

Liturgy of the Hours
LITURGY OF THE HOURS

OFFICE OF READINGS

December 21, 2025

{ Fourth Sunday of Advent }



Stand and make sign of cross

God, come to my assistance.

— Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now,
and will be for ever. Amen. Alleluia.

HYMN

Redeemer of the nations, come;
reveal yourself by virgin birth.
Let ev'ry age with wonder know
that such a birth befits our God.

Conceived not from the seed of man
but by the Spirit's wondrous breath,
the Word of God is now made flesh,
as Mary's womb brings forth its fruit.

The Virgin's womb grows great with child,
this cloister is for ever pure;
the banners of her virtues gleam,
for in this temple God resides.

From bridal chamber let him come,
from royal Virgin, palace chaste,
with twofold nature God and man,
a champion swift to run his course.

The eternal Father's Equal, come,
bind on the trophy of our flesh,
and strengthen with your lasting pow'r
the weakness of our mortal frame.

Your manger now with splendor shines
and night breathes forth new radiant light,
which no night may corrupt or dim:
so let it shine through constant faith.

To you, O Christ, most loving King,

and to the Father, glory be,
one with the Spirit Paraclete,
from age to age for evermore. Amen.

Metrical hymn, melody: Breslau, 8 8 8 8; first appeared in As Hymnodus Sacer, Leipzig, 1625, adapted by Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, 1809–1847

Plainsong, mode II, melody 46; Liber Hymnarius, Solesmes, 1983; Text: Veni, redemptor gentium, St. Ambrose, 340–397

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Sit or stand

PSALMODY

Antiphon 1

This is our heavenly King, he comes with power and might to save
the nations, alleluia.

Psalm 24

The Lord's entry into his temple

Christ opened heaven for us in the manhood he assumed (St. Irenaeus).

The Lórd's is the éarth and its fúllness, *
the wórld and áll its péoples.
It is hé who sét it on the séas; *
on the wáters he máde it firm.

Who shall clímb the móuntain of the Lórd? *
Who shall stánd in his hóly pláce?
The mán with clean hánds and pure héart, †
who desíres not wórtlless thínghs, *
who has not swórn so as to decéive his néíghbor.

He shall recéive bléssings from the Lórd *
and rewárd from the Gód who sáves him.
Súch are the mén who séek him, *

seek the fáce of the Gód of Jácob.

O gátes, lift hígh your héads; †
grow hígher, áncient dóors. *

Let him énter, the kíng of glóry!

Whó is the kíng of glóry? †
The Lórd, the míghty, the váliant, *
the Lórd, the váliant in wár.

O gátes, lift hígh your héads; †
grow hígher, áncient dóors. *
Let him énter, the kíng of glóry!

Who is hé, the kíng of glóry? †
Hé, the Lórd of ármies, *
hé is the kíng of glóry.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, *
and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, *
and will be for ever. Amen.

Antiphon

This is our heavenly King, he comes with power and might to save
the nations, alleluia.

Antiphon 2

Daughter of Jerusalem, rejoice and be glad; your King will come to
you. Zion, do not fear; your Savior hastens on his way.

Psalm 66

Eucharistic hymn

The Lord is risen and all people have been brought by him to the Father (Hesychius).

I

Cry out with jóy to Gód, all the éarth, *
O síng to the glóry of his náme.
O rénder him glórious práise. *
Say to Gód: “How treméndous your déeds!
Bécause of the gréatness of your stréngth *

your énemies crínge befóre you.
Befóre you all the éarth shall bów; *
shall síng to you, síng to your náme!”

Come and sée the wórks of Gód, *
treméndous his déeds among mén.
He túrned the séa into dry lánd, *
they pássed through the ríver dry-shód.

Let our jóy then bé in hím; *
he rúles for éver by his míght.
His éyes keep wátch over the nátions; *
let rébels not ríse agáinst him.

O péoples, bléss our Gód, *
let the vóice of his práise resóund,
of the Gód who gave lífe to our sóuls *
and képt our féet from stúmbing.

