

**East Hendred Catholic Parish**

# **Four Candles**

**20<sup>th</sup> December – 24<sup>th</sup> December 2020**



## **Fourth Week of Advent**

*People look East the time is near,  
for the crowning of the year.*

# Christmas Approaches

**AS I WRITE**, booking has closed for the four Christmas masses and we are sorting out how best to arrange things. We shall be in touch as soon as we can. If you are disappointed, do remember that there will be an opportunity to book for Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> December at 9.30am, which, to all intents and purposes, is also a Christmas Mass. Any questions or problems, contact [hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk) It is also possible to phone me on 01235 835038.

Meanwhile many are being helped by watching our live-stream Mass. Most days over 100 watch Mass – not counting those who flick through the channels and are with us only momentarily. We shall get better at working with ChurchServicesTV live-stream and I urge you to discover how to tune in. The link is on our website, [www.hendredcatholicparish.org.uk](http://www.hendredcatholicparish.org.uk) and I am pleased to discover that some who are not IT literate are helped by family or friends to find the link. Because of Christmas postal difficulties and impending holidays, the weekly bulletin is not being posted out.

We shall be able to bring Holy Communion in advance of the day for some of those unable to come. Delivery will be like other deliveries, with no close contact between individuals. The pyx, once received, should be quarantined until Christmas, when the host can be reverently consumed at or after the live-stream Mass, or making use of the material in the Bulletin. Let me know if you would like this arrangement.

We need to be very careful over our Christmas services. More people than usual will be attending and we shall do the fogging between events. You play a vital part in acting cautiously, avoiding coming if you are unwell, and, hardest of all, maintaining two metres' distance at all times.

This edition of the Bulletin takes us from Sunday to Thursday morning. There will be a new Christmas edition in a few days' time.

Fr Andrew

# East Hendred Catholic Parish



**Fourth Sunday of Advent  
(Year B)  
20<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

**Antiphons,  
Prayers and Readings**

## **Entrance Antiphon**

*Rorate cæli*

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.

*Cf Is 45:8*

Cantor (1st time)

Drop down ye heavens from above,

Full

and let the skies pour down righteousness.

## **Advent Wreath IV**

Blessed are you, sovereign Lord, merciful and gentle: to you be praise and glory for ever. Your light has shone in our darkened world through the child-bearing of blessed Mary; grant that we who have seen your glory may daily be renewed in your image and prepared like her for the coming of your Son, who is the Lord and Saviour of all.

## **Collect**

Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord, your grace into our hearts, that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ your Son was made known by the message of an Angel, may by his Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of his Resurrection. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever

## **First Reading**

*2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8-12, 14, 16 [RSV]*

Now when the king dwelt in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies round about, <sup>2</sup>the king said to Nathan the prophet, 'See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent.'

<sup>3</sup> And Nathan said to the king, 'Go, do all that is in your heart; for the LORD is with you.'

<sup>4</sup> But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, <sup>5</sup> 'Go and tell my servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: Would you build me a house to dwell in?... <sup>8</sup> Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel; <sup>9</sup> and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. <sup>10</sup> And I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, <sup>11</sup> from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. <sup>12</sup> When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom..... <sup>14</sup> I will be his father, and he shall be my son. When he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men.... <sup>16</sup> And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever.'"

**Psalm 89:2-5, 27, 29 R/ 2**

**R/ I will sing for ever of your mercies, O Lord.**

I will sing for ever of your mercies O Lord;  
through all ages my mouth will proclaim your fidelity.  
I have declared your mercy is established for ever;  
your fidelity stands firm as the heavens. **R/**

'With my chosen one I have made a covenant;  
I have sworn to David my servant:  
I will establish your descendants for ever,  
and set up your throne through all ages.' **R/**

He will call out to me: 'You are my father,  
my God, the rock of my salvation.'  
I will keep my faithful love for him always;  
with him my covenant shall last. **R/**

## **Second Reading**

*Romans 16:25-27 [RSV]*

Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret for long ages <sup>26</sup> but is now disclosed and through the prophetic writings is made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith— <sup>27</sup> to the only wise God be glory for evermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.

