

WORSHIP AT HOME

Advent: Watching and Waiting for The Coming Christ

The Way of the Blessed!

Divine Reading

Divine Reading is the way of entering Scripture to practice watching and waiting for the Coming Christ. We practice watching and waiting through Reading Scripture, Prayer, Confession, and Witness. These practices prepare us to make straight the way of the Lord.

Prayer

Prayer teaches us to wait to receive a word from the Coming Christ.

In the first reading we Wait. Wait for words, phrases, or ideas, in the Scripture to open the ears of our heart and mind. God gives, we receive! Receive these words, phrases, or ideas by writing them in your journal.



LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE: HOPE

Jesus says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."

Advent means we watch and wait for Christ's coming. Christ comes to give Hope to the "poor in spirit". The "poor in spirit" receive Christ the King of God's Kingdom. Disciples of Christ give Hope to the world.

ACT ONE: "GOD WITH US."

Joseph is "poor in spirit." He did not want to expose Mary to public disgrace. He knew the Law of Moses. He wanted to keep it. He was blind and deaf to Christ's Way of Grace.

Mary receives God's favor. She was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit.

Joseph hears God's still small voice. He receives Mary. Imagine Joseph and Mary's Hope filled conversations. "God is with us, and we didn't know it."

This week speak with loved ones about times the Holy Spirit used disgrace to open your heart-soul-mind to experience God with us. Disciples of Christ give Hope by quietly exposing disgraced people to God's mercy, grace, and love.



Confession

Confession teaches us to watch for the Coming Christ to appear through His Word.

In the second reading we Watch, while we wait. When you come to each of the words, phrases, or ideas written in your journal, pause to wait and watch. While you wait ask, "What does this word, phrase, or idea mean to me." Write your answers in your journal. Notice we receive God's word to give God our hearts and minds.

We confess what God's word, phrase our idea leads us to think and feel.

Repentance

Repentance teaches us to hear God's still small voice, the Holy Spirit. Confession and Repentance form a relationship with God. Confession teaches us to give God our hearts and minds. Repentance teaches us to receive Christ in our hearts and minds.

Divine Reading of Scripture:

Matthew 1:

The bold words are what I received from my reading of God's word. The ones you receive will likely be different than mine.

18 This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about[d]: His mother Mary was **pledged** to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be **pregnant through the Holy Spirit**. **19** Because Joseph her husband was **faithful to the law**, and yet[e] did not want to expose her to public **disgrace**, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

20 But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, **do not be afraid** to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. **21** She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus,[f] because he will save his people from their sins."

22 All this took place to **fulfill** what the Lord had said through the prophet: **23** "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"[g] (which



means "**God with us**").

Witness

Witnesses make straight the way of the Coming Christ

In the third reading we Witness through our experiences of prayer as waiting and watching; confession as giving God our hearts and minds; repentance as receiving Christ into the places of our hearts and minds we have emptied.

Prayer, Confession, Repentance, and Witness makes straight the way of the Lord.

Welcome to Holy Communion on earth as it is in heaven.

24 When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and **took Mary home as his wife.** **25** But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he **gave** him the name Jesus.

The Way of the Blessed

I hope you will receive and practice the Way of the Blessed. (See the left side -bar.) Please allow me to pray with you as we enter Our Father's House of Prayer.

“Father, thank you for blessing ***Your name here*** with the gift of Holy Scripture. Let the words you desire ***your name here*** to receive be lifted out of the passage and flow into ***her/his*** heart and mind. Let your Holy Spirit lead ***her/him*** to share with You what the word means to ***her/him***. (Confession) Lord Jesus, you say you desire mercy, not sacrifice. Let this Hope of Mercy free ***your name here*** to enter your Holy Presence. Abiding in your presence give ***your name here*** ears to hear what the word means to you. (Repentance) Give ***her/him*** eyes to see how to prepare the way of the Lord with others. (Witness) Amen

Read the passage printed above.

Prayer: What word, phrase our idea did you receive from God through the Word?

Read the passage a second time.

Confession: What does the word, phrase, or idea mean to you.

Read the passage a third time.

Repentance: Asks what the word means to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (Pay close attention to how Matthew quotes the prophets. How is God fulfilling the scripture through Joseph and Mary. God desires to commune with you in the same way. In other words, ask how God desires to fulfill his Word in you. (When I ask God what a word received through the Holy Spirit means, It often comes as a sudden knowing. It is like hearing a still small voice speaking in my soul.)

Witness: Keep a journal. God often gives me answers when I least expect it. When you receive and answer record it in your journal. Give thanks for the answer. Ask God who you might share your witness of receiving God's word, confessing your understanding, hearing God's answers, and how it

HOPE: GOD WITH US

Imagine receiving an invitation from God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit

Name, you are invited to join me in The House of Prayer for the Wedding Feast. Arrive clothed in Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.

