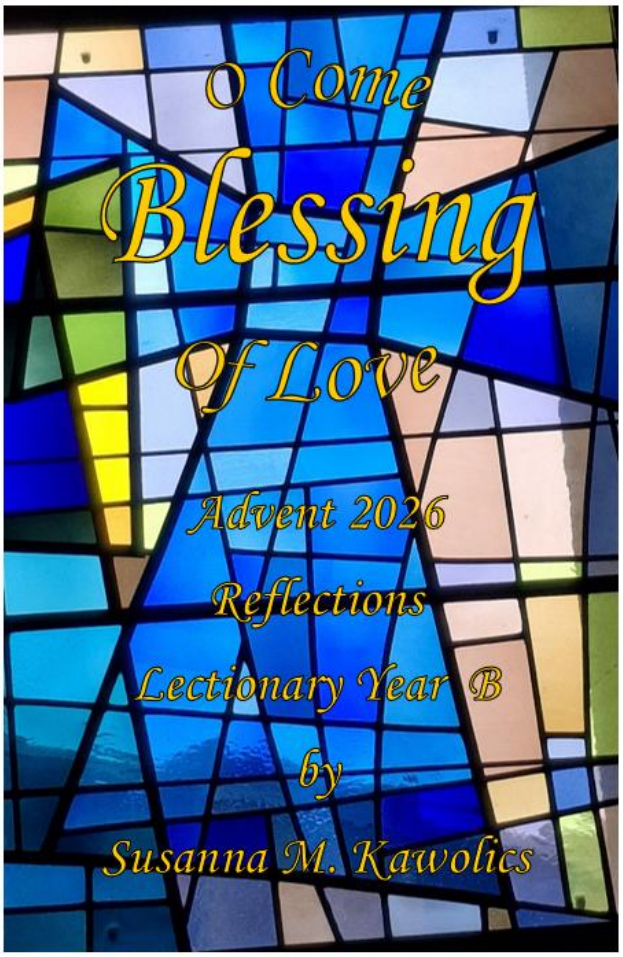




Dedicated to the memory of
Eileen M. Murray
November 16, 1950 –
October 9, 2026
Anam Cara (Soul Friend)

In preparing to create my Advent Reflections for this year, I have come to a place which, for me, is truly holy ground, Mount St. Benedict in Erie, PA. I arrive here just a few days after the death of a dearly beloved soul friend, an *anam cara*, Eileen Murray. She was such a loving companion on the journey: teacher, mentor, cheer-leader, true soul friend. We celebrated so many joys and sorrows together, attended programs and concerts, walked numerous labyrinths, shared meals and stories and all manner of life experiences and reflections.

Eileen especially loved the poetry, prayers, and poems of John O'Donohue, Irish mystic and writer, and introduced me to his writings. Before O'Donohue's untimely death in 2008 at the young age of 54, Eileen was instrumental in bringing him to speak in Cleveland. His words continued to inspire Eileen, and as well as many others.

This Advent season, Eileen and John are inspiring my reflections. I am immersed in grief and gratitude for Eileen, and the deep wisdom and inspiration of John O'Donohue, especially his book *To Bless the Space Between Us*. Eileen loved Advent reflections, and was so supportive and affirming of all my ministry. So I am dedicating this year's reflections to her memory, and using some quotations from John O'Donohue throughout to help guide the prayer themes for the week.

O'Donohue says, "There is a quiet light that shines in every heart. It draws no attention to itself, though it is always secretly there. It is what illuminates our minds to see beauty, our desire to seek possibility, and our hearts to love life. . . . This shy inner light is what enables us to recognize and receive our very presence here as blessing. . . . The word Blessing evokes a sense of warmth and protection; it suggests that no life is alone or unreachable. Each life is clothed in raiment of spirit that secretly links it to everything else . . . [A] blessing . . . touches that tender membrane where the human heart cries out to its divine ground. . . . [I]t would be lovely if we could rediscover our power to bless one another." It is my prayer that this year's Advent reflections will inspire blessings from all of us into the world. O'Donohue goes on to say: "When a blessing is invoked, it changes the atmosphere. Some of the plenitude flows into our hearts from the invisible neighborhood of loving kindness. . . . The quietly eternal that dwells in our souls is silent and subtle; in the activity of blessing it emerges to embrace and nurture us."

