

Planning for Rites and Rituals

A Resource for Episcopal Worship, Year B, 2020–2021



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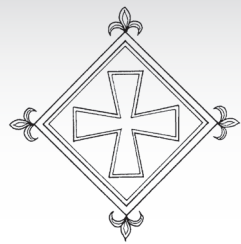
Church Publishing Incorporated
19 East 34th Street
New York, NY 10016

Cover design by: Jennifer Kopec, 2 Pug Design
Typeset by: Linda Brooks

A record of this book is available from the Library of Congress.

ISBN: 9781640653054 (pbk.)

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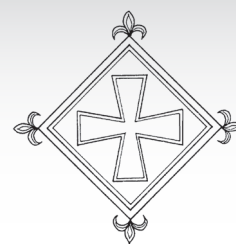
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Welcome



Welcome to the 2020-2021 Year B edition of *Planning for Rites and Rituals*. All of us at Church Publishing are pleased to bring you this new resource for liturgical planning.

The editorial team (Nancy Bryan, Sharon Ely Pearson, Milton Brasher-Cunningham, and Wendy Barrie) tasked with creating this volume worked with some amazing folks to bring you a wide range of thought-provoking, creative options for Sundays and holy days throughout the liturgical year. Looking for ways to engage a range of ages? It's here. Looking for help "seeing" the images in each week's scripture? We've got that. Want hymns keyed to the lectionary or brief introductions to the scriptures? It's all here, in a single resource.

You will find that this resource offers two areas for engaging in planning, grouped by liturgical season and date. Each season begins with a "Preparing for . . ." section designed to get you thinking and your creative juices flowing. "Seasonal Rites" follows, offering expansive ideas for worship within or outside the primary Sunday service. Following these two overview documents, every Sunday's set of resources offers all you need for putting together a Sunday (or holy day) service as well as other ideas for formation and community engagement within and beyond your church doors.

Dozens of individuals were part of the creation of this all-in-one volume. Priests, educators, musicians, members of Altar Guilds, and many others are featured within these pages. Our intention is to provide a similar mix of established writers and new voices—those working in small parishes and those in larger ones, those in rural locales and those in cities, clergy and lay—in each new volume of this resource over the years to come.

Here is a description of the areas to deepen themes of each Sunday and holy day, along with those who have contributed their creative ideas this year:

- ♦ *Preaching the Gospel for Year B* was written by **Cynthia Briggs Kittredge**, dean and president of Seminary of the Southwest. The *Preparing for* seasonal overviews were taken from *Planning the Church Year* by the late **Leonel Mitchell**. *Weekday Commemorations* were written by **Martha Baker**, writer, editor, and educator in St. Louis, Missouri.
The scriptural overviews that open each Sunday or holy day come from *Preparing for Sunday* (www.preparingforsunday.com).
- ♦ *Prayers of the People* are the work of **Lyn Zill Briggs**, vicar of Episcopal Church of the Resurrection in the Diocese of Utah. They are specifically designed to follow the child-friendly pattern of her lectionary volume, *God's Word, My Voice*.
- ♦ *Engaging all Ages* offers ideas for deepening all ages in their engagement with worship (children, youth, and adults). They include thoughts for the congregation to take home and discuss, things to notice or highlight during worship (colors, senses, symbols, gestures), and ideas for action. Contributors for these portions are: **Sharon Ely Pearson**, an educator from Norwalk, Connecticut; **Marisa Tabizon Thompson**, rector of All Saints Episcopal Church, Omaha, Nebraska; and **Sarah Bentley Allred**, Director of Children and Family Ministries, St. John's Episcopal Church in Wake Forest, North Carolina.
- ♦ *Ideas for the Day* offers thoughts for approaching the day and its text in preaching and worship, including contemporary issues, movies, technology and social media, literature, historical events, and figures related to the Sunday lessons and season. Contributing these ideas are: **Helen Svoboda Barber**, rector of St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Durham, North Carolina; **Jennifer Holt Enriquez**, Children and Youth Formation Director, St. Christopher's Episcopal Church, in Oak Park,

Illinois; **Robert W. Lee IV**, pastor of Uniform Church in Statesville, North Carolina; **Patrick Kangrga**, the Associate for Youth Ministries at Trinity Episcopal Church, Menlo Park, California; **Hillary Raining**, rector of St. Christopher's Episcopal Church, Gladwyne, Pennsylvania; **Will Mebane**, of St. Barnabas Episcopal Church in Falmouth, Massachusetts; **Anna V. Ostenso Moore**, Associate for Family Ministry at St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral, Minneapolis, Minnesota; **Lelanda Lee**, a writer, poet, and church and community leader in Longmont, Colorado; and **William (Billy) Daniel**, of St. Michael's Episcopal Church, Geneseo, New York.

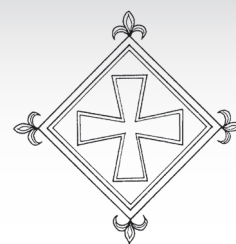
- ♦ *Making Connections* offers insights into connecting our Episcopal tradition to each Sunday. This may take the form of referencing other areas of the Book of Common Prayer, our Baptismal Covenant, or faith in daily life. Contributors here are: **Heidi J. A. Carter**, lay minister associate at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Kansas City, Missouri; and **Victoria Garvey**, biblical scholar and educator based in Chicago, Illinois.

- ♦ *Images in the Reading* taps into the metaphors, names, history, and theology that are found in the day's lections. **Gail Ramshaw**, well-known author and speaker, provides these rich resources.
- ♦ *Hymn suggestions* are drawn from **Carl Daw Jr.** and **Thomas Pavlechko's** *Liturgical Music for the Revised Common Lectionary, Year B* (Church Publishing Incorporated, 2008). These complement the theme and readings of the day and come from *The Hymnal 1982, Lift Every Voice and Sing II*, and *Wonder, Love, and Praise*.

Your feedback and perspective, of course, are also critical to these efforts. Let us hear from you—what would you appreciate seeing? What was most helpful? Who are the writers you would recommend to us for future editions?

Thank you for the trust you put in Church Publishing Incorporated to provide liturgical planning tools for your parish use. We value our partnership on the journey and are grateful for the many ways in which you care for the church's worship.

