

# **The Advent Stations:**

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From Magnificat's Advent Daily Companion

## **What are the Advent Stations?**

The Advent Stations take us on a tour of the Old Testament. Like the traditional Lenten Stations of the Cross, these seven Advent "stations" or "stopping points" provide a way to ponder the mystery of how God prepared the world to receive His Son at the moment of the Annunciation.

Each station contains an Old Testament foreshadowing of the incarnation, a meditation, the New Testament fulfillment in Christ, and then a prayer.

They can be prayed alone, or with your family, or even in the church with a group of faithful.

## **FIRST STATION**

### **The Creation of Adam and Eve**

Let us make man in our image

#### **Old Testament Scripture      Genesis 1:26-28**

<sup>26</sup> Then God said, "Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." <sup>27</sup> So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. <sup>28</sup> And God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

#### **MEDITATION**

In the wonders of creation the Lord revealed His great love by creating man in His own image and likeness. By the sin of Adam and Eve though, that image was disfigured and the likeness was dimmed. All of their children would be marked by their transgression. The goodness of creation was left waiting to be found; the beauty of man was hidden behind his sin. It was not to remain so forever because the Father so loved the world that He gave His own Son to be its Saviour.

In Christ all that had been lost was restored and even more was given. Man who had once lost his friendship with the Lord now in Christ would know the intimacy of God himself. Even before Adam and Eve were finally banished from the garden the Lord was preparing the world to receive the gift of His Son.

This is the mystery of Advent -- preparing for His coming. This is the mystery of the incarnation -- preparing for Christ to make all things new.

#### **New Testament Scripture      (Revelation 21: 1- 5)**

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. <sup>2</sup> And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; <sup>3</sup> and I heard a great voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God himself will be with them; <sup>4</sup> He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away."

<sup>5</sup> And He who sat upon the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." Also, He said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true."

## **PRAYER**

Loving Father, through Christ our Lord, You call us to a new paradise. More than we could ever have hoped for given to us by the gift of Your Son. His becoming man made it possible for man to have a share in Your divine life.

In this time of attack upon married life, give husbands and wives the grace to persevere in their vocations. May marital fidelity conquer all the temptation of Satan. May the love of husband and wife truly become an image of Your own love. We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord. Amen.

*O come, thou Wisdom born in heaven's height;  
Come peacefully, thy people set aright,  
To us the path of knowledge show  
And help us in that way to go.  
Rejoice, rejoice!  
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

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## **SECOND STATION**

### **The Covenant Begins**

The Promise of a Son to Abraham and Sarah

#### **Old Testament Scripture (Genesis 18: 9-11; 21: 1-3)**

<sup>9</sup> They said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" And he said, "She is in the tent." <sup>10</sup> The Lord said, "I will surely return to you in the spring, and Sarah your wife shall have a son." And Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him. <sup>11</sup> Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.

The Lord visited Sarah as He had said, and the Lord did to Sarah as He had promised. <sup>2</sup> And Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age at the time of which God had spoken to him. <sup>3</sup> Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore him, Isaac.

#### **MEDITATION**

At this time in our history that regards life as more of a burden than a gift, society finds it difficult to understand the disappointment of a childless couple. The children of friends and relatives are constant reminders though of the joy that eludes them as co-creators with God of human life.

Abraham and Sarah ask the questions: "Who will remember us when we lie in death?" The Lord answers: "There is never a time when I have not heard you or remembered you; if I should forget you even for a moment the universe would cease to be. You will have a son and his descendants will be as numerous as the stars of the sky and the sands of the sea. I will always be with you, for I am Emmanuel.

#### **New Testament Scripture (Romans 9: 1-9)**

I am speaking the truth in Christ, I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit, <sup>2</sup> that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. <sup>3</sup> For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen by race. <sup>4</sup> They are Israelites, and to them belong the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; <sup>5</sup> to them belong the patriarchs, and of their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.

<sup>6</sup> But it is not as though the word of God had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, <sup>7</sup> and not all are children of Abraham because they are his descendants; but "Through Isaac shall your descendants be named." <sup>8</sup> This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are reckoned as descendants. <sup>9</sup> For this is what the promise said, "About this time I will return, and Sarah shall have a son."

## **PRAYER**

Blessed are You, O King of the universe. To Abraham and Sarah You revealed that You are faithful to Your promises. You spoke Your name to their descendants, that great and unspeakable name which brings life and salvation.