During Advent, we are called to take some time in stillness, in quiet, to prepare our hearts for the perfect ultimate blessing that God sent to our world, love made flesh in the person of Jesus. For centuries, we who long for Christ's presence have expressed this yearning in a variety of ways. One way was by praying through various images of God known as *O Antiphons*. They became part of the Christian tradition in the 7th or 8th century, and are different names for God, traditionally used during the last week of Advent, December 17th through 23rd. These Antiphons are prayed and sung and are best known in the seven verses of the Advent hymn *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (included in this booklet).

Because God is so much greater than our minds can even begin to comprehend, we can only know God through glimpses, through reflections. Inspired by the *O Antiphons*, I have sought to express other images of God based on the weekly Revised Common Lectionary readings for this Advent and Christmas season. The reflections for the Sunday readings begin on the Monday before so that we will have the opportunity to reflect on these Bible verses before hearing them in worship. There is also a prayer to guide each day.

John O'Donohue says, "Let us begin to learn how to bless one another. . . . May we all receive blessing upon blessing. And may we realize our power to bless, heal, and renew one another."

I hope that these reflections, offered from the heart and based on the lectionary readings for the season of Advent, will be blessings to you on this journey.

May you and your loved ones experience the fullness of Christ's presence this Advent and Christmas season, and always. May your life journeys be filled with hope, peace, joy, and love.

In Christ's Peace,

Susi Kawolics

The images of God are the author's own responses to the scripture verses, except for the traditional *O Antiphons* from December 17 through December 23.

Scripture verses are quoted from *An Inclusive-Language Lectionary: Readings for Year B* Copyright 1986 by Division of Education and Ministry, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.
Or: *The New Testament and Psalms, An Inclusive Version,* copyright 1995 by Oxford University Press, Inc., New York, New York.

Quotations taken from: O'Donohue, John. *To Bless the Space Between Us: A Book of Blessings*. Doubleday, 2008.

I would welcome any of your thoughts, comments, suggestions, or reflections as you journey through this Advent season. Please share through my Facebook page: *facebook.com/AdventReflections*
or email to: *reverendsusi@gmail com*
or online at: *www.adventreflections.org*

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Translated: John Neale, 1818-66
( ) indicates date of traditional "O Antiphons"

Hymn # 31 from **Lutheran Worship**
Author: French Processional
Tune: VENI EMMANUEL, first published in 1854

(12/23) O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel!

(12/17) O come, our Wisdom from on high,
And order all things far and nigh;
To us the path of knowledge show,
And cause us in her ways to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel!

(12/18) O come, O come, our Lord of might,
Who to your tribes on Sinai's height
In ancient times gave holy law,
In cloud and majesty and awe.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel!

(12/19) O come, O Rod of Jesse's stem,
From ev'ry foe deliver them
That trust your mighty pow'r to save;
Bring them in vict'ry through the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel!

(12/20) O come, O Key of David, come,
And open wide our heav'nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel!

(12/21) O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer
Our spirits by thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel!

(12/22) O come, Desire of nations, bind
All peoples in one heart and mind;
Bid envy, strife and quarrels cease,
Fill the whole world with heaven's peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel!

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Alternative verses by Susanna M. Kawolics
©2014
( ) indicates date of traditional "O Antiphons"
Tune: VENI EMMANUEL, first published in 1854

(12/17) O come, O Wisdom who from dawning day
Creates and shapes a new world, a new way.
You at the gateways of our choices stand
And guide us with your dancing, loving hand.
Rejoice! Rejoice! O God amazing, wise,
May we each day be open to surprise.