## **Alleluia**

Alleluia, alleluia! The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and they will call him Emmanuel: a name which means 'God-is-with-us'. Alleluia!

## **Gospel**

*Luke 1:26-38 [RSV]*

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> And he came to her and said, 'Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you!' <sup>29</sup> But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup> And the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. <sup>31</sup> And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.

<sup>32</sup> He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, <sup>33</sup> and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end.'

<sup>34</sup> And Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I have no husband?'

<sup>35</sup> And the angel said to her,

'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.

<sup>36</sup> And behold, your kinswoman Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. <sup>37</sup> For with God nothing will be impossible.' <sup>38</sup> And Mary said, 'Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.' And the angel departed from her.

## **Prayer over the Offerings**

May the Holy Spirit, O Lord, sanctify these gifts laid upon your altar, just as he filled with his power the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Through Christ our Lord.

**Preface***(II De Adventu: De duplici exspectatione Christi)*

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord. For all the oracles of the prophets foretold him, the Virgin Mary longed for him with love beyond all telling. John the Baptist sang of his coming and proclaimed his presence when he came. It is by his gift that already we rejoice at the mystery of his Nativity, so that he may find us watchful in prayer and exultant in praise. And so, with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions, and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven, we sing the hymn of your glory, as without end we acclaim: Holy, Holy, Holy &c.

**Communion Antiphon***Ecce Virgo concipiet*

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

*Is 7:14***Prayer after Communion**

Having received this pledge of eternal redemption, we pray, almighty God, that, as the feast day of our salvation draws ever nearer, so we may press forward all the more eagerly, to the worthy celebration of the mystery of your Son's Nativity. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

**Scripture Reading (until 24<sup>th</sup> December)**

<b>21<sup>st</sup> December</b>	<i>O Oriens</i>	Zephaniah 3:14-18	Luke 1:39-45
<b>22<sup>nd</sup> December</b>	<i>O Rex</i>	1 Samuel 1:24-28	Luke 1:46-56
<b>23<sup>rd</sup> December</b>	<i>O Emmanuel</i>	Malachi 3:1-4, 23-24	Luke 1:57-66
<b>24<sup>th</sup> December</b>		2 Sam. 7:1-5,8-12,14,16	Luke 1:67-79

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# NOTICEBOARD

## HOLY FATHER'S DECEMBER PRAYER INTENTION

We pray that our personal relationship with Jesus Christ be nourished by the World of God and a life of prayer.

## THE SICK AND THOSE IN NEED

Baby Martha, John Castle, Petal Connell, Daniel Cuevas, Rose Millet, John Stringer, Louise Woodhouse, Sr Catherine, Mary Wallace, Brenda Paddon, Angus Clark, Karen Greig, Kitty Teasdale, Mary Mc Nichol, Andrew Gunn, Elizabeth Gunn, Des McNichol, Christine Robinson, Rose

## THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

Week 20th-26th Dec: Sadie Regan, Kathleen Mary Doyle, Bernard Egan, Maureen Morris, Helena Rea, Mary Agnes Hunt, John Stibbs, Winifred Anns, Thomas Eyston, John Champ.

## THE YEAR OF THE WORD

Following the disruption caused by COVID-19, Bishop Philip has extended 'The Year of the Word' until 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021. In short, we shall continue with our intense Scripture programme till then.

## GIVING

To help with supplying the Didcot Foodbank, contact Veronica Paget: [veronicapaget@hotmail.com](mailto:veronicapaget@hotmail.com) or leave suitable food outside her front door. [Jackymattam@btinternet.com](mailto:Jackymattam@btinternet.com) helps with the poor locally.

**MISSIO** The Red Box Collection for 2020 has been sent in. £701.83. Thanks to Margaret Maytham for overseeing this. Must get mine sorted.....

