

Advent Vigil

a Taizé-style vigil including music from the Taizé
and Iona communities

¶ Preparation

Hymn

- 1 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 thee, O Israel.*

- 2 O come, thou Rod of Jesse, free
thine own from Satan's tyranny;
from depths of hell thy people save,
and give them victory o'er the grave:
- 3 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:
- 4 O come, thou Key of David, come,
and open wide our heavenly home;
make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery:
- 5 O come, O come, thou Lord of Might,
who to thy tribes, on Sinai's height,
in ancient times didst give the law
in cloud and majesty and awe:

Advent Antiphons, Latin, pre-8th cent.,
tr. John Mason Neale 1818–66 [CP32]

But Zechariah, Elizabeth, and Mary were not filled with wishes. They were filled with hope. Hope is something very different. Hope is trusting that something will be fulfilled, but fulfilled according to the promises and not just according to our wishes. Therefore, hope is always open-ended.

I have found it very important in my own life to let go of my wishes and start hoping. It was only when I was willing to let go of wishes that something really new, something beyond my own expectations could happen to me. Just imagine what Mary was actually saying in the words, 'I am the handmaid of the Lord... let what you have said be done to me' (Luke 1:38). She was saying, 'I don't know what this all means, but I trust that good things will happen.' She trusted so deeply that her waiting was open to all possibilities. And she did not want to control them. She believed that when she listened carefully, she could trust what was going to happen.

To wait open-endedly is an enormously radical attitude toward life. So is to trust that something will happen to us that is far beyond our own imaginings. So, too, is giving up control over our future and letting God define our life, trusting that God moulds us according to God's love and not according to our fear. The spiritual life is a life in which we wait, actively present to the moment, trusting that new things will happen to us, new things that are far beyond our own imagination, fantasy, or prediction. That, indeed, is a very radical stance toward life in a world preoccupied with control.

Watch for the Light : Readings for Advent and Christmas. –
Farmington, PA : The Plough Publishing House, 2001. –
(from the reading for 28 November)

¶ **Word and Silence**

Chant

- 1 Word of the Father,
*Come, Lord, come;
and take our fear away,
and take our fear away;
replace it with your love.*
- 2 Firstborn of Mary,
- 3 Healer and helper,
- 4 Servant and sufferer,
- 5 Jesus, redeemer,
- 6 Christ resurrected,
- 7 Maranatha!

Iona Community © 1995 WGRG [CAYP]

Reading

Psalm 9.1-8

Litany of the Word

- 1 Word of justice, *Alleluia,*
come to dwell here. *Maranatha!*
- 2 Word of mercy, *Alleluia,*
live among us. *Maranatha!*
- 3 Word of power, *Alleluia,*
live within us. *Maranatha!*
- 4 Word of freedom, *Alleluia,*
save your people. *Maranatha!*
- 5 Word of healing, *Alleluia,*
heal our sorrow. *Maranatha!*

Reading 3

A reading from Oscar Romero.

God comes, and his ways are near to us.

God saves in history.

Each person's life, each one's history,
is the meeting place to which God comes.

How satisfying to know one need not go to the desert
to meet him,

need not go to some particular spot in the world.

God is in your own heart.

* * *

Who will put a prophet's eloquence into my words
to shake from their inertia
all those who kneel before the riches of the earth –
who would like gold, money, lands, power, political life
to be their everlasting gods?

All that is going to end.

There will remain only the satisfaction of having been,
in regard to money or political life,
a person faithful to God's will.

One must learn to manage the relative and transitory
things of earth according to his will,
not make them absolutes.

There is only one absolute: he who awaits us
in the heaven that will not pass away.

Oscar Romero, 10 December, 1978

Reading 4

Waiting for God

A reading from Henri Nouwen

Most of us think of waiting as something very passive, a hopeless state determined by events totally out of our hands. The bus is late? You cannot do anything about it, so you have to sit there and just wait. It is not difficult to understand the irritation people feel

Chant

Within our darkest night,
you kindle the fire that never dies away,
that never dies away.

Within our darkest night,
you kindle the fire that never dies away,
that never dies away.

Taizé Community [CAH950]

Reading

A reading from Oscar Romero

Chant

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.

Wait for the Lord: keep watch, take heart!

from Psalm 27:14, Taizé Community [CAH949]

Reflection / Meditation

A reading from Henri Nouwen

Pause

for silent prayer and reflection

Intercessions, with Chant

Kindle a flame to lighten the dark
and take all fear away.

Iona Community [HSNW]

Chant

In the Lord I'll be ever thankful,

in the Lord I will rejoice!

Look to God, do not be afraid;
lift up your voices, the Lord is near;
lift up your voices, the Lord is near.