(12/18) O come, O God of Ancient Israel,
Who with your people faithfully do dwell.
You've shown yourself in tablets of law,
And burning bush, and cloud that wand'rers saw.
Rejoice! Rejoice! O God of Ancient Days,
We trust and rest our hearts in you always.

(12/19) O come, O come, O Flower of Jesse's Tree.
No one believed a shepherd King would be.
You chose the humblest of his sons to reign
To show your ways are not our ways, again.
Rejoice! Rejoice! O Flower of Jesse's Tree,
Bring birth and newness from the smallest seed.

12/20) O come, O Key of David, open wide
Our locked-down hearts so peace may come inside.
Release the hold of grudges past
And tenderly toward hope lead us at last.
Rejoice! Rejoice! O Key of David, free
Our hearts from hatred that they healed might be.

(12/21) O come, O Dayspring, in our darkest night
With your bright stars and moon disperse our fright.
Weave light through shadows, make all things new
And bring a wholeness only found through you.
Rejoice! Rejoice! O God of Radiant Light
And put the darkness in our lives to flight.

(12/22) O come, Uniter of the Nations, hold
All on this earth in your close, loving fold.
Heal wounds and mend together broken hearts.
Bring universal peace from varied parts.
Rejoice! Rejoice! O God of Unity,
Grant that your realm of love might come to be.

(12/23) O come, O come, Emmanuel,
Be birthed again that all earth be made well.
Inspire us all to make your presence known
By tending seeds of justice you have sown.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall through and in us once more come and dwell.

First Sunday of Advent:

November 29, 2026

Begin reflections on

Monday, November 23

Readings:



Isaiah 64:1-9

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Mark 13:24-38

The overall theme of this week:

Hope

*"Despite all the darkness, human **hope** is based on the instinct that at the deepest level of reality some intimate kindness holds sway."*

John O'Donohue
To Bless the Space Between Us

Monday, November 23

Antiphon

O Shaper of Lives, Come

Scripture

Isaiah 64:8b *We are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Shaper of Lives, Come~
Remind us that our precious lives,
the works of your hands,
are like clay vessels:
beautiful, rare, and fragile.
Make us ever grateful for these unique lives of ours,
which grace our world.
Continue to form us, mold us, refine us.
Make our hearts soft, pliable,
and sensitive to your touch.
Smooth our rough edges, tenderly caress us,
lovingly gaze upon us,
that we might be formed into vessels
of your love and compassion.
Call us to pour out
blessings of healing and hope
on this parched and thirsting world.

Amen.

Tuesday, November 24

Antiphon

O Guiding Shepherd, Come

Scripture

Psalm 80:1 *Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Guiding Shepherd, Come~
Lead us in your ways.
Remind us that we are all one flock,
lovingly attended to by your love.
Pilot us as we seek to follow your paths
of justice, compassion, and peace.
Reassure us of your presence
as we wend our way in hope.
Free us from fear of the next step,
and enable us to trust in the promise
that wherever we roam, you are with us.
You go behind us, beside us, before us,
so we never travel alone.
Shepherd us, abide in us, and unite us
that we may bless each other
along the journey.

Amen.

Wednesday, November 25

Antiphon

O Restorer of Lives, Come

Scripture

Psalm 80:3 *Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved!*

Prayerful Reflection

O Restorer of Lives, Come~
Repair the breaches in our lives:
remedy suffering of body and spirit,
remediate severed relationships,
revive shattered dreams,
rebind broken hearts.
Resurrect our buried hopes
for peace, harmony, and friendship.
Reinvigorate us that we may work toward
re-envisioning ourselves as
a beloved community.
Send us forth restored,
to shine blessings
of healing and hope upon our world

Amen.