**TO GIVE TO OUR PARISH BY REGULAR STANDING ORDER OR GIFT**

**BANK DETAILS: PRC DTR East Hendred, St Mary**

**Sort Code: 309304 Account Number: 00877183**

**To arrange Gift Aid, contact : [hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)**

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Buy a few Christmas dinners and help for the homeless:

<https://www.crisis.org.uk/>

## CHILDREN CELEBRATE

Our Team have produced resources, which are available at the back of St Mary's. See also [www.hendredcatholicparish.org.uk](http://www.hendredcatholicparish.org.uk) and the link below.



### CLG Advent Booklet 2020.pdf

Children's liturgy for the coming weeks

See: [www.cafod.org.uk/childrensliturgy](http://www.cafod.org.uk/childrensliturgy)  
Children's liturgy general guidelines (doc, 59kb)

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### CAFOD World Gifts

This Christmas why not buy gifts that will change lives and bring happiness! CAFOD's World Gifts are a range of virtual gifts that transform the lives of those living in poverty overseas. New gifts this year included Keep Clean £6 (soap and washing powder for family ) and Emergency Food £50 so please look on line at:

<https://worldgifts.cafod.org.uk/>

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**emmaus OXFORD Donations to their Christmas Challenge can be doubled through the Big Give. More details <https://emmaus.org.uk/oxford/>**



# **CHRISTMAS SERVICES AT ST MARY'S**

## **CHRISTMAS EVE**

**4pm Vigil Mass of Christmas**

**6pm-7pm Christmas Candle Lighting**

Everyone of any religion or none is invited to visit St Mary's Church to light a candle between 6 and 7PM. At the entrance of the Church you can collect a candle (which will not have been handled by anyone) and you will be guided to light it from a pillar candle by the door then walk slowly towards the altar and place it on the table in front of the altar, then leave the Church following the one-way route. Please note - you are asked to wear a mask and keep 2 metres distance from others not in your own household group. Children are welcome also, if they can be supervised to not touch anything please, as this will take place between Masses. If you would like a candle to be lit in the Church on Christmas Eve for someone in particular, who cannot visit, please advise by emailing [hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:hendred@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk) or calling 01235 835038 (before 20<sup>th</sup> Dec) with a first name which will be written on a candle and lit on your behalf. There is no charge for candles, however any online contributions via St Mary's Parish website: [Hendred Catholic Parish](#) 'donate' button are most gratefully received.

**8pm Mass of Christmas Night**

## **CHRISTMAS DAY**

**9.30am Mass of Christmas Day (1)**

**11.15am Mass of Christmas Day (2)**

**Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> December (St Stephen) No Mass**

**Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> December (Holy Family) 9.30am Mass (No 11.15am)**

# The Divine Office

**The People of God** share in different ways in the daily recitation of the Divine Office. The Office of Readings (sometimes called 'Vigils' or 'Matins') used to be a night time provision. Nowadays it takes place early in the morning but may be scheduled for any convenient time of day. To this, religious add the minor hours of Terce (approx. 9am), Sext (approx. 12 noon), None (approx. 3pm), and Compline (late evening). Those not in religious communities are able to replace Terce, Sext, and None with a short Midday Office. The major hours are Lauds (Morning Prayer) and Vespers (Evening Prayer), each climaxing with a Gospel Canticle, the Song of Zechariah (*'Benedictus'*) in the morning and the Song of Our Lady (*'Magnificat'*) in the evening. It is these major hours, which the Second Vatican Council called 'the hinges' (*'cardines'*) of the Divine Office and it is these major hours which the whole People of God are to share.

It is not an easy time to buy Office Books, which are all being revised. Stocks are low if not non-existent. Many people now make use of an app and read the Office on an iPad or iPhone. Google <https://universalis.com> for material and help with dealing it. There are some basic decisions: the version on the internet is free but uses its own translation to avoid problems of copyright; the version as an iPhone or android app costs about £10 (one-off single payment) and that allows one to use the proper texts. There are also options: to use Revised Standard Version (as we do in East Hendred); to listen to the Office read and sung &c.