Year B: The Year of Mark and John



The design of the Revised Common Lectionary Year B follows Mark's gospel and is supplemented by readings from the Gospel of John in Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, and Easter; and in the time after Pentecost, five Sundays of readings from John 6.

The Gospel of Mark

Not only is Mark the earliest of the four canonical gospels, but it is the first piece of literature to which we have given the name *gospel*, a word that describes both the book's genre and its subject: the gospel, *evangelion*, "good news." The first line of Mark announces itself as "The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." The "beginning" speaks of both the beginning of the book and the origin of the good news that the narrative itself proclaims. The Gospel of Mark tells the story of Jesus without reference to its author (cf. John 19:35; 21:24) or the circumstances of its writing (cf. Luke 1:1-2). The omniscient narrator tells the story with absolute authority from the citation of the prophet Isaiah in 1:2-3 to the silent flight from the tomb in 16:8. The narrator relates the story of Jesus in the language and imagery of the scriptures of Israel, creating a rich texture of allusions to exodus, exile, prophets, law, and covenant. The style is fast-paced, lacking smooth transitions between episodes. Its spare narrative casts specific details in high relief.

The World Behind the Text

Written around 70 CE during the violence of the Jewish war with Rome or after the destruction of the temple, the gospel presents traditions about Jesus's teaching and healing ministry, words and deeds, and an extended narrative of the events of his passion and death. Scholars have placed the gospel in Rome, Syria, or another part of the Roman Empire. The social

setting of Mark's community is one of suffering and marginalization in Roman-occupied Palestine. In its depiction of the scribes and Pharisees as opponents of Jesus and in details of the trial, it reflects early stages in the mutual self-definition between the early Christian assembly and the Jewish community from which it came. The gospel shows Jesus reinforcing the teaching of Torah and emphasizing its true intention (Mark 7:9-23; 10:1-12; 12:28-34). Mark is the primary literary source for the composition of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke and a strong influence on John. The depiction of women as exemplars of faith and of the values taught by Jesus (1:30-31; 5:25-34; 7:24-30; 12:41-44; 14:1-9; 15:40-41; 16:1-8) may indicate the prominence of women as leaders in the ministry of Jesus and in the community of Mark's gospel.

The World in Front of the Text

Church historian Eusebius cites Papias's testimony that the gospel was written by Mark, who interpreted Peter's experience. Christian leaders in the second century thought it important to link the inherited gospels to apostles who knew Jesus. Sometime in the process of transmission, the shorter ending (16:8b) and the longer ending (16:9-20) were added to the original gospel, perhaps to resolve the mysterious ending and to make it resemble the pattern of the other gospels that report appearances of the risen Jesus.

How the Gospel "Works"

Literary critical scholarship on Mark has explored Mark as story, and studies of orality in the early Christian context have given renewed attention to how the story of Mark would have been heard. Contemporary performance of Mark displays how the drama plays out, creating suspense, surprise, irony,

and paradox. Individual episodes refer backward and forward with repeated key words, summoning the entire good news. To preach one episode of healing or teaching in Mark, reading it in the larger context of the whole story, is most powerful.

As a rhetorical work, the Gospel of Mark does something to those who hear it. The good news provokes emotion and motivates to action. Older scholarship spoke of the outline or structure of Mark as a passion narrative with an extended introduction, noting that Mark 1–8 showed Jesus as a divine man doing deeds of power, then seeming to reverse or correct that picture with a narrative of arrest, humiliation, and death. Literary criticism explicated the plot of Mark in which the identity of Jesus as Messiah was both revealed and concealed as the story progressed. Understanding Mark as rhetorical performance highlights how the reader/hearer experiences the story: you know the end, and it is still a shock; you experience the shift from power to powerlessness; you are propelled from the tomb to speak or not and to meet Jesus in Galilee “just as he told you” (16:7). Some interpreters have read Mark’s gospel as itself an ordeal or baptism into death as a kind of literary-liturgical journey.

The World of the Text: Narrative Arc and Peak Events

The citation of the prophet Isaiah in Mark 1:2–3 (actually, Malachi *and* Isaiah), followed by John baptizing in the wilderness, summons up the setting of the Exile and prophetic vision of redemption. Readers are propelled into Galilee, where God and Satan are at war for control of the cosmos, the society, and the human individual. Jesus’s exorcisms demonstrate that he casts evil spirits from unwilling human hosts as he casts out a legion of demons into the countryside (5:1–20); the strong man is bound in order to plunder his house (3:23–27). Controversy ensues as conflict with the religious authorities escalates, and the disciples, despite being given the secret of the kingdom of God (4:11), misunderstand and misinterpret Jesus’s teaching and the significance of his deeds of power. Jesus’s family attempts to restrain him (3:21). At the same time, many without privilege exhibit confidence in Jesus’s power to heal, those who are in desperate

need of healing for themselves or someone close to them: a leper (1:40), friends of the paralyzed man (2:3–4), Jairus (5:22–23), a bleeding woman (5:25), and a Syrophenician woman (7:25). Readers/hearers of Mark are caught up in the ironic dynamic that those on the inside misunderstand while those on the outside or at the edge respond with faith: “your faith has made you well” (“saved you”) (5:34; 10:52).

Readers, like the characters in Mark, are confronted with how to comprehend Jesus’s teaching that the Son of Man must be killed and rise again, announced three times with intensifying detail (8:31; 9:31; 10:33–34). Will they seek positions of glory as James and John and the Gentiles (10:42) or be those who lose their lives for “my sake, and for the sake of the gospel” (8:35)? Jesus’s teaching in Mark 8:27–10:45 is bracketed by two stories of Jesus healing a blind man, one at Bethsaida, where Jesus gives sight in two stages (8:22–26), and another outside of Jericho, where Bartimaeus asks for and receives his sight, then follows Jesus “on the way” (10:46–52). In the oral performance of the gospel, these two stories evoke the reality of partial sight/knowledge and the difficulty and remarkable gift of complete sight.

The climactic episode in the drama of knowing/not knowing, saving and losing, opens the passion narrative. At Bethany, a woman breaks open a jar of costly ointment and pours it on Jesus’s head while he sits at the table. Her prophetic action of anointing Jesus’s head and Jesus’s acknowledgment that she has “anointed my body beforehand for its burial” (14:8) reveal the paradoxical truth that the anointed one is also the one who will die. Rather than being wasteful, her pouring out all the ointment is the epitome of the way of life that Jesus teaches: losing life to save it. For this reason, her “good service” will be told wherever the gospel is proclaimed “in remembrance of her” (14:9).

