

## SUNDAY MASS

### ENTRANCE ANTIPHON:

Drop down dew from above, you heavens, and let the clouds rain down the Just One; let the earth be opened and bring forth a Saviour.

**FIRST READING:** Micah 5:1-5.

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM:** Psalm 80.

### RESPONSE:

O God, bring us back; let your face shine on us, and we shall be saved.

1. O shepherd of Israel, hear us, enthroned on the cherubim, shine forth, rouse up your might and come to save us. **R**
2. God of hosts, turn again, we implore; look down from heaven and see. Visit this vine and protect it, the vine your right hand has planted. **R**
3. May your hand be on the man at your right hand, the son of man you have confirmed as your own. And we shall never forsake you again; give us life that we may call upon your name. **R**

**SECOND READING:** Hebrews 10:5-10.

### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

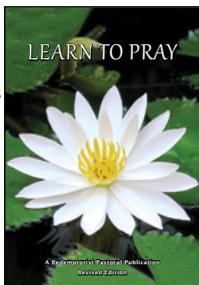
Alleluia, alleluia! Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word. Alleluia.

**GOSPEL:** Luke 1:39-45.

### COMMUNION ANTIPHON:

Behold a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son; and his name will be called Emmanuel.

This is a revised edition of the ever-popular Redemptorist Pastoral Publication, "Learn to Pray: Discovering different forms of prayer." The title itself evokes the incident in the Gospels where the disciples petitioned Jesus: "Lord, teach us to pray!" Throughout the Christian centuries, subsequent disciples of Jesus have also wanted to learn how to pray, and have developed different techniques of praying. This booklet gathers together some of the many different possible ways of praying.



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## THE WEEK AHEAD

# Live the Word

### Mon 20 Dec Liturgy of the Day

Isaiah 7:10-14; Psalm 24; Luke 1:26-38

Emmanuel, God with us, came into our world with a heart for justice, and left his heart with us. What can we do to continue this reign of justice? How are we going to be responsible with God's heart?

### Tue 21 Dec (St Peter Canisius, PrD)

Zephaniah 3:14-18; Psalm 33; Luke 1:39-45

God will never force anything on us. Our freedom is paramount to God. But do we treat others in the same way – respecting their freedom. Let us strive to love as God loves.

### Wed 22 Dec Liturgy of the Day

1 Samuel 1:24-28; 1 Samuel 2:1.4-8; Luke 1:46-56

St Joseph had some tough decisions to make. May he accompany us in the often confusing times of decision-making and help us discern the most loving way forward.

### Thu 23 Dec (St John of Kanty, Pr)

Malachi 3:1-4; 4:5-6; Psalm 25; Luke 1:57-66

'What, then, will this child be?' is a question that could be asked of each of us. Will our lives prepare a way for the Lord – in our world, and in our hearts – throughout our lives?

### Fri 24 Dec Liturgy of the Day

2 Samuel 7:1-5.8-12.14.16; Psalm 89; Luke 1:67-79

Our lives have the ability to impact others in ways that we can never predict and might never be aware of. If we carry the Light of the world in our hearts, who knows what shadows we can help lift?

### Sat 25 Dec NATIVITY OF CHRIST

Isaiah 52:7-10; Psalm 98; John 1:1-18

Our God came to be with us in human flesh. Today, let us remember that we are the Body of Christ, born into the world every day. Take Christ with you wherever you go, bringing love and compassion to all.

### Sun 26 Dec HOLY FAMILY

1 Samuel 1:20-22.24-28; Psalm 84; Luke 2:41-52

Despite the politics surrounding migration, and keeping the Holy Family in mind, let us have empathy for those fleeing their homeland, and extend our compassion towards those families who long for security.

(KEY: **SOLEMNITY**; FEAST; Memorial; (Optional Memorial) Pr=Priest; D=Doctor

# Catholic Link

## THE "O" ANTIPHONS

4th Sunday in Advent • Year C  
Divine Office: Week IV • 19 December 2021



# O Come, O Dayspring, from on High

Photo by Damian Markuff from Unsplash

As Christmas draws near, we reflect on the O Antiphon of the dawn. We sense that the night of waiting is almost over, and we welcome the light of a new day in the words:

O come, O Dayspring, from on high,  
the bright eternal light,  
and sun of righteousness,  
on those who sit in darkness  
and death's cruel shadow, shine.

As with the other O Antiphons, Scripture is the inspiration. In this antiphon, Isaiah 9:1-2 comes to mind: "But there will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. A people who walked in darkness has seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness – on them light has shone."

That light, we believe as Christians, is Jesus, who himself declares in Revelation 22:16, "It is I, Jesus, who sent my angel to you with this testimony for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star."

The theme of the interplay between light and darkness is eminently biblical. The Psalms are replete with this image, like Psalm 139:12, "If I say, let the darkness hide me, even darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you." In the New Testament, the prophecy of Zechariah before the birth of Christ captures the mystery: "By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit

in darkness and in the shadow of death" (Luke 1:79). St John, in the Prologue to his Gospel, connects life and light in the person of the Word-made-flesh: "... that life was the light of all, a light that shines in the darkness, a light that darkness could not overpower" (John 1:4-5).

Somehow in these days of Covid, in these days of civil unrest and economic hardship, it feels as though we're all in the dark. The future is not bright. Advent spirituality invites us to "own" (to use a modern expression) that darkness and fear; to stay with it, to face it. Advent is a liturgical season that reminds us that all is not well with the world, no matter how much we try to hype up our optimism. Optimism is not the same as hope. Hope is a theological virtue, along with faith and love. Hope is born of labour pain; it is born out of darkness. Hope is realised in and through a certainty, based on faith, that the dawn will break, that light always overcomes darkness.

As this is true at the social and global level, so is it true at the personal level. Jesus comes to us as the light of the whole world, true, but he also comes as the light of my life. In my own insecurities and fears, in the darkness of depression and sorrow, and, in no small way, the darkness of my sin and failure, I too can cry out in the words of this antiphon: O come, O Dayspring, from on high, the bright eternal light and sun of righteousness, come shine on me.