Thursday, November 26

Antiphon

O Enricher of Souls, Come

Scripture

1 Corinthians 1:5-6 *. . . for in every way you have been enriched in Christ, in speech and knowledge of every kind - just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Enricher of Souls, Come~
Strengthen us with Christ's presence.
You sent your Child
as the embodiment of your love,
and have promised to grace us in that spirit.
Enrich us in speech, that we may speak words
of healing, hope, and compassion.
Enrich us in knowledge, that we may understand
truth, depth, and nuance.
Enrich us in strength that we may not tire
of testifying to Christ's love
for all people, and for all of creation.
Enrich us to bless the world
with your hope and love.

Amen.

Friday, November 27

Antiphon

O Everlasting Word, Come

Scripture

Mark 13:31 *Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Everlasting Word, Come~
Open us to honor, hear, and heed
your everlasting Word
of mercy, kindness,
and compassion for all people.
Just as your Word formed the cosmos
at the dawn of time,
and dwelt among us in the flesh
at your appointed time,
that Word still speaks of healing and hope
at this present time.
May we speak and embody
your holy and still-speaking Word
to bring forth blessings
of your eternal love, grace, and hope.

Amen.

Saturday, November 28

Antiphon

O Grantor of Grace, Come

Scripture

I Corinthians 1:3 *Grace to you and peace from God . . . and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Grantor of Grace, Come~
Infuse us with your steadfast love.
Open us to receive your
unearned, undeserved, unconditional grace.
Our souls long for reassurance
of your love and acceptance of us
just as we are.
Our hearts long for kindness and respect
among our loved ones, our neighbors,
our siblings throughout the world.
Fill us with the hope that through your grace
we may love you,
and also ourselves, our neighbors,
and our world as you do.
Make us blessings of grace to others.

Amen.

First Sunday of Advent, November 29

Antiphon

O Sender of Signs, Come

Scripture

Mark 13:28 *From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Sender of Signs, Come~
On this First Sunday of Advent,
bless us with hope.
Grant us perception to notice all the ways
that your presence is made real to us.
Make us stop, be still, and pay attention
to the sacraments of life
that surround us and appear to us.
Let us see the visible signs of your invisible grace
which manifest continually
through your creation, your people,
your spirit.
May they give us hope in your abiding presence,
that we may be blessings of your loving
spirit to the world.

Amen.

Second Sunday of Advent

December 6, 2023

Begin reflections on

Monday, November 30

Readings:



Isaiah 40:1-11

Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13

2 Peter 3:8-15a

Mark 1:1-8

The overall theme of this week~

Peace

"As clay anchors a tree in light and wind, may your outer life grow from ***peace*** *within."*

John O'Donohue
To Bless the Space Between Us

Monday, November 30

Antiphon

O Proclaimer of Repentance, Come

Scripture

Mark 1:4 *John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Proclaimer of Repentance, Come~
Welcome us back.
You promise that if we but acknowledge
our misdeeds, our failures, our shortcomings,
and seek to change our ways,
you will forgive us.
Have mercy on us.
Turn our hearts toward you,
toward your vision of a just world
for all people,
toward your dream of a restored creation,
toward your hope for a peace-filled earth.
In your mercy, bless us,
and reconcile us to you and to each other,
that we may bless the world with your mercy.
Amen.

Tuesday, December 1

Antiphon

O Increaser of Good, Come

Scripture

Psalm 85:12 *God will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Increaser of Good, Come~
Accept the gifts we offer to you,
our hearts, our deeds, our resources.
Expand the love in our hearts,
multiply the reach of our generosity,
widen the scope of our outreach.
Grant us faith to trust
that each and every kindness we share,
gift we give,
blessing we bestow,
will be increased in its yield
by your generous heart.
With each small, gracious act, prayer, and word,
may the world be blessed with
your love and peace.

Amen.