In the fullness of time You spoke Your Word of promise again in Jesus Christ, our life and salvation. May the people You chose long ago come to full redemption and may Your children, born not of flesh but by adoption in water and the Holy Spirit, come to share in all You have promised. Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*O come, O come, thou Lord of might  
Who to thy tribes on Sinai's height  
In ancient times did give the Law  
In cloud and majesty and awe.  
Rejoice, rejoice!  
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

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## THIRD STATION

### The Angelic Announcement To Manoah and His Wife

#### **Old Testament Scripture (Judges 13: 2-7, 24)**

<sup>2</sup> And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the tribe of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren and had no children. <sup>3</sup> And the angel of the Lord appeared to the woman and said to her, "Behold, you are barren and have no children; but you shall conceive and bear a son. <sup>4</sup> Therefore beware, and drink no wine or strong drink, and eat nothing unclean, <sup>5</sup> for lo, you shall conceive and bear a son. No razor shall come upon his head, for the boy shall be a Nazirite to God from birth; and He shall begin to deliver Israel from the hand of the Philistines." <sup>6</sup> Then the woman came and told her husband, "A man of God came to me, and his countenance was like the countenance of the angel of God, very terrible; I did not ask him whence he was, and he did not tell me his name; <sup>7</sup> but he said to me, 'Behold, you shall conceive and bear a son; so then drink no wine or strong drink, and eat nothing unclean, for the boy shall be a Nazirite to God from birth to the day of his death.'"

<sup>24</sup> And the woman bore a son and called his name Samson; and the boy grew, and the Lord blessed him.

#### **MEDITATION**

Throughout the living of the covenant, the Lord sought to guide His people to the Messiah. Manoah and his wife reveal that the Messiah can work where the world believes He cannot. Even barrenness is not an obstacle to His fertility. The strength of Samson foreshadows the very strength of Christ himself.

Samson ripped apart physical chains and brought down the temple of his captors. Christ destroyed the very chains of death itself and allowed the Temple of his body to be torn down and then raised up in glory. Our salvation comes only from the Lord and in no force of our own.

## **New Testament Scripture (Luke 1: 5-17)**

<sup>5</sup> In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah; and he had a wife of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. <sup>6</sup> And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. <sup>7</sup> But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.

<sup>8</sup> Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, <sup>9</sup> according to the custom of the priesthood, it fell to him by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. <sup>10</sup> And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. <sup>11</sup> And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. <sup>12</sup> And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. <sup>13</sup> But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer is heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.

<sup>14</sup> And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth; <sup>15</sup> for he will be great before the Lord, and he shall drink no wine nor strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. <sup>16</sup> And he will turn many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God, <sup>17</sup> and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared."

### **PRAYER**

Loving God and Father, time and time again, You bring fruit out of human barrenness. With the words of angels You communicated to the chosen people of the covenant but now we have Your Word himself as our Lord and Saviour.

Help us always to hear Christ speaking in our hearts. He alone can relive our fears and anxieties. Only Christ can bring our life to this world. In His Holy Name then, give children to those who ask and give faith to those who are barren of heart, especially those in our families. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*O come, thou Rod of Jesse, free  
Thine own from Satan's tyranny,  
From depths of Hell thy people save  
And give them vict'ry o'er the grave.  
Rejoice, rejoice!  
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

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## **FOURTH STATION**

### **The Destiny of Bethlehem**

Revealed in Ruth and Boaz

#### **Old Testament Scripture (Ruth 4: 10-13)**

<sup>10</sup> Also Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, I have bought to be my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from the gate of his native place; you are witnesses this day." <sup>11</sup> Then all the people who were at the gate, and the elders, said, "We are witnesses. May the Lord make the woman, who is coming into your house, like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel. May you prosper in Ephrathah and be renowned in Bethlehem; <sup>12</sup> and may your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the children that the Lord will give you by this young woman."

<sup>13</sup> So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife; and he went into her, and the Lord gave her conception, and she bore a son.

#### **MEDITATION**

Small towns can be places where people "watch out" for each other, and small can also be places where people "watch" each other, especially the stranger. In this shrinking world, each day the stranger and the marginalized are treated with suspicion, resentment, and contempt. Lives are shattered and broken when minds and hearts refuse to admit that God desires to save people of all races and all nations and all creeds.

Bethlehem was a small town that first closed its doors to Jesus, Mary and Joseph. The Lord, though, even uses our sins and weakness to show His mercy and strength. Bethlehem would be called great regardless of its smallness.

#### **New Testament Scripture (Matthew 2: 1-6)**

<sup>1</sup> Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, <sup>2</sup> "Where is He who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship him." <sup>3</sup> When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; <sup>4</sup> and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. <sup>5</sup> They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it is written by the prophet: <sup>6</sup> 'And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will govern my people Israel.'"



## **PRAYER**

O Lord of all nations, the holy woman Ruth was not a daughter of the covenant You made with Abraham yet You favoured her to be an ancestor of the Christ and gave her to us as an example of loyalty and reverence to You.