For yóu, O Gód, have tésted us, *
you have tríed us as sílver is tríed:
you léd us, Gód, into the snáre; *
you láid a heavy búrden on our bácks.

You lét men ríde over our héads; †
we wént through fire and through wáter *
but thén you bróught us relíef.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, *
and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, *
and will be for ever. Amen.

Antiphon

Daughter of Jerusalem, rejoice and be glad; your King will come to you. Zion, do not fear; your Savior hastens on his way.

Antiphon 3

Let us cleanse our hearts for the coming of our great King, that we may be ready to welcome him; he is coming and will not delay.

II

Burnt offering I bring to your house; *
to you I will pay my vows,
the vows which my lips have uttered, *
which my mouth spoke in my distress.

I will offer burnt offerings of fatlings †
with the smoke of burning rams. *
I will offer bullocks and goats.

Come and hear, all who fear God. *
I will tell what he did for my soul:
to him I cried aloud, *
with high praise ready on my tongue.

If there had been evil in my heart, *
the Lord would not have listened.
But truly God has listened; *
he has heeded the voice of my prayer.

Blessed be God who did not reject my prayer *
nor withhold his love from me.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, *
and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, *
and will be for ever. Amen.

Antiphon

Let us cleanse our hearts for the coming of our great King, that we
may be ready to welcome him; he is coming and will not delay.

VERSE

Turn back to us, O Lord, our God.

— Show us your face and we shall be saved.

Sit

READINGS

First reading

From the book of the prophet Isaiah

Thus says the Lord:
Listen to me, Jacob,
Israel, whom I named!
I, it is I who am the first,
and also the last am I.
Yes, my hand laid the foundations of the earth;
my right hand spread out the heavens.
When I call them,
they stand forth at once.

All of you assemble and listen:
Who among you foretold these things?
The Lord's friend shall do his will
against Babylon and the progeny of Chaldea.

I myself have spoken, I have called him,
I have brought him, and his way succeeds!
Come near to me and hear this!
Not from the beginning did I speak it in secret;
At the time it comes to pass, I am present:
"Now the Lord God has sent me, and his spirit."

Thus says the Lord, your redeemer,
the Holy One of Israel:
I, the Lord, your God,
teach you what is for your good,
and lead you on the way you should go.

If you would hearken to my commandments,
your prosperity would be like a river,
and your vindication like the waves of the sea;
Your descendants would be like the sand,
and those born of your stock like its grains,
Their name never cut off
or blotted out from my presence.

Go forth from Babylon, flee from Chaldea!
With shouts of joy proclaim this, make it known;

Publish it to the ends of the earth, and say,
“The Lord has redeemed his servant Jacob.
They did not thirst
when he led them through dry lands;
Water from the rock he set flowing for them;
he cleft the rock, and waters welled forth.”

Along the ways they shall find pasture,
on every bare height shall their pastures be.
They shall not hunger or thirst,
nor shall the scorching wind or the sun strike them;
For he who pities them leads them
and guides them beside springs of water.
I will cut a road through all my mountains,
and make my highways level.

See, some shall come from afar,
others from the north and the west,
and some from the land of Syene.
Sing out, O heavens, and rejoice, O earth,
break forth into song, you mountains.
For the Lord comforts his people
and shows mercy to his afflicted.

Responsory

Psalm 96:11; Isaiah 49:13; Psalm 72:7

Rejoice, you heavens, and celebrate, O earth; cry out with praise, you mountains, for the Lord is coming.

— He will have compassion on his poor.

In his days justice will flourish and peace will abound.

— He will have compassion on his poor.

Second reading

From a commentary on Luke by Saint Ambrose, bishop

(Lib. 2, 19. 22-23. 26-27: CCL 14, 39-42)

Mary visits Elizabeth

When the angel revealed his message to the Virgin Mary he gave

her a sign to win her trust. He told her of the motherhood of an old and barren woman to show that God is able to do all that he wills.

When she hears this Mary sets out for the hill country. She does not disbelieve God's word; she feels no uncertainty over the message or doubt about the sign. She goes eager in purpose, dutiful in conscience, hastening for joy.