The Anointed One

The Blessed Pray

Blessed are the poor in spirit... God's ways are not our ways. God is Life Giving and Life Receiving. Holy is the One who's spirit Receives Life and Gives Life!

The world teaches us to give and take. Giving and taking teaches us survival skills for walking through our world filled with valleys of darkness. Blessed is the one who experiences "God with us" in the valleys of fear, disease, suffering, depression, exile... The soul longs to receive and give such Blessed Hope.

The Holy Spirit leads us not into our temptations, but delivers the "poor in spirit" with its many temptations into the Kingdom of Heaven. Prayer teaches us to enter our minds to watch, and enter our hearts to wait until we hear our soul joyfully proclaim, "God is in this place and I did not know it." Awe, Blessed Hope!

Blessed are you! God gave you an invitation to The House of Prayer. Will you receive it? God invites the "poor in spirit" to the Wedding Feast. Those who receive it are clothed in the Spirit of Hope. Hope makes people Holy as God is Holy. Blessed is the one who enters The House of Prayer clothed in Hope.

Close your eyes. Imagine receiving God's invitation to The House of Prayer. The breath God gives you knows the way of receiving and giving.

Imagine sitting in The House of Prayer. Let your breathing show you the way. The House of Prayer is your heart - soul- mind.

Imagine receiving the Heart of God, the Father. Imagine, Receiving the Soul of God, the Holy Spirit. Imagine, receiving the Mind of God, the Son.

As you receive a breath let your still small voice say, "Welcome, Life." As you give the breath to creation let your still small voice say, "Thank you, Life."

In the name of Christ, Welcome to the Kingdom of Heaven clothed in Hope for the World. Amen.

The Blessed Confess

The "poor in spirit" confess their Hope of receiving God's Blessing.

Imagine entering God's House of Prayer. God, The Holy Spirit, leads us to our seats. God, the Father, speaks to us saying, "Receive Our Blessing." God, the Son, clothes us in Blessed Hope. Suddenly we have eyes to see Joseph: We have ears to hear Joseph's heart and mind. Wait! As we watch we see others enter. "God with us" appears. The Father's House of Prayer celebrates Holy Communion. Could this be why Jesus teaches us to pray, "Our Father who art in heaven..."

Watching and waiting we see Joseph and Mary. We hear Joseph say to Mary, "I give myself to you in Hope of receiving you. In the name of God, I receive you to have and to hold from this day forward. I receive you for better or worse, for richer or poorer, and sickness and health."

Mary turns to Joseph repeating the "pledge" of Hope. They receive a cup. It is filled with fine wine. Looking closely we see the cup as it is in heaven. God, the Father, gives the cup to the Holy Spirit. The cup is Christ! God, the Father, and God, the Holy Spirit, give the Cup of Christ to Joseph and Mary to receive the Hope of the World.

Oh, the sight of it is enough to cause us to turn away. Joseph and Mary enter the Valley of Darkness. What shall become of Hope? What becomes of Blessed Hope when it experiences "disgrace"?

We wait and watch the Holy Spirit lead Joseph to experience the dark valley where Hope meets disgrace. We have ears to hear Joseph asking God, the Father, "How can this be? I pledged my Hope to Mary in your presence. I placed my Hope in her. This child in her womb cannot be mine. I have not known her this way.

Hope watches and waits for the Coming Christ.

We hear the the still small voice of God, the Holy Spirit, ask, “Joseph, tell us about your faith?” Joseph replies, “I am faithful to the Law of Moses.” The Holy Spirit asks, Joseph, from whom did Moses receive the Law? Joseph says, “Moses received the Law from God.” “Joseph, shall you place your faith in the receiver of the Law or the Giver?”

The Blessed Repent

Joseph says, “I do not understand. What does your question have to do with the way Mary disgraced me. I want to keep the Law. Adulterer’s must be put to death. Yet, the Law also says, “Thou shall not kill.” I have made up my mind to divorce her quietly!”

We hear God, the Son, say, Joseph, remember your pledge! We see the Father and the Holy Spirit lift the Cup of Christ to Joseph’s lips. We hear Joseph whisper, “God is in this place and did not know it. I made a pledge to Mary by placing my faith in God, the giver of the Law. Awe, the taste of Blessed Hope! Could this be why Jesus says as often as you drink from the cup, do this in remembrance of me?”

The Blessed Witness

Watching and waiting we see and hear Joseph receive Mary, and together they give Hope to the World.

Benediction

God’s son is Jesus, God is with us. Jesus gave us another comforter. The Holy Spirit who is with us always. The same Holy Spirit who gave Mary the Christ Child seeks to overshadow your heart, transform your mind, and clothe your soul with Hope.

Covid-19 is a valley of darkness. God with us! Watch and Wait for the Coming Christ. He comes through His Word to transform our hearts and minds into The House of Prayer. Amen.