

December 5, 2021
HYMNS FOR 2nd SUNDAY IN ADVENT
LBW #26 “Prepare the Royal Highway”
LBW #34 “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” (vs. 2)
LBW #36 “On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry”
LBW #30 “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming give to all the people of the world knowledge of your salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

FIRST READING: Malachi 3:1-4

God announces a covenant with Israel. A messenger like Malachi (his name means “my messenger”) will prepare the way for the coming of the Lord by purifying and refining God’s people, as silver and gold are refined.

¹See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. ²But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ soap; ³he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness. ⁴Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

PSALM: Luke 1:68-79

R In the tender compassion of our God the dawn from on high shall break upon us. (Lk. 1:78)

⁶⁸Blessed are you, Lord, the God of Israel,
you have come to your people and set them free.

⁶⁹**You have raised up for us a mighty Savior,
born of the house of your servant David. R**

⁷⁰Through your holy prophets, you promised of old to save us from
our enemies,

⁷¹from the hands of all who hate us,

⁷²**to show mercy to our forebears,
and to remember your holy covenant.**

⁷³This was the oath you swore to our father Abraham:

⁷⁴to set us free from the hands of our enemies,

free to worship you without fear,

⁷⁵**holy and righteous before you, all the days of our life. R**

⁷⁶And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High,

for you will go before the Lord to prepare the way,

⁷⁷**to give God's people knowledge of salvation**

by the forgiveness of their sins.

⁷⁸In the tender compassion of our God

the dawn from on high shall break upon us,

⁷⁹**to shine on those who dwell in darkness and in the shadow
of death,**

and to guide our feet into the way of peace. R

SECOND READING: Philippians 1:3-11

The apostle Paul was the pastor of many new churches. He writes in this letter about his joy to be in partnership with the Christians of Philippi. Listen to how tender-hearted Paul, sometimes a stern preacher, is with his friends as he encourages them to grow in love and knowledge.

³I thank my God every time I remember you, ⁴constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, ⁵because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. ⁷It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. ⁸For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. ⁹And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight ¹⁰to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, ¹¹having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

GOSPEL: Luke 3:1-6

John the Baptist is a herald of Jesus, whose way is prepared by "repentance for the forgiveness of sins." As we hear the careful record of human leaders, we sense the spectrum of political and religious authority that will be challenged by this coming Lord.

¹In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, ²during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. ³He went

into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins,⁴ as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.

⁵Every valley shall be filled,
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,
and the crooked shall be made straight,
and the rough ways made smooth;

⁶and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’”

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

P In this season of watching and waiting, let us pray for all people and places that yearn for God’s presence.

A brief silence.

A You send messengers into the world to proclaim the day of your coming. Make our bishops, pastors, deacons, and lay preachers confident in their preaching, that their words and our lives witness to your grace. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

A Send your Spirit to all living creatures that are endangered. Provide them with shelter and care, and bring us into right relationship with the earth that you create and call good. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

A Send leaders to our nations, cities, schools, and businesses to work on behalf of those who have lost parents, spouses, and loved ones; immigrants; the imprisoned; those living in poverty; and all who are oppressed. Make them bold in their commitments to justice and reconciliation. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

A Send your servants to care for those who suffer. Use our ministries and our lives to reach out with compassion to those who are hungry, oppressed, lonely, or ill (especially). Grant them healing and wholeness. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

A Send prophets to speak difficult truths, even when they are poorly received. Embolden those who ask hard questions and challenge accepted ways. Instill in youth and elders alike a passion for pointing to Jesus in all things. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

A We remember your saints, both those publicly celebrated and those more humbly remembered. Confident that your work will be completed, we live in faith until the day of your coming. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

P God of new life, you come among us in the places we least expect. Receive these prayers and those of our hearts, in the name of Jesus.

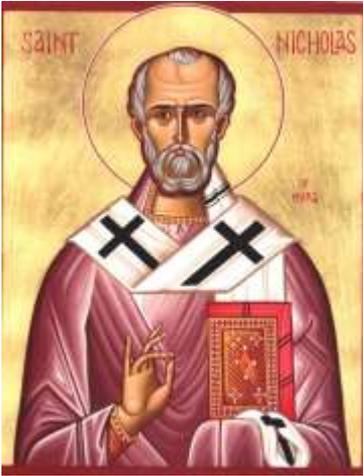
C Amen.

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Saint Nicholas of Myra



Saint Nicholas was born around 280 AD in Patara, in present-day Turkey. Both of his parents died when he was a young man and reportedly used his inheritance to help the poor and sick. He was a devout Christian who later became bishop of the city of Myra. Many legends attest to Nicholas' generosity. One credits him with secretly throwing bags of coins through a poor man's window at night to provide dowries for his three daughters. This allowed the sisters to be married rather than be sold as servants. Other legends describe Nicholas miraculously restoring three young boys to life after a butcher killed them, cut them into pieces and put them into a tub of brine.

Bishop Nicholas was martyred on Dec. 6, 343 AD during the Roman persecution of Christians under the Emperor Diocletian. He was declared a saint based on stories of his miracles and work for the poor. He is known as the protector of children and sailors and is associated with gift-giving.