The passion narrative recounts Jesus’s betrayal and arrest, desertion by his followers, trial, torture, and execution by his enemies. Having exhibited extraordinary power in Galilee, Jesus becomes seemingly powerless and mostly silent, the one able to save others but unable to save himself (15:31). Jesus’s cry from the cross, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” expresses abandonment and despair, a realistic depiction of human loneliness and death.

Three critical moments of the naming of Jesus as Son punctuate the gospel. The first is at his baptism, when a voice from heaven says, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased” (1:11). The second is at his transfiguration, when a voice from the cloud says, “This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!” (9:7). The third is after his death, when a centurion says, “Truly this man was God’s Son!” (15:39). These three voices resonate within the hearers of the gospel, setting up an implicit but unexplained relationship between baptism, transfiguration, and crucifixion.

Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome’s arrival at the tomb culminates the theme of women following and serving Jesus (1:30-31; 15:40-41) and recalls the anointing at the table at Bethany (14:3-9). The young man announces “He has been raised” and commissions the women to tell the others that “he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him” (16:6-7). The ambiguous conclusion—that the women flee in silence and fear—has often been interpreted as failure and lack of faith. However, other heroes in the biblical tradition (Daniel, John, Ezekiel, Isaiah) are overcome by fear and struck dumb by extraordinary revelation. When they behold Jesus’s resurrection, the faithful women fear, tremble, and are amazed. The gospel ends in the moments before their speech, anticipating reunion with Jesus in Galilee and ongoing ministry to restore the world.

Mark in Year B

The pattern of the Revised Common Lectionary, built around themes of the liturgical season, governs the placement of readings from Mark: in Advent, Jesus’s apocalyptic speech (13:24-37) and the appearance of John baptizing (1:1-8); in the time after Epiphany, controversies and healings (Mark 1) and transfiguration (9:2-10); in Lent, Jesus’s temptation and first passion prediction; and in the time after Pentecost, passages from Mark 3–13. The Markan passion narrative is assigned for the Sunday of the Passion, and the story of the sending out from the empty tomb, on Easter Sunday. Notable omissions from the RCL are the parable of the sower and teaching about parables (4:1-25), the exorcism of the Gerasene demoniac (5:1-20), and the two-stage healing of the blind man at Bethsaida (8:22-26).

Readings from the Gospel of John in each season interrupt the connected narrative of Mark.

Within the liturgical year, the preacher can exploit the dramatic arc of Mark by drawing on the whole gospel when preaching on one episode. The paradox of seeing/not seeing, saving/losing, being served/serving, and power/weakness run throughout the gospel. Resurrection happens in Galilee when Peter’s mother-in-law rises to serve and when Jesus tells the one who is paralyzed and the one whose hand is withered to rise (2:11; 3:3). The exorcism of Legion from the man in the tombs, the healing of the bleeding woman, and the raising of Jairus’s daughter are all stories of resurrection that amplify the significance of Jesus’s teaching and his death. Other key words such as *bread*, *serve*, *clothes*, and *save* set up resonances that reward spiritual and homiletical reflection.

The Gospel of John in Year B

The Gospel of John has its own narrative and symbolic integrity. Using a style and sensibility very different than Mark, John portrays Jesus as the preexistent Word who descends to “his own” and ascends at the time of his exaltation. The fourth gospel interprets the crucifixion as Jesus’s being lifted up (John 3:14; 8:28; 12:32, 34). The motif of Jesus’s “hour,” summarizing the paschal mystery, runs through the entire gospel. Readings from John in year B are concentrated in Lent (3, 4, 5) and Easter (2, 4, 5, 6, 7). John’s narration of events shapes the liturgies of Holy Week. Five Sundays in the time after Pentecost explore Jesus’s bread of life discourse in John 6. Lenten readings from John use distinctive Johannine images: destroying and raising the temple, lifting up the Son of Man, dying and bearing much fruit to anticipate the resurrection. Readings in the Easter season recount the appearances to the disciples and Thomas, Jesus as good shepherd and true vine, and the prayer for the disciples from his farewell discourse. With John, as with Mark, effective preaching connects an individual passage in John with its role in the imaginative world of the whole gospel.

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Advent



Preparing for Advent

The Climax of the Church Year

The First Sunday of Advent is not only the beginning of a new season, it is really the climax and conclusion of the Church Year. The apocalyptic readings leading up to the Christ the King proper on the Last Sunday after Pentecost reach their climax in the celebration of the Parousia on Advent Sunday, after which the theme rapidly modulates to the first Advent. Planning needs to take account of this continuity, so that eschatological themes are not suddenly introduced on a single Sunday and then trundled quickly off again. These eschatological readings give to the liturgy of the last few Sundays before Advent an aura of intense expectation, which should be reflected in other aspects of the liturgy.

A reasonable procedure for overall planning would be to plan the month of November, from All Saints' Day to Christ the King, with the building Advent theme as a unit. The use of the lectionary in planning, the setting of seasonal themes for decoration of the church (such as late fall flowers), a uniform treatment of the psalm between the readings (singing or reciting it responsively as described on p. 582 of the prayer book, for example), and the use of an appropriate canticle such as 9 ("The First Song of Isaiah") or 19 ("The Song of the Redeemed") throughout the period in place of the *Gloria in excelsis* are possible ways to draw the period together. Thanksgiving Day will occur on the fourth Thursday of the month and can easily be included in the planning.

Advent as a Season

Advent itself should be planned as a distinct liturgical season. It is the season of preparation for the coming of Jesus Christ, both his coming in history to Bethlehem at Christmas and his coming in glory at the end of time "to judge the living and the dead" to which Christians look forward. Expectation, not penitence, is its major theme. "The King shall come!" and "Rejoice!" are its watchwords. The great Advent figures who dominate the scripture readings are Isaiah, John the Baptist, and the Virgin Mary.

