

The background of the cover is a photograph of a nativity scene. A manger, constructed from dark wood and supported by four legs, sits on a rocky ground. It is filled with straw and contains a white cloth. The scene is set against a dark blue night sky filled with stars, with a bright star in the upper left corner.

ACCORDING
TO YOUR
WORD

DAILY
CATHOLIC
PRAYERS
FOR ADVENT

CHRIS KOELLHOFFER, I.H.M.

Introduction

In this sacred season, we remember Jesus as both human and divine. We call him God-with-us. He is Emmanuel, the Holy One, who lovingly embraces our human condition. Emmanuel, who holds in tender remembrance the intimate, lived experience of what it is to inhabit our fragile human flesh that longs for the Holy.

In these Advent days and beyond, may we embody Jesus' way of being present to our beautiful yet wounded world. May these Advent prayers invite us to more fully put on the mind of Christ, to acquire the consciousness, the perspective, the worldview of Emmanuel in our time and place.

Chris Koellhoffer, I.H.M.

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

May the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all...

1 THESSALONIANS 3:12

Holy One, I hear in this the call of an earlier messenger, John the Baptist, telling me that you must increase and I must decrease. I hear his words echoing again today in the challenge of another messenger, St. Paul. How am I to grow in the direction you desire for me? Love, only love, is your answer. Love without exception, love beyond all boundaries, love without counting or calculation. Grow in me, I pray, the spaciousness of heart that will stretch my worldview and illuminate your face in the face of neighbors both near and distant. AMEN.

MONDAY, FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

*They shall beat their swords into plowshares
and their spears into pruning hooks.*

ISAIAH 2:4

Holy One, I want to believe this shall come to pass. I want to hope this is not some impossible dream: Tilling the soil instead of wielding the sword. Cultivating the seed in place of trampling tender shoots. Retiring the spear instead of hanging up my harp. No more wars of weapons or of words. Only a conversion of attitude, a softening of my heart. May it come to be as I work with you toward the harvest of justice and peacemaking you desire. AMEN.

TUESDAY, FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

*On that day, a shoot shall sprout
from the stump of Jesse,
and from his roots a bud shall blossom.*

ISAIAH 11:1

Come, O Holy One! To the dry and withered landscape, to the thirsting root, to the parched desert, come! To the lonely and severed branch, to the shriveled stump that longs for green, to the broken heart that cannot imagine wholeness, come! When I doubt my belovedness, when my future stands uncertain, when my life feels unfinished and incomplete, come! Even as we wait to celebrate your birth, come, O Holy One, green and bud in me this day. AMEN.

WEDNESDAY, FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

*My heart is moved with pity for the crowd,
for they have been with me now for three days
and have nothing to eat.*

MATTHEW 15:32

Holy One, you are mobbed by the crowd spread at your feet: mute, deformed, blind, lame and hungry. Are they perhaps also carrying, in secret or in shame, wounds invisible and unnamed? I notice how your tender heart tends to each one. Bring me to the mountain perch with you so that I may recognize this same sea of suffering humanity, so that I may sit by your side and learn from your compassion. Lead me toward a holy outreach to our beautiful yet wounded world, a world filled with those who hunger for both bread and to belong in your company. AMEN.

THURSDAY, FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

Open to me the gates of justice;

I will enter them and give thanks to the LORD.

PSALM 118:19

Holy One, I long to be in the place of justice, that place of right relationship with you, with myself, with all of creation. Open those gates; help me to enter and find my home with you, I pray. Open those gates so that I can put on your mind, the mind of the Holy One. Open those gates so that I can better know your consciousness and live in this world in ways that will make a difference for all the family of creation. AMEN.

FRIDAY, FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

*On that day the deaf shall
hear the words of a book;
And out of gloom and darkness,
the eyes of the blind shall see.*

ISAIAH 29:18

Holy One, I attempt to hear, but many times my focus is elsewhere. I find myself distracted and failing to pay attention. Help me, I pray, to truly listen to your presence in my life and in the lives that intersect with mine each day. I long to see, yet often my spirit is visually impaired, missing your light in the gloom and darkness of worry, anxiety and fear. They obstruct my view and close my ears. May “that day” be this day, the day when I live in consciousness of your coming at every moment. AMEN.

SATURDAY, FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary...”

LUKE 1:29-30

Holy One, news of all kinds comes into my life on a daily basis. Sometimes confusing, sometimes troubling, sometimes heartbreaking, sometimes explosive. When I receive a word that completely upends my plans for the day, let me sit with the witness of Mary. As she receives the incredible news of her call to mother you, the Holy One, she hears the words your messengers say to each of us at the tipping points in our lives: “Do not be afraid ...” May I, like Mary, listen and ponder and trust. AMEN.

The background of the page is a dark blue night sky filled with stars. A bright, multi-pointed starburst is positioned at the top center. In the lower right corner, there is a silhouette of a manger, a traditional nativity scene element, filled with straw and covered with a white cloth. The overall mood is serene and spiritual.

With the Advent wreath lighting our way, we prepare for the coming of our Savior at Christmastime. Preparing ourselves through prayer amidst the busyness of the season is much easier when we focus on small things each day. In *According to Your Word: Daily Catholic Prayers for Advent*, Sr. Chris Koellhoffer invites us to more fully put on the mind of Christ and to acquire the consciousness, the perspective and the worldview of Emmanuel in our time and place. Following the light, not just each week, but each and every day of Advent, will help the faithful to see their newborn Savior and welcome him into the world.

This book, along with many other *Creative Communications for the Parish* products, is available on **amazon** kindle and **nook**
by Barnes & Noble

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