Wednesday, December 2

Antiphon

O Eternal Visionary, Come

Scripture

2 Peter 3:8 *But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with God one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Eternal Visionary, Come~
Transform our sense of time.
Grant us courage to take action
bringing forth urgently needed change.
Imbue us with patience to plant seeds
that will take time to flourish.
Release us from our relentless desire
to experience results in our time.
Fill us with peace of mind to believe
that every good seed we sow will take root
and help grow a future we may never see.
May we trust that the blessing of your peace
will come in your time, even if not in ours.

Amen.

Thursday, December 3

Antiphon

O Lifter of Valleys, Come

Scripture

Isaiah 40:4 *Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Lifter of Valleys, Come~
Raise up all those brought low,
those who are world-weary,
those who know only rough landscapes.
Make us harbingers of hope,
and purveyors of peace,
as we reach out to bless
those who are down-trodden.
Teach us to level the field alongside them,
encourage us to accompany them,
enable us to stand as allies with them.
Grant that together we may all know true peace
with which to bless our world.

Amen.

Friday, December 4

Antiphon

O Tender Comforter, Come

Scripture

Isaiah 40:1-2 *Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem . . .*

Prayerful Reflection

O Tender Comforter, Come~
Soothe our sorrowing souls,
comfort our grieving hearts.
Open us to receive graciously
the gentle gestures,
the caring acts,
the kind words
of friends and loved ones,
as they embody compassion for us.
As we receive comfort and peace,
may we make tender
our own words and deeds,
that we would bless the world
with your comfort and peace.

Amen.

Saturday, December 5

Antiphon

O Holy Baptizer, Come

Scripture

Mark 1:8 *I [John] baptized you with water; but the one who comes will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Holy Baptizer, Come~
Claim us as your own.
Immerse us in your holy, healing, cleansing spirit.
Create in us new and pure hearts,
healed from unforgiveness and hatred,
empty of cruelty and unkindness,
open to compassion and reconciliation.
Flood us in love that we may be
awash in your hope,
soaked in your peace,
saturated in your mercy.
With hearts overflowing
and abounding in your grace,
send us forth to bless the world.

Amen.

Second Sunday of Advent, December 6

Antiphon

O Peace-Speaker, Come

Scripture

Psalm 85:8 *Let me hear what God the Most High will speak, for God will speak peace to God's people.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Peace-Speaker, Come~
On this Second Sunday of Advent,
bless us with your word of peace.
Into our lives filled with clamor and noise,
with jarring news and divisive exchanges,
send your deep and quiet peace.
Remind us again and again
of our connection to each other,
of your dream for peace in our world.
May your whisper of peace be heard
and your blessing of peace be spread.
Grant that we would become
peace-givers, peace-makers,
peace-speakers and peace-seekers
in your name.

Amen.

Third Sunday of Advent

December 13, 2026

Begin reflections on

Monday, December 7

Readings



Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11
Psalm 126
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
John 1:6-8, 19-28

The overall theme of this week~

Joy

*"It brings great **joy** to feel alive. You sense the beauty and privilege of being here. For a while your eyes take in the world in all its adventure and grace; you feel somehow at the center of its surge of invitation and possibility."*

John O'Donohue
To Bless the Space Between Us

Monday, December 7

Antiphon

O Binder of the Brokenhearted, Come

Scripture

Isaiah 61:1b *God has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Binder of the Brokenhearted, Come~
Suture together the torn pieces of our world.
Bring healing and wholeness
to our hearts, our lives, our relationships,
to our neighborhoods, our nations, our world,
to all your creatures and children.
Liberate us from hatred,
breakdown the walls that divide us,
open us to reconciling ways.
Grant us your vision of boundless love
as a lens through which we may see others.
Summon us to release kindness and joy
as blessings upon this world.

Amen.

Tuesday, December 8

Antiphon

O Witness to Light, Come

Scripture

John 1:8 *John was not the light, but came to bear witness to the light.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Witness to Light, Come~
Make known your luminous presence.
Shine in the night with your everlasting radiance.
When we encounter those who are
wounded, hurting, broken,
may we extend to them
your healing light, your comforting warmth,
your compassionate care.
May we all endure the night,
and wake to the dawn of joy.
Ignite the spark of your love to burn in our hearts,
that we may be blessings of light
in this world.