Liturgical Color

Royal purple or Sarum blue, as colors more appropriate to the season, are increasingly used for vestments and hangings in place of the violet introduced in the nineteenth century from the Roman sequence of liturgical colors but which many people feel tended to make the season more penitential. In some places, rose vestments have been worn on the Third Sunday of Advent, also following a Roman tradition. This Sunday was known as *Gaudete* Sunday by Roman Catholics and Lutherans, because of the antiphon on its introit.

If the parish owns and wishes to use such vestments, they might be more appropriate on the Fourth Sunday, where the proper is always festive and the Virgin Mary (often represented as a mystic rose) is central to the gospel lesson. There does not seem to be any good reason to introduce rose vestments where they have not been used.

Sunday Liturgies

The Sunday morning Advent liturgies should have a seasonal unity. The Gloria is not used, and either the *Trisagion* or the *Kyrie* is sung. The use of the same setting of one of these for the four Sundays will begin to give the services continuity. The *Benedictus* is the traditional Advent canticle, and, unless it is being sung at Morning Prayer, the planners may wish to make a place for it at the eucharist. It could be sung, for example, as an entrance song or between the New Testament reading and the Gospel, either to a plainsong or Anglican chant setting from *The Hymnal* 1982, depending on the preference of the congregation.

Sermons for the four Sundays can be planned as a unity, not necessarily a series, covering the major themes of the season as highlighted in the readings for the particular Sunday. If the same person will not preach every week, it is especially important that the planning committee give attention to the total impact of the Advent preaching. The sermon themes and the readings will then form the basis for selecting hymns and anthems. At least this much of the planning will have to be done well in advance, so that the music can be selected and rehearsed.

Unless different forms of the Prayers of the People tied to the readings (such as those in Gail Ramshaw's *Intercessions for the Christian People*) are used every week, a decision can be made to use the same form for the whole of Advent, further tying the services together. The Advent proper preface is used at all services, and Eucharistic Prayer B, with its strong emphasis on the incarnation, is a particularly appropriate choice for the period from Advent 1 through the Baptism of Christ.

The singing of one of the alternative fraction anthems (*confractoria*), such as "My flesh is food indeed" (S 168 or S 169), in place of "Christ our Passover" during the breaking of the bread is another way to give seasonal unity to the services.

Two alternative seasonal blessings for Advent are in *The Book of Occasional Services* (p. 22). The first contains four short paragraphs, to which all respond "Amen." The second is a simple introduction to the usual blessing. Either may be used, and a decision to use one or the other at every service during Advent is another seasonal possibility.

The Advent Wreath

The lighting of an Advent wreath is an appropriate seasonal symbol. The wreath is of evergreen with four candles, which may be white or the color of the Advent vestments. One candle is lit for each of the four weeks of Advent. This is done at the beginning of the liturgy and may also be done by people in their homes. Often a fifth candle in the middle of the wreath, the Christ candle, is lit on Christmas and throughout the twelve days. In the church, the wreath may be hung from the ceiling or placed on a stand or table in any convenient place where it can be seen by the people. *The Book of Occasional Services* (p. 28) recommends that no particular ceremonial elaboration accompany its use but that at morning services it simply be lit before the services begin. For services held in the evening, the candles may be lit after the Prayer for Light in the Order for Evening.

Evening Services

The use of the Order for Evening during Advent is particularly appropriate, since sunset will be early, evenings long, and evening services easily begun in a darkened church. The order may replace the entrance rite of the Eucharist or be a separate evening service.

The order begins with a special greeting, "Light and peace, in Jesus Christ our Lord," and continues with a Prayer for Light. During Advent this is the collect for Advent 1. The appropriate number of candles on the Advent wreath are then lit and the lights in the church brought up. A proper Advent *Lucernarium* (Anthem at the Candle lighting) is given on page 10 of *The Book of Occasional Services* and set to music in the Hymnal appendix (S 309). This may be sung by a cantor or other song leader while the candles are being lit, or this may be done in silence. Then either the hymn *Phos Hilaron* (as in Evening Prayer) "or some other hymn" is sung. Advent has a particularly suitable hymn for this purpose. "Creator of the stars at night" (hymn 60). If the service is a Eucharist, it continues with the collect of the day. Otherwise, it continues with an evening psalm, a lesson, or a sermon, if desired; the *Magnificat* or another canticle or hymn of praise; prayers; and a blessing. One of the forms for the eucharistic Prayers of the People or Suffrages B from Evening Prayer,

concluding with the collect of the day and the Lord's Prayer, are good choices for the prayers. The blessing may be the proper seasonal blessing from *The Book of Occasional Services*.

One or more evening services, whether the Eucharist or Evensong, might be considered as special events for the Advent season. *The Book of Occasional Services* contains instructions for an Advent Festival of Lessons and Music, which is another possibility for an evening service introduced by the lighting of the Advent wreath. This will provide an opportunity for the singing of more traditional Advent music than is convenient in four Sunday services and give the choir an opportunity to sing some things too difficult for congregational singing, as well as serving as a parish pre-Christmas party.

Advent Music

There is a wealth of Advent hymnody and anthems. In selecting appropriate music, remember that the Parousia theme of Advent I has been replaced by the Annunciation or Visitation by Advent 4. The hymns about coming in glory are, therefore, best for the last Sundays after Pentecost and Advent Sunday, so that by the Sunday before Christmas we can use hymns like *Rosa Mystica* (hymn 81) or Annunciation/Visitation hymns.

Decorating the Church

A perennial cause of conflict between "purists" and "pragmatists" is the proper time to decorate the church for Christmas. In reaction to the secular putting up of Christmas decorations in October, purists insist that nothing can be done until December 24, while the pragmatists plead that such a course of action is totally impractical and urge an earlier date. There is, of course, no reason why evergreens and wreaths cannot be used to decorate the church during Advent. Some churches put bows of Advent blue or purple (depending upon which color they use for the altar hangings and vestments) on their wreaths, changing them to red or white for Christmas. An alternative tradition is to "green" the church on December 17, so that the greens are in place for the festive liturgies of Advent 4. This may have the "practical" advantage of keeping the greens from drying out before Epiphany. December 17 is called "O Sapientia" because a special antiphon was sung before and after the *Magnificat* at evensong from that date until Christmas. These antiphons are preserved in the Hymnal (with the dates on which they were sung) as the verses of "O come, O come, Emmanuel" (hymn 56). The "greening" of the church and the use of this special music marked the increased sense of expectation as Christmas approached. A liturgy committee with imagination might find interesting ways to adapt and incorporate these medieval customs into their own preparation for Christmas.