Filled with God, where would she hasten but to the heights? The Holy Spirit does not proceed by slow, laborious efforts. Quickly, too, the blessings of her coming and the Lord's presence are made clear: as soon as *Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting the child leapt in her womb, and she was filled with the Holy Spirit.*

Notice the contrast and the choice of words. Elizabeth is the first to hear Mary's voice, but John is the first to be aware of grace. She hears with the ears of the body, but he leaps for joy at the meaning of the mystery. She is aware of Mary's presence, but he is aware of the Lord's: a woman aware of a woman's presence, the forerunner aware of the pledge of our salvation. The women speak of the grace they have received while the children are active in secret, unfolding the mystery of love with the help of their mothers, who prophesy by the spirit of their sons.

The child leaps in the womb; the mother is filled with the Holy Spirit, but not before her son. Once the son has been filled with the Holy Spirit, he fills his mother with the same Spirit. John leaps for joy, and the spirit of Mary rejoices in her turn. When John leaps for joy Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit, but we know that though Mary's spirit rejoices she does not need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Her son, who is beyond our understanding, is active in his mother in a way beyond our understanding. Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit after conceiving John, while Mary is filled with the Holy Spirit before conceiving the Lord. Elizabeth says: *Blessed are you because you have believed.*

You also are blessed because you have heard and believed. A soul that believes both conceives and brings forth the Word of God and acknowledges his works.

Let Mary's soul be in each of you to proclaim the greatness of the

Lord. Let her spirit be in each to rejoice in the Lord. Christ has only one mother in the flesh, but we all bring forth Christ in faith. Every soul receives the Word of God if only it keeps chaste, remaining pure and free from sin, its modesty undefiled. The soul that succeeds in this proclaims the greatness of the Lord, just as Mary's soul magnified the Lord and her spirit rejoiced in God her Savior. In another place we read: *Magnify the Lord with me*. The Lord is magnified, not because the human voice can add anything to God but because he is magnified within us. Christ is the image of God, and if the soul does what is right and holy, it magnifies that image of God, in whose likeness it was created and, in magnifying the image of God, the soul has a share in its greatness and is exalted.

Responsory

Luke 1:45, 46; Psalm 66:16

Happy are you who have believed, because the Lord's promises will be accomplished in you. And Mary said:

— My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord.

Come, and listen, and I will tell what great things God has accomplished for me.

— My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord.

Stand

TE DEUM

You are God: we praise you;
You are the Lord: we acclaim you;
You are the eternal Father:
All creation worships you.

To you all angels, all the powers of heaven,
Cherubim and Seraphim, sing in endless praise:
Holy, holy, holy, Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.

The glorious company of apostles praise you.
The noble fellowship of prophets praise you.
The white-robed army of martyrs praise you.

Throughout the world the holy Church acclaim you:
Father, of majesty unbounded,
your true and only Son, worthy of all worship,
and the Holy Spirit, advocate and guide.

You, Christ, are the King of glory,
the eternal Son of the Father.

When you became man to set us free
you did not spurn the Virgin's womb.

You overcame the sting of death,
and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

You are seated at God's right hand in glory.
We believe that you will come, and be our judge.

Come then, Lord, and help your people,
bought with the price of your own blood,
and bring us with your saints
to glory everlasting.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Let us pray.

Lord,
fill our hearts with your love,
and as you revealed to us by an angel
the coming of your Son as man,
so lead us through his suffering and death
to the glory of his resurrection,
for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

— Amen.

Acclamation

Let us praise the Lord.

— And give him thanks.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The English translation of Antiphons, Invitatories, Responsories, Intercessions, Psalm 95, the Canticle of the Lamb, Psalm Prayers, Non-Biblical Readings, Hagiographical Introductions from *The Liturgy of the Hours* © 1973, 1974, 1975, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL); excerpts from the English translation of *The Roman Missal* © 2010, ICEL; the English translation of Hymns from *The Liturgy of the Hours* © 2023. All rights reserved.

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