Amen.

Wednesday, December 9

Antiphon

O Transformer of Tears, Come

Scripture

Psalm 126:6 *Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves*.

Prayerful Reflection

O Transformer of Tears, Come~
Attend to our weeping.
Our hearts break for those
who experience violence,
for those who hunger, who thirst,
who are unsheltered and unprotected.
Our hearts ache for those who are
falsely accused,
erroneously blamed,
wrongfully convicted.
As we cry, turn our heartache to action,
that our tears may produce
harvests of justice,
crops of compassion,
sheaves of generosity.
May today's tears of despair be transformed into
blessings of tomorrow's justice and joy.

Amen.

Thursday, December 10

Antiphon

O Voice in the Wilderness, Come

Scripture

John 1:23 *[John] said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,'" as the prophet Isaiah said.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Voice in the Wilderness, Come~
Call out to us over the blaring noise,
the constant activity, the unrelenting demands
that seem to bombard our lives.
Summon us to the wilderness
of barrenness and solitude,
of openness and insight
of expandisveness and quiet.
Take us straight to your presence
deep within ourselves
and speak to us in the silence of our hearts.
Remind us of the privilege and joy of being alive.
May that joy then radiate from us as
a joyful blessing to others.

Amen.

Friday, December 11

Antiphon

O Nurturer of Righteousness, Come

Scripture

Isaiah 61:11 *For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Sovereign GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Nurturer of Righteousness, Come~
Grow in us seeds of justice and shoots of praise.
Cultivate in our hearts a picture of your holy dream:
of a world where all can live
free of fear, danger, hunger, isolation;
of a world where all can know
love, acceptance, and welcome;
of a world where all cannot help
but to sing songs of joyful praise.
Call us to bless the world by
sowing seeds with this vision
that your garden of righteousness
may spring up and thrive.

Amen.

Saturday, December 12

Antiphon

O Faithful Caller, Come

Scripture

1 Thessalonians 5:24 *The one who calls you is faithful, and will do it.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Faithful Caller, Come~
Be persistent with us.
You steadfastly call us, summoning us
to act justly, to love mercy,
and to walk humbly with you.
Often we do not hear or listen,
so we travel roads of our own proud making.
Continue to nudge us,
to beckon to us,
until we respond in faithfulness to you.
Grant us trust in you to believe
that you will uphold us and sustain us
as we seek to go in joy
to be blessings
wherever you summon us to go.

Amen.

Third Sunday of Advent, December 13

Antiphon

O Evoker of Gratitude, Come

Scripture

1 Thessalonians 5:18 *Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Evoker of Gratitude, Come~
On this third Sunday of Advent,
bless us with joy-filled hearts.
Make us mindful of myriad ways
in which you bless our lives:
by your creation, which nourishes us,
sustains us, and fills us with wonder,
through your people, who gladden, love, support,
and encourage us,
with your Spirit, which inspires, renews,
guides, and grounds us.
Call us to live in awe of all the gifts
you so generously and lovingly
bestow upon us.
With grateful hearts, may we relish life,
and bless the world with our joy.

Amen.

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 20, 2026

Begin reflections on

Monday, December 14

Readings



2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16
Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26
Romans 16:25-27
Luke 1:26-38

The overall theme of this week~

Love

"It is such a privilege to have people who continue each day to bless us with their ***love*** *and prayer. These inner friends of the heart confer on us inestimable gifts."*

John O'Donohue
To Bless the Space Between Us

Monday, December 14

Antiphon

O Doer of the Impossible, Come

Scripture

Luke 1:37 *For with God, nothing will be impossible.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Doer of the Impossible, Come~
Like Mary, help us believe in impossibilities.
Broaden our minds that we may go beyond
the boundaries of our own limited knowledge,
the narrowness of
our own human experience,
the constraints of our own points of view.
When we face challenges, conflicts,
impossible conundrums,
stretch us and open us to your creative energy,
to your hidden ideas and new ways,
to your power, your wisdom, your spirit.
Show us the possibilities
in what appears impossible,
that your love may bless the world
in unpredictable, astonishing, loving ways.
Amen.