## **Universalis as it describes itself**

*Martin Kochanski who runs the site writes:*

"[Universalis] is the biggest present there can be, because it changes lives, and it lasts for ever. A Universalis registration code costs £19.99... It gives the recipient all the Mass readings for every day, forever, and all the Hours of the Liturgy of the Hours for every day, forever. There are also benefits such as the daily 'About Today' pages, with their stories of the saints and their illustrations. The registration code works on whatever devices your friend has – Android and iPhone/iPad/iPod Touch and Mac and Windows – and also for making personal e-books. It is very simple indeed to give a Universalis registration code as a present. [Our blog post gives all the details.](#)"

# FOOD FOR THE JOURNEY

20<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> December 2020

Advent Week 4

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## ***O Clavis David [O Key of David]***

**O Key of David** and sceptre of the House of Israel; you open and no one can shut; you shut and no one can open: Come and lead the prisoners from the prison house, those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death.

*cf Is 22:22, 42:7*

**Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> December**

**Reading**

*Isaiah 7:10-14*

*The Virgin is with Child*

<sup>10</sup> Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, <sup>11</sup> 'Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.' <sup>12</sup> But Ahaz said, 'I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.' <sup>13</sup> And he said, 'Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? <sup>14</sup> Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emman'u-el.

**Reflection**

**THE PROPHET** is one who sees both the present and the future with a keen and usually uncomfortable eye. In today's reading, Isaiah counsels King Ahaz about the danger of joining a union of small states against the might of Assyria. That coalition, says Isaiah, will fail and, far from preserving Judah's independence, make matters worse. If the prophet's analysis of the present is grim, he nonetheless looks to the future with hope. The prophecy of Emmanuel ('God-with-us') happens three times in Isaiah (7:14; 8:8; 8:10). It is not so much a comfort for present difficulties as the guarantee of a future favourable outcome. Ahaz needs to do nothing to save his nation but have confidence in God's words of assurance. The relevance for us is not only the passage pointing to the birth of the Messiah,

as the Church has traditionally interpreted it, but the knowledge that God is with us and will be with us in all circumstances, in all our difficulties.

## ***O Oriens [O Morning Star]***

**O Morning Star**, splendour of light eternal and sun of righteousness: Come and enlighten those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death.

*cf Mal 4:2*

### **Monday 21<sup>st</sup> December**

#### **Reading**

*Song of Songs 2:8-14*

*My beloved comes leaping over the Mountains*

My beloved is like a gazelle,

or a young stag.

Behold, there he stands

behind our wall,

gazing in at the windows,

looking through the lattice.

**10** My beloved speaks and says to me:

'Arise, my love, my fair one,

and come away;

**11** for behold, the winter is past,

the rain is over and gone.

**12** The flowers appear on the earth,

the time of singing has come,

and the voice of the turtledove

is heard in our land.

**13** The fig tree puts forth its figs,

and the vines are in blossom;

they give forth fragrance.

Arise, my love, my fair one,

and come away.

**14** O my dove, in the clefts of the rock,

in the covert of the cliff,

let me see your face,

let me hear your voice,

for your voice is sweet,

and your face is comely.

## Reflection

**SONG OF SONGS** means 'the best of all songs'. Sometimes known as 'The Song of Solomon', because the book is dedicated to Solomon, we are here looking at something from the Wisdom literature in the Hebrew Bible. We can only guess when the book was written and can only marvel at its poetry. It is always a surprise to discover that it is the one book in the Bible that makes no mention of God. The characters seem to be the Man, the Woman, and the Daughters of Jerusalem – and that is made clear in the different Hebrew verb forms. Jewish tradition has always associated this love song as an allegory of the love of God and the covenant people, Israel. Christian thought re-interprets that as the love of God and the Church, the New Israel. Today's reading is a description of the delight of lovers in Springtime and, as Christmas approaches, we look forward to celebrating afresh the outpouring of God's love for us in Christ.