Taizé Community [CAH929]

¶ Conclusion

The Lord be with you

All **and also with you.**

Blessing

May God the Father, judge all-merciful,
make us worthy of a place in his kingdom.

All **Amen.**

May God the Son, coming among us in power,
reveal in our midst the promise of his glory.

All **Amen.**

May God the Holy Spirit make us steadfast in faith,
joyful in hope and constant in love.

All **Amen.**

Ending

As we await our coming Saviour,
go in the peace of Christ.

All **Thanks be to God.**

Hymn

- 1 Longing for light, we wait in darkness.
Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people,
light for the world to see.

Christ be our light!

Shine in our hearts.

Shine through the darkness.

Christ be our light!

*Shine in your church
gathered today.*

- 2 Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has the power to save us.
Make us your living voice.
- 3 Longing for food, many are hungry.
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for others,
shared until all are fed.
- 4 Longing for shelter, many are homeless,
Longing for warmth, many are cold.
Make us your building, sheltering others,
walls made of living stone.
- 5 Many the gifts, many the people,
many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another,
making your kingdom come.

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- 6 Word of comfort, *Alleluia*,
bring us hope now. *Maranatha!*
- 7 Word of gladness, *Alleluia*,
fill our hearts now. *Maranatha!*
- 8 Word of wisdom, *Alleluia*,
come renew us. *Maranatha!*
- 9 Word we long for, *Alleluia*,
word we thirst for. *Maranatha!*
- 10 Key of David, *Alleluia*,
Son of Mary. *Maranatha!*
- 11 Promised Saviour, *Alleluia*,
true Messiah. *Maranatha!*
- 12 Cry of prophets, *Alleluia*,
hope of ages. *Maranatha!*
- 13 Light of nations, *Alleluia*,
light in darkness. *Maranatha!*
- 14 Risen Saviour, *Alleluia*,
Lord of glory. *Maranatha!*
- 15 You we long for, *Alleluia*,
you we thirst for. *Maranatha!*
- 16 Here among us, *Alleluia*,
living in us. *Maranatha!*

Bernadette Farrell [L]

Reading

Revelation 14.13 – 15.4

Silence

a quiet period of several minutes for silent prayer and reflection

when somebody says, ‘Just wait’. Words like that seem to push us into passivity.

But there is none of this passivity in scripture. Those who are waiting are waiting very actively. They know that what they are waiting for is growing from the ground on which they are standing. That’s the secret. The secret of waiting is the faith that the seed has been planted, that something has begun. Active waiting means to be present fully to the moment, in the conviction that something is happening where you are and that you want to be present to it. A waiting person is someone who is present to the moment, who believes that this moment is the moment.

A waiting person is a patient person. The word patience means the willingness to stay where we are and live the situation out to the full in the belief that something hidden there will manifest itself to us. Impatient people are always expecting the real thing to happen somewhere else and therefore want to go elsewhere. The moment is empty. But patient people dare to stay where they are. Patient living means to live actively in the present and wait there. Waiting, then, is not passive. It involves nurturing the moment, as a mother nurtures the child that is growing in her. Zechariah, Elizabeth, and Mary were very present to the moment. That is why they could hear the angel. They were alert, attentive to the voice that spoke to them and said, ‘Don't be afraid. Something is happening to you. Pay attention.’

But there is more. Waiting is open-ended. Open-ended waiting is hard for us because we tend to wait for something very concrete, for something that we wish to have. Much of our waiting is filled with wishes: ‘I wish that I would have a job. I wish that the weather would be better. I wish that the pain would go.’ We are full of wishes, and our waiting easily gets entangled in those wishes. For this reason, a lot of our waiting is not open-ended. Instead, our waiting is a way of controlling the future. We want the future to go in a very specific direction, and if this does not happen we are disappointed and can even slip into despair. That is why we have such a hard time waiting: we want to do the things that will make the desired events take place. Here we can see how wishes tend to be connected with fears.

Opening responses

O God, make speed to save us.

All **O Lord, make haste to help us.**

Reveal among us the light of your presence,

All **That we may behold your power and glory.**

Words of introduction and welcome may be said.

Chant

The Lord is my light,
my light and salvation:
in God I trust,
in God I trust.

Taizé Community [CAH944]

The Advent Wreath

A candle on the Advent wreath is lit, and a prayer is said.

Blessed are you, Sovereign Lord, God of our ancestors:
to you be praise and glory for ever!

You called the patriarchs to live by the light of faith
and to journey in the hope of your promised fulfilment.

May we be obedient to your call
and be ready and watchful to receive your Christ,
a lamp to our feet and a light to our path;

for you are our light and our salvation.

Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

All **Blessed be God for ever.**

Chant

Bless the Lord, my soul,
and bless God's holy name.

Bless the Lord, my soul,
who leads me into life.

Taizé Community [CAH923]

Pause

for silent prayer and reflection