Tuesday, December 15

Antiphon

O Rock of Salvation, Come

Scripture

Psalm 89:26 *David shall cry to me, "You are my Protector, my God, and the Rock of my salvation!"*

Prayerful Reflection

O Rock of Salvation, Come~
Gift us with trust in your presence,
a firm foundation
on which to ground our lives.
Shelter us when life's storms rain down,
uphold us when we lose our footing,
save us when the burdens of life
threaten to crush us.
Secure us firmly on the solid rock
of your compassionate care,
of your abiding presence,
of your merciful grace.
Make us to know the joy and the blessing
of your firm, protecting, ever-saving love.

Amen.

Wednesday, December 16

Antiphon

O Merciful Helper, Come

Scripture

Luke 1:54 *God has helped God's servant Israel, in remembrance of God's mercy. . .*

Prayerful Reflection

O Merciful Helper, Come~
Make us to remember your boundless grace.
When these winter nights feel too dark,
these winter days too cold,
this winter season too long,
come to our aid.
Surround us with soul friends:
those who accept us as we are;
those who listen without judgment;
those who love us unconditionally
and companion us on the journey.
May we see them as tangible signs of your
mercy and kindness,
and may we bless others
with deep friendship born of your love.

Amen.

Thursday, December 17

Antiphon

O Sacred Wisdom, Come

Scripture

Romans 16:27 *To the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Sacred Wisdom, Come~
Stand with us at the crossroads
of difficult situations, of pressing decisions,
and guide us in our discernment.
Humble us to accept that
what we think is wise
is often foolishness in your sight.
Because your wisdom is much higher
than our minds can ever reach,
open us to see glimpses, to hear whispers,
to feel nudges of your insight,
that we may begin to understand your ways
and seek to live accordingly.
Lead us to understand your loving spirit,
and to bless the world with your wisdom.

Amen.

Friday, December 18

Antiphon

O Lord of Ancient Israel, Come

Scripture

Psalm 89:1-2a *I will sing of your steadfast love, O God, forever . . . I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations. For your steadfast love is established forever . . .*

Prayerful Reflection

O Lord of Ancient Israel, Come~
Remind us of your steadfast love
established forever, since time eternal.
As you revealed yourself to our sacred ancestors
through holy law on high,
through manna and water on earth,
through guiding cloud in the heavens,
reveal yourself to us as well.
Open our eyes to see
the wonders you orchestrate,
the blessings you bestow,
the steadfast love you promise.
Call us to bless the world as joyful witnesses
to your abiding presence and eternal love.

Amen.

Saturday, December 19

Antiphon

O Flower of Jesse's Stem, Come

Scripture

2 Samuel 7:8 *"Thus says the God of hosts, I took you [David] from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel. . ."*

Prayerful Reflection

O Flower of Jesse's Stem, Come~
Inspire us to see with your eyes.
Just as long ago you led your servant David
from the pasture to the palace,
from unknown shepherd to powerful king,
so you see beyond our lives as they are
to the possibilities that can be,
further than the future of our imagining.
Plant in us the seeds to envision a world
filled with love that reaches
wider, higher, and deeper
than we could ever imagine.
Bless us into living up to our potential,
trusting in your guidance and love
as we blossom into becoming
all that you created us to be.

Amen.