Seasonal Rites for Advent

The Advent Wreath

The Advent wreath is a visual symbol marking the progress of the season of Advent. When it is used in the church, no special prayers or ceremonial elaboration beyond what is described in the prayer book is desirable. At morning services, the appropriate number of candles is lighted before the service begins.

When used in private homes, the Advent wreath provides a convenient focus for devotions at the time of the evening meal. Here we offer the Prayer for Light as well as prayers for using an Advent wreath in the home.

Prayer for Light

Grant us, Lord, the lamp of charity which never fails, that it may burn in us and shed its light on those around us, and that by its brightness we may have a vision of that holy City, where dwells the true and never-failing Light, Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Prayers for the Advent Wreath at Home¹

First Week in Advent

Leader: Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness,

And put on the armor of light,

Leader: Now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Second Week in Advent

Leader: Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance,

And prepare the way for our salvation,

Leader: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer: who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Third Week in Advent

Leader: Stir up your power, O Lord,

And with great might come among us;

Leader: And, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Fourth Week in Advent

Leader: Purify our conscience, Almighty God,

by your daily visitation,

Leader: That your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Advent Blessing

The following blessing may be used by a bishop or priest whenever a blessing is appropriate. It is a three-fold form, with an Amen at the end of each sentence, leading into a Trinitarian blessing.

May Almighty God, by whose providence our Savior Christ came among us in great humility, sanctify you with the light of his blessing and set you free from all sin. *Amen.*

May he whose second Coming in power and great glory we await, make you steadfast in faith, joyful in hope, and constant in love. *Amen.*

¹ Anne E. Kitch. *The Anglican Family Prayer Book* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2004), 115-121.

May you, who rejoice in the first Advent of our Redeemer, at his second Advent be rewarded with unending life. *Amen.*

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you for ever. *Amen.*

Advent Festival of Lessons & Hymns

Nine lessons are customarily selected (but fewer may be used), interspersed with appropriate Advent hymns, canticles, and anthems. When possible, each Lesson should be read by a different lector, preferably voices of male and female readers as well as a variety of ages. The Lesson from the third chapter of Genesis is never omitted.

Genesis 2:4b-9, 15-25

Genesis 3:1-22 or 3:1-15

Isaiah 40:1-11

Jeremiah 31:31-34

Isaiah 64:1-9a

Isaiah 6:1-11

Isaiah 35:1-10

Baruch 4:36—5:9

Isaiah 7:10-15

Micah 5:2-4

Isaiah 11:1-9

Zephaniah 3:14-18

Isaiah 65:17-25

Luke 1:5-25 or Luke 1:26-38 or Luke 1:26-56

The Celebration of Our Lady of Guadalupe

The Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe (Día de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe) is a celebration of the appearance of the Virgin Mary to an Aztec peasant during the first years of Spanish rule. Today it is both a national and religious holiday in Mexico. The festival begins on the eve of December 12, when concero dancers gather in the atrium of the church.

In the Roman Catholic tradition, the liturgy includes a celebration of the Eucharist followed by a festive meal.

Readings

Zechariah 2:10-13 or Revelation 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10

Luke 1:26-38 or Luke 1:39-47

O God of power and mercy, you blessed the Americas at Tepeyac with the presence of the Virgin Mary of Guadalupe. May her prayers help all men and women to accept each other as brothers and sisters. Through your justice present in our hearts, may your peace reign in the world. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God, forever and ever. *Amen.*

The Angelus (English)

Leader: The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary

And she conceived by the Holy Ghost.

Leader: Hail Mary, full of grace: The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God: Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. *Amen.*

Leader: Behold, the handmaid of the Lord.

Be it done unto me according to thy word.

Leader: Hail Mary . . .

Holy Mary . . .

Leader: And the Word was made flesh

And dwelt among us.

Leader: Hail Mary . . .

Holy Mary . . .

Leader: Pray for us, O holy Mother of God,

That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Leader: Let us pray.

Pour forth, we beseech thee, O Lord, thy grace unto our hearts, that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ, thy Son, was made known by the message of an Angel, may by His Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of His Resurrection, through the same Christ, our Lord, Amen.

El Angelus (Español)

Líder: El Angel del Señor anunció a María.

*Y concibió por obra del
Espíritu Santo.*

Líder: Dios te salve, María. Llena eres de gracia:
El Señor es contigo. Bendita tú eres entre todas las
mujeres. Y bendito es el fruto de tu vientre: Jesús.

*Santa María, Madre de Dios, ruega por
nosotros pecadores, ahora y en la
hora de nuestra muerte. Amén.*

Líder: He aquí la esclava del Señor.

Hagase en mí según Tu palabra.

Líder: Dios te salve María

Santa María

Líder: Y el Verbo se hizo carne.

Y habito entre nosotros.

Líder: Dios te salve María

Santa María

Líder: Ruega por nosotros, Santa Madre de Dios.

*Para que seamos dignos de alcanzar
las promesas de Jesucristo.*

*Todos: Derrama, Señor, Tu gracia en nuestros
corazones; que habiendo conocido la
Encarnación de Cristo, Tu Hijo, por la voz
del Angel, por los meritos de Su Pasión y
cruz seamos llevados a la gloria de la
Resurrección. Por el mismo Cristo,
Nuestro Señor. Amén.*

Las Posadas

Las Posadas (Spanish for "the inn" or "lodgings") is a traditional Mexican festival which reenacts Joseph's search for room at the inn. Beginning on December 16 and continuing for nine days leading up to Christmas Eve worship, a procession carrying a doll representing the Christ Child and images of Joseph and Mary riding a burro walks through the community streets. The processional stops at a previously selected home and asks for lodging for the night. People are invited in to read scriptures and sing Christmas carols. Refreshments are provided by the hosts. The doll is left at the chosen home and picked up the next night when the procession begins again.

Elements for the Procession

Invite participants to sing together a beloved Christmas carol. "O Little Town of Bethlehem" or the traditional Mexican song "Los Peregrinos" ("The Pilgrims").

