly: “Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?” The question reflects a surprising uncertainty about Jesus on the part of John and his disciples. Yet, it is boldly asked.

LIVING THE
LITURGICAL YEAR

THE O ANTIPHONS



One of the most popular hymns we hear during Advent is “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.” While we don’t usually sing all seven verses at a given liturgical celebration, there is a reason it has seven stanzas. Each one starts with a title for the Messiah, and also refers to the prophecy of Isaiah about the coming of the Messiah. We call these the O Antiphons.

The O Antiphons became part of the evening prayer of Benedictine monks by the seventh century. The monks arranged these with a purpose: the first letter of the titles in Latin, starting with

the last verse — *Emmanuel, Rex, Oriens, Clavis, Radix, Adonai, Sapientia* — spells *ero cras* — that is, “Tomorrow, I will come.” Beginning on December 17, these antiphons prepare us to recognize the long-awaited Messiah in the Babe of Bethlehem.

EMMANUEL — God-with-us
REX GENTIUM — King of the Nations
ORIENS — Morning Star
CLAVIS DAVID — Key of David
RADIX JESSE — Root of Jesse
ADONAI — Lord
SAPIENTIA — Wisdom

SAINTS of the SEASON

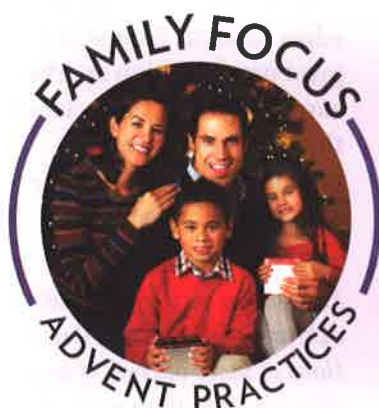
Saint Lucy
Feast day: December 13



Saint Lucy was a fourth-century martyr, whose name and feast day are associated with light. In Scandinavia, children light candles and bring pastries to their parents the morning of Saint Lucy’s feast day. In Italy, Saint Lucy brings small gifts to good children. In Hungary, there is a tradition of planting wheat seeds in a little pot on the feast of Saint Lucy. Children watch the wheat grow and use the sprigs in the manger of their family’s Christmas crèche.

GAUDETE SUNDAY

The Third Sunday of Advent has a different liturgical color than the rest of Advent. The third candle in the Advent wreath as well as the liturgical vestments are usually rose-colored to emphasize our joyful expectation of the Lord’s coming. The name comes from the Gregorian chant intonation to the Mass: “*Gaudete in Domino semper; iterum dico*”: “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice!”



BLESS THE TREE

As you put up the family Christmas tree, give thanks to God for the gift of evergreens in the winter, the gift of lights to remind us of Jesus coming into the world, and special ornaments that remind us of family, friends, and holidays past. What does the evergreen teach us about God’s love for us? (Hint: it is everlasting!)

“Let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice.’ Although man can forget God or reject him, He never ceases to call every man to seek him, so as to find life and happiness.” (CCC, 30)

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