

That glorious form, that light unsufferable,
And that far-beaming blaze of majesty,
Wherewith he wont at Heav'n's high council table,
To sit the midst of trinal unity,
He laid aside; and here with us to be,
 Forsook the courts of everlasting day,
And chose with us a darksome house of mortal clay.

— *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity*
John Milton (1629)

**The Second Sunday in Advent
December 5, 2021**

The theme for this Second Week in Advent is Preparation: preparation for the coming of our Lord at Christmas, for the coming of our Lord into our hearts, and for the coming of our Lord at the end of history. Isaiah said,

“Prepare the way of the LORD;
make straight in the desert a highway for our God” (Isa 40.3).

Let us pray.

Father, hasten the day when your Son will light up the night with his glorious return. Protect us, O Lord, from a preoccupation with the cares of this world. Restrain our self-obsession, and do not withhold from us the joy that fills the hearts of those who long for his appearing. May the darkness of our world not prevent us from experiencing the light you give to those who look in faith for your coming. Hear our prayer, O Lord, through your Son our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

“Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (Isa 7.14).

Hymn No. 194

O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL

A Reading from the Prophet Isaiah:

A Voice cries:

“In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD;
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.
And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
and all flesh shall see it together,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken” (Isa 40.3-5).

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

A Reading from the Gospel of Mark:

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in Isaiah the prophet,

“Behold, I send my messenger before your face,
who will prepare your way,
the voice of one crying in the wilderness:
‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight,’”

John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel’s hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, “After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit” (Mk 1.1-8).

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn No. 214

ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH

The Nicene Creed

Trinity Hymnal (p. 846)

Hymn No. 230

THOU WHO WAST RICH BEYOND ALL SPLENDOR

The Apostle Paul on the Incarnation:

“...who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil 2.6-11).

Reflections on the Incarnation

“The Greatest of All Mysteries”

Hymn No. 280

O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL

Hymn No. 195

JOY TO THE WORLD! THE LORD IS COME

Receive the Lord’s Blessing:

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope” (Rom 15.13).

Thanks be to God.