The Collect

O God, you have caused this holy night to shine with brightness of the true Light: Grant that we, who have known the mystery of that Light on earth, may also enjoy him perfectly in heaven; where with you and the Holy Spirit he lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting. *Amen.*

The Phos Hilaron

O gracious Light,
pure brightness of the everlasting Father in
heaven,
O Jesus Christ, holy and blessed!
Now as we come to the setting of the sun,
and our eyes behold the vesper light,
we sing your praises, O God: Father, Son, and
Holy Spirit.
You are worthy at all times to be praised by
happy voices,
O Son of God, O Giver of life,
And to be glorified through all the worlds.

The Song of Mary, the Magnificat, Luke 1:46-55

And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

An Advent Bidding Prayer for an End to Global Poverty and Instability²

This is a litany prepared by the Office of Government Relations. It is based on the Millennium Development Goals and can be used in place of the Prayers of the People.

Leader: Brothers and sisters in Christ: As we await the great festival of Christmas, let us prepare hearts so that we may be shown its true meaning. Let us pray for the world that God so loves; for peace and unity all over the earth; for the poor, the hungry, the cold, the helpless, and the oppressed; the sick and those who mourn; the aged and the little children; and all who rejoice with us but on another shore and in a greater light, that multitude which none can number, whose hope was in the Word Made Flesh, and with whom, in our Lord Jesus Christ, we forever more are one.

Silence

Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to prepare the way for your only Son: By his coming, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and put on the armor of light, that our feet may be strengthened for your service, and our path may be brightened for the work of justice and reconciliation in our broken world.

God of love, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Let us pray for the poor, hungry, and neglected all over the world, that their cries for daily bread may inspire works of compassion and mercy among those to whom much has been given.

Silence

Almighty and most merciful God, you took on human flesh not in the palace of a king but in the throes of poverty and need: Grant that your holy and life-giving Spirit may so move every human heart; that, following in the steps of your blessed Son, we may give of ourselves in the service of others until poverty and hunger cease in all the world, and all things are reconciled in the reign of Christ.

God of love, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Let us pray for schools and centers of learning throughout the world, for those who lack access to basic education, and for the light of knowledge to blossom and shine in the lives of all God's people.

Silence

Eternal God, the author and source of all knowledge and Truth: bless all who seek to learn and those who teach them, and inspire us to break down barriers that withhold education from your children; that, enlightened with the bright beams of Wisdom, all may be equipped to seek the blessings of liberty, justice, and peace.

God of love, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Let us pray for an end to the divisions and inequalities that scar God's creation, particularly the barriers to freedom faced by God's children throughout the world because of gender; that all who have been formed in God's image might have equality in pursuit of the blessings of creation.

Silence

O God, in whom there is neither male nor female, Jew nor Gentile, slave nor free: Unite the wills of all people, that the walls which divide us and limit equality among your children may crumble, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease; so that all may live together in justice, harmony, and peace.

God of love, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Let us pray for the health of women, children and families around the world, especially for an end to maternal and child mortality, that in building healthy families, all God's people may be empowered to strengthen their communities and repair the breaches which divide nations and peoples.

Silence

² www.episcopalchurch.org/library/article/advent-bidding-prayer-end-global-poverty-and-instability; accessed May 22, 2020.

Almighty and ever-living God, you were born into human flesh and sanctify all families: Protect the health and safety of all women in childbirth and the children whom they bear, and inspire your people to build strong and healthy families and communities, where all may be strengthened to do your will on earth until the day when you gather us into one heavenly family.

God of love, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Let us pray for an end to pandemic disease throughout the world, that plagues of death may no longer fuel poverty, destabilize nations, and inhibit reconciliation and restoration throughout the world.

Silence

O God, the strength of the weak and the comfort of all who suffer: Grant your saving health to all who are afflicted by disease throughout the world. Bless the labors of all who minister to the sick, and unite the wills of nations and peoples in seeking an end to the pandemics of our age; that sickness may be turned to health, sorrow turned to joy, and mourning turned to praise of your Holy Name.

God of love, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Let us pray for an end to the waste and desecration of God's creation, for access to the fruits of creation to be shared equally among all people, and for communities and nations to find sustenance in the fruits of the earth and the water God has given us.

Silence

Almighty God, you created the world and gave it into our care so that, in obedience to you, we might serve all people: Inspire us to use the riches of creation with wisdom, and to ensure that their blessings are shared by all; that, trusting in your bounty, all people may be empowered to seek freedom from poverty, famine, and oppression.

God of love, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Let us pray for all nations and people who already enjoy the abundance of creation and the blessings of prosperity, that their hearts may be lifted up to the needs of the poor and afflicted, and partnerships between rich and poor for the reconciliation of the world may flourish and grow.

Silence

Merciful God, you have bestowed upon us gifts beyond our imagining and have reminded us that all that we have belongs to you alone and is merely held in trust by human hands: we give you thanks for those moments of reconciliation and grace we see in our world, of wrongs that are made right, knowing that in your love all things are possible. Inspire in our nation, its leaders and people a spirit of greater sacrifice and devotion in the use of our treasures for the reconciliation of your world; that, in forsaking wealth and giving up ourselves to walk in the way of the Cross, we may find it to be none other than the way of life and peace.

God of love, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Let us pray for the departed, particularly those who have died as a result of poverty, hunger, disease, violence, or hardness of the human heart;

Silence

Almighty God, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ was born into human flesh to live and die as one of us and destroy forever the bondage of sin and death: We commend to your mercy all your departed servants, particularly those who have died as a result of the brokenness of our world; and we pray that we, too, may share with the Blessed Virgin Mary, [_____] and all the saints in the joy of your heavenly reign.

God of love, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

The Celebrant adds a concluding Collect:

Eternal God, in whose perfect kingdom no sword is drawn but the sword of righteousness, no strength known but the strength of love: So mightily spread abroad your Spirit, that all peoples may be gathered together and reconciled under the banner of the Prince of Peace, as children of one Father; to whom be dominion and glory, now and forever. **Amen.**

An Advent Litany of Darkness and Light³

Voice 1: We wait in the darkness, expectantly, longingly, anxiously, thoughtfully.

Voice 2: The darkness is our friend. In the darkness of the womb, we have all been nurtured and protected. In the darkness of the womb, the Christ-child was made ready for the journey into light.