## *O Rex Gentium*

**Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> December**

**O King of the nations**, and their desire, the cornerstone making both one:  
Come and save the human race, which you fashioned from clay.

*cf Is 28:16; Eph 2:14*

## Reading

*Luke 1:46-56*

*Mary's Song of Praise*

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 for ever.'

<sup>56</sup> And Mary remained with Elizabeth about three months, and returned to her home.

## Reflection

**THE *MAGNIFICAT***, as this Gospel passage from St Luke is called, is a hymn from the mouth of Mary when she visited her cousin Elizabeth. At the time, Elizabeth was six months' pregnant with the son of her old age, John later called 'the Baptist'. Mary's canticle is based on the Song of Hannah, the mother of the Old Testament prophet, Samuel, (1 Sam 2:1-10), but greatly enriched by other biblical allusions, such as the use of phrases from the Psalms. It was customary for Hellenistic historians to use speeches to summarise conversations and events and St Luke shows himself to be such an historian. The importance of the *Magnificat* is that it is a prospectus for the coming Kingdom of God, in which values are turned upside down. This prospectus, together with Our Lady's statement, 'All generations shall call me blessed', is why the canticle forms the climax each day of the Evening Office of Vespers. Mary's words are those of the faithful daughter of Israel. In that sense, she speaks not just for herself but for the whole People of God. God is described in the canticle as 'Lord', 'Saviour', and 'Holy'. Each of these titles has been applied (Luke 1:34, 1:43) or will be applied (2:11) to Jesus. The Child about to be born is indeed Almighty God.

## ***O Emmanuel***

**O Emmanuel**, our king and our lawgiver, the hope of the nations and their Saviour: Come and save us, O Lord our God. *cf Is 7:14*

### **Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> December**

#### **Reading**

*Luke 1:57-66*

#### *The Birth of John the Baptist*

<sup>57</sup> Now the time came for Elizabeth to be delivered, and she gave birth to a son. <sup>58</sup> And her neighbours and kinsfolk heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. <sup>59</sup> And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they would have named him Zechari'ah after his father, <sup>60</sup> but his mother said, 'Not so; he shall be called John.' <sup>61</sup> And they said to her, 'None of your kindred is called by this name.' <sup>62</sup> And they made signs to his father, inquiring what he would have him called. <sup>63</sup> And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, 'His name is John.' And they all marvelled. <sup>64</sup> And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God. <sup>65</sup> And fear came on all their neighbours. And all these things were talked about through all the hill country of Judea; <sup>66</sup> and all who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, 'What then will this child be?' For the hand of the Lord was with him.

#### **Reflection**

**BEFORE** we get to the birth of Jesus, the Infancy Narratives at the beginning of St Luke's Gospel give us the account of the birth and naming of his older cousin, St John the Baptist. The birth of John and Jesus, sixth months apart, are preceded by the announcement of the pregnancy of Elizabeth and Mary. There was the encounter of Zechariah, John's father, with the angel Gabriel in the temple at Jerusalem, at the offering of incense, Zechariah's priestly task. And there was the encounter of Mary with Gabriel at Nazareth, announcing her overshadowing by the Holy Spirit. The difference between these two angelic encounters are significant. One was to an important person, a Jerusalem priest and the other to a girl in an obscure Galilean village. One was to an elderly childless man and the other

to a young woman, only just old enough, we presume, for the responsibilities of motherhood. One was to an incredulous man, who was struck dumb by the news. The other was to a young woman, happy to obey and trust even what she could not begin to understand. And so, in the story of the birth of John the Baptist, Zechariah has the opportunity to recover his powers of speech by expressing his faith and confidence in God first writing on a tablet. He and Elizabeth decline to follow tradition and give their son a family name and so name their son John, the name given to them by the angel.