Never allow our hearts to be closed to the stranger or the immigrant. Help us to know that in welcoming them we welcome Your Son. May we always remember that even a cup of cool water given to the stranger out of love in Jesus' name will be remembered on the Day of Judgment. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*O come, thou Key of David, come  
And open wide our heavenly home;  
Make safe the way that leads to thee  
And close the path to misery.  
Rejoice, rejoice!  
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

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## **FIFTH STATION**

### **The Song of Praise** of Hannah and Elkanah

#### **Old Testament Scripture (1 Samuel 1: 19-20, 27-28; 2: 1-10)**

<sup>19</sup> They rose early in the morning and worshiped before the Lord; then they went back to their house at Ramah. And Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, and the Lord remembered her; <sup>20</sup> and in due time Hannah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Samuel, for she said, "I have asked him of the Lord."

<sup>27</sup> For this child I prayed; and the Lord has granted me my petition which I made to him. <sup>28</sup> Therefore I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he lives, he is lent to the Lord." And they worshiped the Lord there.

Hannah also prayed and said, "My heart exults in the Lord; my strength is exalted in the Lord. My mouth derides my enemies because I rejoice in thy salvation.

<sup>2</sup> "There is none holy like the Lord, there is none besides thee; there is no rock like our God. <sup>3</sup> Talk no more so very proudly, let not arrogance come from your mouth; for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by Him actions are weighed. <sup>4</sup> The bows of the mighty are broken, but the feeble gird on strength. <sup>5</sup> Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, but those who were hungry have ceased to hunger. The barren has borne seven, but she who has many children is forlorn.

<sup>6</sup> The Lord kills and brings to life; He brings down to Sheol and raises up.

<sup>7</sup> The Lord makes poor and makes rich; He brings low, He also exalts. <sup>8</sup> He raises up the poor from the dust; He lifts the needy from the ash heap, to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honour. For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and on them He has set the world. <sup>9</sup> "He will guard the feet of His faithful ones; but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness; for not by might shall a man prevail. <sup>10</sup> The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces against them He will thunder in heaven. The Lord will judge the ends of the earth; He will give strength to His king and exalt the power of His anointed."

#### **MEDITATION**

Prayer was the first of Hannah and Elka'nah's duties. So often it is our last and most neglected. Prayer unites us to God himself in a communion of mind and heart. Prayer brings a confidence in knowing that all we ask for the Lord will grant, according to His loving plan of Divine Providence.

This is the confidence which Christ bestows on us in praying the prayer that he taught us: "thy kingdom come, thy will be done." The Father's will may not always be clear to us, but that should not inhibit our praise of His goodness. Prayers of praise constantly flow from the true believer's soul.

## **New Testament Scripture – (Luke 1 39-56)**

<sup>39</sup> In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a city of Judah, <sup>40</sup> and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup> And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit <sup>42</sup> and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! <sup>43</sup> And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? <sup>44</sup> For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb leaped for joy. <sup>45</sup> And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her from the Lord." <sup>46</sup> And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord, <sup>47</sup> and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, <sup>48</sup> for He has regarded the low estate of His handmaiden. For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed; <sup>49</sup> for He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name. <sup>50</sup> And His mercy is on those who fear him from generation to generation. <sup>51</sup> He has shown strength with His arm, He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts, <sup>52</sup> He has put down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of low degree; <sup>53</sup> He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent empty away. <sup>54</sup> He has helped His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy, <sup>55</sup> as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to His posterity forever." <sup>56</sup> And Mary remained with her about three months and returned to her home.

### **PRAYER**

Lord, of life, You reveal to us the wonders of Your love in the gift of newborn life. You gave Hannah and Elkanah the courage to ask for the gift of a child. Give us that same courage to ask for what we truly need. Give us also the ability to praise Your goodness even in moments of difficulty and distress.

Help us to see Your hand at work in our lives, always bringing us closer to Yourself. May Mary's own song of praise echo in every moment of our life. May the depths of our souls praise You for ever. Grant this through Christ our Lord.

*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 thee, O Israel.*

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## SIXTH STATION

### David's Promise to Bathsheba

"Your son shall reign after me"

#### **Old Testament Scripture (1 Kings 1: 15-18, 29-31)**

<sup>15</sup> So Bathsheba went to the king into his chamber (now the king was very old, and Abishag the Shunammite was ministering to the king). <sup>16</sup> Bathsheba bowed and did obeisance to the king, and the king said, "What do you desire?" <sup>17</sup> She said to him, "My lord, you swore to your maidservant by the Lord your God, saying, 'Solomon your son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne.' <sup>18</sup> And now, behold, Adonijah is king, although you, my lord the king, do not know it.