*You are with us, O God,
in darkness and in light.*

Voice 1: It is only in the darkness that we can see the splendor of the universe—blankets of stars, the solitary glowings of distant planets.

Voice 2: It was the darkness that allowed the magi to find the star that guided them to where the Christ-child lay.

*You are with us, O God,
in darkness and in light.*

Voice 1: In the darkness of the night, desert people find relief from the cruel relentless heat of the sun.

Voice 2: In the blessed darkness, Mary and Joseph were able to flee with the infant Jesus to safety in Egypt.

*You are with us, O God,
in darkness and in light.*

Voice 1: In the darkness of sleep, we are soothed and restored, healed and renewed.

Voice 2: In the darkness of sleep, dreams rise up. God spoke to Jacob and Joseph through dreams. God is speaking still.

*You are with us, O God,
in darkness and in light.*

Voice 1: In the solitude of darkness, we sometimes remember those who need God's presence in a special way—the sick, the unemployed, the bereaved, the persecuted, the homeless; those who are demoralized and discouraged, those whose fear has turned to cynicism, those whose vulnerability has become bitterness.

Voice 2: Sometimes in the darkness, we remember those who are near to our hearts—colleagues, partners, parents, children, neighbors, friends. We thank God for their presence and ask God to bless and protect them in all that they do—at home, at school, as they travel, as they work, as they play.

*You are with us, O God,
in darkness and in light.*

Voice 1: Sometimes, in the solitude of darkness, our fears and concerns, our hopes and our visions rise to the surface. We come face to face with ourselves and with the road that lies ahead of us. And in that same darkness, we find companionship for the journey.

Voice 2: In that same darkness, we sometimes allow ourselves to wonder and worry whether the human race is going to make it at all.

*We know you are with us, O God, yet we still
await your coming. In the darkness that
contains both our hopelessness and our
expectancy, we watch for a sign of God's Hope.
Amen.*

³ "An Advent Litany of Darkness and Light," in *The Wideness of God's Mercy: Litanies to Enlarge Our Prayers* Jeffrey W. Rowthorn, editor (New York: Church Publishing, 2007), 65-66.



The First Sunday of Advent

November 29, 2020

Keep Awake!

Color Violet or Blue

Preface Advent

Collect

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Readings and Psalm

Isaiah 64:1–9

Today's reading is included in a psalm of lamentations and intercession (63:7–64:11). When the exiles returned to their land, they found Israel still desolate and the temple still in ruins (64:10–12). Their conviction that God desired Israel's salvation wavered in the face of the immense task of restoration and their own continuing sense of sinfulness and alienation. The prophet recalls the parenthood of God in order to stress God's role as Israel's begetter, the One that gives life and identity to Israel—a reminder of the permanence of their relationship with God, in which rests all their hope.

Psalm 80:1–7, 16–18

This lament of the nation for deliverance probably comes from the northern kingdom, whose tribes are enumerated. The “Shepherd of Israel” (the only occurrence of this phrase in the psalms) is pictured as enthroned over the ark between the wings of the cherubim. The psalm's refrain echoes the blessing given by Aaron in Numbers 6:24–26.

1 Corinthians 1:3–9

Paul adapts the customary introduction of ancient letters and combines the usual greetings, “grace” (Greek) and “peace” (Hebrew). More than good wishes, these words describe salvation as “grace,” God's gift, and as “peace,” the harmony of the kingdom of God. In the thanksgiving, Paul sets forth the themes of the letter and carefully places the Corinthians' present individualistic use of the gifts into a context of future revelation and shared responsibility in the community.

Mark 13:24–37

Jesus's terse parable about the deputized servants who await the master's return urges us to live in that balance between keen anticipation and faithful obedience. The former without the latter may lead to idleness and a neglect of service. An unwavering commitment to responsibilities without an eager hope may result in feelings of drudgery and despair or spiritual and moral lassitude. The final word to all is, “Keep awake!”

Prayers of the People

Creator of the stars in the sky, the sun, and the moon,
You are the light by which we wake and work.

Illumine our darkness, and keep us alert.

Surround your church, her leaders, and people, with
your armor of light. We pray especially for N, our
presiding bishop; N, our bishop; and N, our priest.
Strengthen them as they reach out to you in prayer
and hope. Open their hearts to your will.

Illumine our darkness, and keep us alert.

We pray for our leaders: especially N, our president;
N, our governor; and the Congress and courts of this
land. Savior of the nations, guide those who govern,
and awaken those they lead, that we may all live in
the spirit of cooperation and share so that all have
enough: food, care, and peace.

Illumine our darkness, and keep us alert.

For people across the world whose spirits bend under
the yoke of oppression and struggle, give the people of
this community a sense of togetherness and support.
Open our eyes to those who fall by the wayside and
whose faces and needs remain invisible.

Illumine our darkness, and keep us alert.

Lover of our souls, you continue to mold us in your
image and hold us in your hands. We ask your blessing
on those who struggle with illness, anxiety, grief, or
isolation. Today we pray for N.

Illumine our darkness, and keep us alert.

Father of us all, we pray for those who have recently
returned to your embrace and those who are broken
with grief.

Images in the Readings

The four gospels repeatedly refer to the Jewish
apocalyptic figure called the **Son of Man**, a mysterious
human-like judge who as part of the cosmic upset
at the end of time will appear in the sky to represent
God to the people and the people to God. The term
does not mean that Jesus was the human son of Mary.
Today's several readings describe the end of the world
with the arrival of the Son of Man in both frightening
and comforting language. As Mark says it, the sun will
be darkened, yet summer buds promise new life.

There are many biblical references to the **fig tree**.
An image in ancient myth and literature for male
fertility, the fig tree provided both food and shade for
Israelites, and even clothing in the story of the fall.
Thus in Mark 13, the fig tree is a positive image for
the arrival of God. What is now in bud will see its
fruition.

God is like a **potter**, shaping us who are made of
clay. Not only did God create the universe, but also
forms us daily in the grace given us in Christ Jesus.

God will assemble us from **the ends of the earth**.
The author imagines earth as a flat four-cornered
plain, edged with mountains. The evangelist, only
three decades after the ministry of Jesus, anticipates
that the elect will come from all corners of the earth.