Fourth Sunday in Advent, December 20

Antiphon

O Key of David, Come

Scripture

Romans 16:25-26 *Now to God who is able to strengthen you . . . according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but is now disclosed . . . be the glory forever.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Key of David, Come~
On this fourth Sunday of Advent,
bless us with your love.
Reveal to us the secret of understanding
those whom we distrust, fear or abhor.
Give us the key to unlock the gates
we have secured against new ideas,
against challenging views,
against truths we do not want to face.
Free us from our self-imposed prisons
so we may embrace
the mystery of every person,
and bless them
with open, unbounded love.

Amen.

Christmas

December 25, 2026

Readings

Christmas Day, Proper I



Isaiah 9:2-7
Psalm 96
Titus 2:11-14
Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)

"The liturgy of dawn signals the wonder of the arriving day. The magic of darkness breaking through into color and light is such a promise of invitation and possibility."

John O'Donohue
To Bless the Space Between Us

Monday, December 21

Antiphon

O Radiant Dawn, Come

Scripture

Isaiah 9:2 *The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness - on them light has shined.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Radiant Dawn, Come~
Our hearts long for the light on this,
the darkest day of the year.
Our worries overwhelm us,
our isolation strains us,
our anxiety unsettles us.
Hold us tightly, tenderly, until sunrise,
when the dawn breaks with the promise of light,
the promise of a new day.
As we start anew this morning,
trusting in your mercy and love,
make your face shine upon us,
and your light emanate from us,
that we may bless the world
with your radiant love.

Amen.

Tuesday, December 22

Antiphon

O Ruler of All Nations, Come

Scripture

Luke 2:14 "*Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those with whom God is pleased!"*

Prayerful Reflection

O Ruler of all Nations, Come~
Remind us that we are all, every one of us,
connected to each other,
through our dependence on this planet,
through our shared human condition,
through our having been created in your image.
Open our eyes to see our commonality
rather than our divisions.
Widen our hearts to care for each other,
to care for our earth, to care for our future.
Unite us, guide us, and rule in our hearts.
Bestow your peace upon us all,
calling us to bless each other
with kindness and compassion,
and to live as one
in your love-filled, all-inclusive embrace.
Amen.

Wednesday, December 23

Antiphon

O Emmanuel, Come

Scripture

Titus 2:11 *For the grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all.*

Prayerful Reflection

O Emmanuel, Come~
Bring your grace to bear upon us all.
Save us from loneliness,
hopelessness, despair.
You have appeared,
and you continue
to reveal yourself to all who seek you.
Give us faith to trust
that you have come to us,
that you abide in and among us,
that you never leave us.
You are "God with us," our Emmanuel.
Be born in our world today and always
as we seek to bless the world
with your ever-present grace.
Amen.

Thursday, December 24

Antiphon

O God of Many Names, Come

Scripture

Isaiah 9:6 *For unto us a child is born . . . One whose name will be called "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Mother, Prince of Peace."*

Prayerful Reflection

O God of Many Names, Come~
As you became flesh in a child so long ago,
make yourself real to us again today,
Guide us with your wisdom,
O Wonderful Counselor.
Strengthen us with your power,
O Mighty God.
Ground us in your eternal compassion,
O Everlasting Father and Mother.
Calm our anxious spirits,
O Prince of Peace.
Just as Mary gave you birth, make us to enflesh
your love in your many names,
as a blessing of your presence
in our world today.

Amen.

Friday, December 25

Antiphon

O Praise-Worthy Sovereign, Come

Scripture

Psalm 96:10-13 *"God is sovereign!" . . . Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it; let the field exult, and everything in it. Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy before God . . ."*

Prayerful Reflection

O Praise-Worthy Sovereign, come~
Receive our songs of gladness!
Together with the earth, we rejoice in you,
together with the field, we exult in you,
together with the trees, we sing for joy!
We celebrate the coming of your Child,
love made flesh,
compassion revealed,
peace personified.
Fill our hearts with Christ's presence
that we may bless the world with your
hope, peace, love, and joy
this Christmas Day and always.

Amen.

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