<sup>29</sup> And the king swore, saying, "As the Lord lives, who has redeemed my soul out of every adversity, <sup>30</sup> as I swore to you by the Lord, the God of Israel, saying, 'Solomon your son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead'; even so will I do this day." <sup>31</sup> Then Bathsheba bowed with her face to the ground, and did obeisance to the king, and said, "May my lord King David live forever!"

#### **MEDITATION**

To have another man's wife, David became party to deception, adultery, and murder. In David's sorrow for his misdeeds, the Lord God did not leave him in sinfulness nor does he allow us to be swept away in the flood of our sins. But even the son of David and Bathsheba, Solomon the Wise, could not offer the price for their redemption. The world still needed a "greater-than-Solomon."

#### **New Testament Scripture (Hebrews 2: 5-9)**

<sup>5</sup> For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. <sup>6</sup> It has been testified somewhere, "What is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that thou carest for him? <sup>7</sup> Thou didst make him for a little while lower than the angels, thou hast crowned him with glory and honour, <sup>8</sup> putting everything in subjection under His feet." Now in putting everything in subjection to him, He left nothing outside His control. As it is, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. <sup>9</sup> But we see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honour because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.

## **PRAYER**

Giver of all good gifts, You created this world to be a peace-able kingdom, but our greed and hatred have left the scars of war, the degradation of creation, and the legacy of death.

Help us to preserve and protect the gift of life in all of its stages. Free us from actions that only enslave and destroy. May all Your children learn to live in peace. May we acknowledge You alone, as the Lord of life and when our time on earth is ended, call us by name into Your holy kingdom. We ask this through Christ our King and our Lord. Amen.

*O come, of all the nations King,  
The world awaits thy ransoming;  
Remove our hate and faithlessness,  
Unite us who thy Name confess.  
Rejoice, rejoice!  
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

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## SEVENTH STATION

### The Birth of the Virgin Mary

The Fidelity of Israel in Anne and Joachim

#### **Old Testament Scripture (Genesis 6: 13 -22)**

<sup>13</sup> And God said to Noah, "I have determined to make an end of all flesh; for the earth is filled with violence through them; behold, I will destroy them with the earth. <sup>14</sup> Make yourself an ark of gopher wood; make rooms in the ark and cover it inside and out with pitch. <sup>15</sup> This is how you are to make it: the length of the ark three hundred cubits, its breadth fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. <sup>16</sup> Make a roof for the ark and finish it to a cubit above; and set the door of the ark in its side; make it with lower, second, and third decks. <sup>17</sup> For behold, I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life from under heaven; everything that is on the earth shall die. <sup>18</sup> But I will establish my covenant with you; and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. <sup>19</sup> And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every sort into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female. <sup>20</sup> Of the birds according to their kinds, and of the animals according to their kinds, of every creeping thing of the ground according to its kind, two of every sort shall come into you, to keep them alive. <sup>21</sup> Also take with you every sort of food that is eaten and store it up; and it shall serve as food for you and for them." <sup>22</sup> Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him.

#### **MEDITATION**

The ark of Noah was built to save mankind from the deadly force of the flood. It was built with precision and care, for the ark would be Noah's only refuge. It would deliver his family from death and destruction.

The new Ark who is Blessed Virgin Mary was created with even greater care and precision, for not just one family would find safety within her but all families! Mary guides us through the last days of our Advent waiting. Her conception and birth are the last preparations before the floods begin again -- not floods of water -- or wrath -- but floods of mercy and love -- as Gods becomes man and takes flesh of the Virgin. The dove is sent out again to bring not a simple olive branch but the very root and stem of Jess, Jesus Christ our Lord.

## **New Testament Scripture (1 Peter 3: 13-22)**

<sup>13</sup> Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is right? <sup>14</sup> But even if you do suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, <sup>15</sup> but in your hearts reverence Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you yet do it with gentleness and reverence; <sup>16</sup> and keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are abused, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. <sup>17</sup> For it is better to suffer for doing right, if that should be God's will, than for doing wrong. <sup>18</sup> For Christ also died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit; <sup>19</sup> in which He went and preached to the spirits in prison, <sup>20</sup> who formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. <sup>21</sup> Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a clear conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, <sup>22</sup> who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers subject to him.

### **PRAYER**

All protecting Father, in the ark of the Blessed Virgin Mary You call all men to find salvation and life in her Son, Jesus Christ. As in the ark of Noah, always keep us free from all natural disasters. In the ark of Mary, keep us free from all spiritual disasters. May we always be strong in faith, steadfast in hope and fervent in charity. Never allow us to drift away from You in anything that we do and remind us always of the safe refuge we have in Your embrace. We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord. Amen.

*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.*