Making Connections

Each year, at the beginning of Lent, on Ash Wednesday,
we receive the Church's most powerful and direct
invitation into the life of faith (BCP, 264). Our collect
today stands to serve in the same manner and is a
clear reminder of what our work should be in the days
and weeks ahead. "Dear People of God: The season of
Advent provides a time in which we who, because of
notorious distractions and fear of death have strayed,
are called out of that bright chaos into a still night.
I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to
the observance of a holy Advent: by self-examination,
prayer, and worship, now in the time of this mortal
life. May God give us grace to cast away the works of
darkness, which blur and distort the mysteries of death
and new life, and grant us the armor of light, that
we may wait in service and devotion, making way to
receive the Christ child again. *Amen.*"

Engaging All Ages

Today we begin a new year on our Christian calendar. How might you engage the congregation in looking at this circular cycle of how we return again and again to the stories and seasons of God's people? Like the Advent wreath, it is circular in nature to symbolize God's never-ending love that has no beginning and no end. Just as the prophets we hear throughout the year in scripture and in our world today, how are we continually being called to turn back to God in order to follow in the way of Jesus?

Ideas for the Day

- ♦ North of the equator, Advent is a time of increasing darkness in our days. The collect for Advent 1 invites us to "cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light." This is an appropriate start for Advent, which is a both/and season. We are both preparing for the second coming of Christ and also retelling the stories of the preparation for the birth of Jesus. This collect invites us to solemnly reflect on the desolation of the end times, while also inviting us into a time of hope about God's incarnation. Preach into the both/and of Advent.

Hymns for the Day

The Hymnal 1982

Blest be the King whose coming 74
 Hark! a thrilling voice is sounding 59
 The King shall come when morning dawns 73
 Before the Lord's eternal throne 391
 Immortal, invisible, God only wise 423
 Judge eternal, throned in splendor 596
 O day of God, draw nigh 600, 601
 How firm a foundation 636, 637
 O Jesus, I have promised 655
 Strengthen for service, Lord, the hands 312
 "Sleepers, wake!" A voice astounds us 61, 62
 Lo! he comes, with clouds descending 57, 58

Lift Every Voice and Sing II

Have thine own way, Lord 145
 Better be ready 4
 My Lord, what a morning 13

Wonder, Love, and Praise

God the sculptor of the mountains 746, 747
 Signs of endings all around us 721

Weekday Commemorations

Monday, November 30

Kamehameha and Emma, King and Queen of Hawai'i, 1864, 1885

Within a year of ascending the throne in 1855, King Kamehameha IV and Queen Emma, each 20 years old, solicited funds to build a hospital in response to a smallpox epidemic. The people of Hawai'i, more accustomed to pomp than to humility in royalty, came to revere Emma and Kamehameha. In 1860, the king and queen petitioned the Bishop of Oxford to send missionaries to establish the Anglican Church in Hawai'i; the priests arrived in 1862 to confirm the queen and king. Kamehameha translated the Book of Common Prayer and the Hymnal. He died a year after his little boy. Emma declined to rule alone but chose to end her days in a life of good works.

Tuesday, December 1

Nicholas Ferrar, Deacon, 1637

Nicholas Ferrar was the founder of a religious community at Little Gidding, Huntingdonshire, England, which existed from 1626 to 1646. His family had been prominent in the affairs of the Virginia Company, but when that company was dissolved, he took deacon's orders and retired to the country. The community at Little Gidding became an important symbol for many Anglicans when religious orders began to be revived. Its life inspired T. S. Eliot, and he gave the title "Little Gidding" to the last of his *Four Quartets*, one of the great religious poems of the twentieth century.

Tuesday, December 1

Charles De Foucauld, Monastic and Martyr, 1916

De Foucauld influenced revival of desert spirituality in the early twentieth century; he inspired the founding of new religious communities for women and men. Brother Charles of Jesus, born in 1858, mixed laxity with stubbornness as a young man. He served as an army officer before becoming an explorer in Morocco, where he encountered Muslims. Their faith inspired him to study his own: in 1886, he found God. He was ordained in 1901 and lived "a ministry of presence" in the Sahara. After being shot to death by bandits in 1916, he was beatified as a Roman Catholic martyr in 2005.

*Thursday, December 3**Francis Xavier, Priest and Missionary, 1552*

The Spaniard Francis Xavier, born in 1506, met Ignatius Loyola while studying in Paris. Francis and his companions bound themselves to serve God in 1534—thus began the Society of Jesus, or Jesuits. Xavier and Loyola were ordained together in 1537. Francis traveled to India, then on to Sri Lanka and Indonesia. In 1549, he moved to Japan and learned the language to prepare a catechism for his mission among peoples he came to respect. In 1551, he traveled to China, hoping to launch a new mission, but he died before he secured passage into China. Francis is buried in Goa, India.

*Friday, December 4**John of Damascus, Priest, c. 760*

John succeeded his father, a tax collector for the Mohammedan Caliph of Damascus. About 715, John entered St. Sabas Monastery near Jerusalem, where he lived ascetically, studying the Fathers. He was ordained a priest in 726, the year the Byzantine Emperor Leo the Isaurian inveighed against Holy Images, beginning the iconoclastic controversy. About 720, John wrote three treatises against the Iconoclasts, arguing that they were not idols but saints and distinguishing between veneration and worship. True worship, he wrote, was due to God alone. John also synthesized theology in *The Fount of Knowledge*. To Anglicans, he is known for his Easter hymns, including “Come, ye faithful, raise the strain.”

*Saturday, December 5**Clement of Alexandria, Priest, c. 210*

Clement’s liberal approach to secular knowledge laid the foundations of Christian humanism. Born mid-second century, Clement was a cultured Greek philosopher: he sought truth widely until he met Pantaenus, founder of the Christian Catechetical School at Alexandria. In 190, Clement succeeded Pantaenus as headmaster; Origen was Clement’s most eminent pupil. Clement’s learning and allegorical exegeses helped commend Christianity to intellectual circles of Alexandria during an age of Gnosticism. Clement dissented from the negative Gnostic view of the world, which denied free will. In *What Rich Man Will Be Saved?*, Clement sanctioned the “right use” of wealth and goods. Among his writings is the hymn “Master of eager youth.” The time and place of his death are unknown.