## ***Christmas Eve***

**Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> December**

**Reading**

*Luke 1:67-79*

*Zechariah's Prophecy*

<sup>67</sup> And John's father Zechari'ah was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying,

<sup>68</sup> 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,  
for he has visited and redeemed his people,  
<sup>69</sup> and has raised up a horn of salvation for us  
in the house of his servant David,  
<sup>70</sup> as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,  
<sup>71</sup> that we should be saved from our enemies,  
and from the hand of all who hate us;  
<sup>72</sup> to perform the mercy promised to our fathers,  
and to remember his holy covenant,  
<sup>73</sup> the oath which he swore to our father Abraham,  
<sup>74</sup> to grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our  
enemies,  
might serve him without fear,  
<sup>75</sup> in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.  
<sup>76</sup> And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;  
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,  
<sup>77</sup> to give knowledge of salvation to his people



in the forgiveness of their sins,  
78 through the tender mercy of our God,  
when the day shall dawn upon us from on high  
79 to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of  
death,  
to guide our feet into the way of peace.'

## Reflection

**THE THREE** passages from St Luke used as canticles or hymns in the Divine Office are *Magnificat* (the Song of Mary) which we encountered on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup>, *Benedictus* (the Song of Zechariah) which we have heard today, and *Nunc Dimittis* (the Song of Simeon) which we shall use at Candlemas (Lk 2:29-32). *Benedictus* is the climax of Lauds, *Magnificat* the climax of Vespers, *Nunc Dimittis* the climax of Compline. These three canticles link the daily prayer of the Church to the Incarnation: God taking our flesh and living in our midst. *Benedictus* takes the form of a traditional Jewish blessing. It begins with God visiting and redeeming Israel, his people. God raises up the horn of salvation to herald the dawning day – the dayspring – from on high, a dawning not of military conquest and political freedom but of a transformation of values, such as was laid out for us in *Magnificat*. This will be heralded by the little child – the infant prophet John the Baptist – who will point to the coming of light, life, and peace.

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# Advent Antiphons

**Sung before and after the Magnificat at Evening Prayer and used as Alleluia verses at Mass**

**17<sup>th</sup> December – O Sapientia**

**O Wisdom**, coming forth from the mouth of the Most High, reaching from one end to the other mightily, and sweetly ordering all things: Come and teach us the way of prudence. *Sir 24:3; Wis 8:1*

**18<sup>th</sup> December – O Adonai**

**O Adonai**, and leader of the House of Israel, who appeared to Moses in the fire of the burning bush and gave him the law on Sinai: Come and redeem us with an outstretched arm. *cf Ex 3:2, 24:12*

**19<sup>th</sup> December – O Radix Jesse**

**O Root of Jesse**, standing as a sign among the peoples; before you kings will shut their mouths, to you the nations will make their prayer: Come and deliver us, and delay no longer. *cf Is 11:10, 45:14, 52:15; Rom 15:12*

**20<sup>th</sup> December – O Clavis David**

**O Key of David** and sceptre of the House of Israel; you open and no one can shut; you shut and no one can open: Come and lead the prisoners from the prison house, those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death. *cf Is 22:22, 42:7*

**21<sup>st</sup> December – O Oriens**

**O Morning Star**, splendour of light eternal and sun of righteousness: Come and enlighten those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death. *cf Mal 4:2*

**22<sup>nd</sup> December – O Rex Gentium**

**O King of the nations**, and their desire, the cornerstone making both one: Come and save the human race, which you fashioned from clay. *cf Is 28:16; Eph 2:14*

**23<sup>rd</sup> December – O Emmanuel**

**O Emmanuel**, our king and our lawgiver, the hope of the nations and their Saviour: Come and save us, O Lord our God. *cf Is 7:14*

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*The first letters of the Latin titles taken backwards (E-R-O-C-R-A-S) form a Latin acrostic - **Ero Cras** which translates as "Tomorrow, I will be [there]", mirroring the theme of the antiphons.*