



## ABC Devotions

*(Follow the Alphabet for your individual or family devotion.)*

*The Fourth Sunday in Advent*

*For the Week of December 18, 2016 through December 24, 2016*

**A.** Make the sign of the cross in remembrance of your baptism and say: **In the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

### **B. Confess the Apostles' Creed**

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life ☩ everlasting. Amen.

### **C. Pray the Lord's Prayer**

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

### **D. Pray the Prayer Appropriate for Time of Day**

#### **Morning**

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

#### **Evening**

I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that you have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that you would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

## E. Daily Bible Reading

**Sunday: Matthew 1:18-25** Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. 19And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. 20But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." 22All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 23"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us). 24When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, 25but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

**Monday: Isaiah 7:10-17** Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, 11"Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." 12But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test." 13And he said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? 14Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. 15He shall eat curds and honey when he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. 16For before the boy knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be deserted. 17The Lord will bring upon you and upon your people and upon your father's house such days as have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah—the king of Assyria."

**Tuesday: Romans 1:1-7** Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, 2which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, 3concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh 4and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, 5through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, 6including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, 7To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Wednesday (St. Thomas, Apostle): John 20:24-29** Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. [25] So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe." [26] Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." [27] Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." [28] Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" [29] Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

**Thursday: Psalm 24** The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein, [2] for he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers. [3] Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place? [4] He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully. [5] He will receive blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God of his salvation. [6] Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob. Selah [7] Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. [8] Who is this King of glory? The LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle! [9] Lift up your heads, O gates! And lift them up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. [10] Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory! Selah

**Friday: Hebrews 1:1-12** Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, [2] but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things,

through whom also he created the world. [3] He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, [4] having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. [5] For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you”? Or again, “I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son”? [6] And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, “Let all God's angels worship him.” [7] Of the angels he says, “He makes his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire.” [8] But of the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. [9] You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.” [10] And, “You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands; [11] they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment, [12] like a robe you will roll them up, like a garment they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will have no end.”

**Saturday (Christmas Eve): Luke 2:1-20** And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. 2 (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) 3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. 4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) 5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. 6 And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. 7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. 8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. 10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. 11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. 12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, 14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. 15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. 16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. 17 And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. 18 And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. 19 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. 20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

## **F. Catechism Reading for the Week**

### **The Lord's Prayer: The Fifth Petition**

And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

*What does this mean?* We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not look at our sins, or deny our prayer because of them. We are neither worthy of the things for which we pray, nor have we deserved them, but we ask that He would give them all to us by grace, for we daily sin much and surely deserve nothing but punishment. So we too will sincerely forgive and gladly do good to those who sin against us.

## **G. Verse for the Week:**

**Isaiah 7:14** Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

## H. Pray the Prayer for the Week

*Collect for the Fourth Sunday in Advent:*

Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come and help us by Your might, that the sins which weigh us down may be quickly lifted by Your grace and mercy; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

## I. Pray for Others and Ourselves *(See below for daily themes.)*

### **Daily Themes for Prayer**

**Sunday:** *Pray for the joy of the resurrection among us; for the fruit of faith nourished by the Word and Sacraments.*

**Monday:** *Pray for faith to live in the promises of Holy Baptism; for one's calling and daily work; for the unemployed; for the salvation and well-being of our neighbors; for schools, colleges, and seminaries; for good government and for peace.*

**Tuesday:** *Pray for deliverance against temptation and evil; for the addicted and despairing, the tortured and oppressed; for those struggling with besetting sins.*

**Wednesday:** *Pray for marriage and family, that husbands and wives, parents and children live in ordered harmony according to the Word of God; for parents who must raise children alone; for our communities and neighborhoods.*

**Thursday:** *Pray for the Church and her pastors; for teachers, deacons, deaconesses, and other church workers; for missionaries and for all who serve the Church; for fruitful and salutary use of the blessed sacrament of Christ's body and blood.*

**Friday:** *Pray for the preaching of the holy cross of our Lord Jesus Christ and for the spread of His knowledge throughout the whole world; for the persecuted and oppressed; for the sick and dying.*

**Saturday:** *Pray for faithfulness to the end; for the renewal of those who are withering in the faith or have fallen away; for receptive hearts and minds to God's Word on the Lord's Day; for pastors and people as they prepare to administer and receive Christ's holy gifts.*

## J. Sing or Say the Hymn of the Week

### **"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"**

**LSB #357**

1 O come, O come Emmanuel, And ransom captive Israel,  
That mourns in lonely exile here Until the Son of God appear.

Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel!

2 O come, Thou Wisdom from on high, Who ord'rest all things mightily;  
to us the path of knowledge show, And teach us in her ways to go. [Refrain]

3 O come, O come, Thou Lord of might, Who to Thy tribes on Sinai's height  
In ancient times didst give the Law In cloud and majesty and awe. [Refrain]

4 O come, Thou Branch of Jesse's tree, Free them from Satan's tyranny  
That trust Thy mighty pow'r to save, And give them vict'ry o'er the grave. [Refrain]

5 O come, thou Key of David, come, And open wide our heav'nly home;  
Make safe the way that leads on high, And close the path to misery. [Refrain]

6 O come, Thou Dayspring from on high, And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, And death's dark shadows put to flight. [Refrain]

7 O come, Desire of nations, bind In one the hearts of all mankind;  
Bid Thou our sad divisions cease, And be Thyself our King of Peace. [Refrain]