



# *Touchstone*

## **Prayers for Advent 2021**

### **Night Falls Light Emerges**

Night falls. Silently. It surprised me the other afternoon driving home just after five. Like a blanket dropped over my head, the light was gone, and the darkness enveloped.

It feels like that has been our story for the past 20 months or so – a blanket has fallen to dim our emotions and psyches.

We string lights, ignite candles, turn on spotlights at this time of year to counteract the short days and to celebrate the deeper spirit light that shines in all of us – however dimly at times.

We sing songs about light and joy and take time to consider the arrival of the Light of the World in the darkness of a Bethlehem night.

It was a dark time in the world then, as it is this year, but hope is on all our minds, as it was for wise men and women and shepherds two millennia past.

In this little card I'm offering some prayers and meditation pieces that have helped me in dark days and offered hope and light even when it felt that the God who is with us and for us was absent.

God is present in us, around us, before we were, and after we are.

## **A Prisoner's Prayer for his Friends**

When I think of the greatness of this great plan I fall on my knees before the Father (from whom all fatherhood, earthly or heavenly derives its name), and I pray that out of the glorious richness of his resources he will enable you to know the strength of the Spirit's inner re-inforcement – that Christ may actually live in your hearts by your faith. And I pray that you, firmly fixed in love yourselves, may be able to grasp (with all Christians) how wide and deep and long and high is the love of Christ – and to know for yourselves that love so far beyond our comprehension. May you be filled through all your being with God himself!

Now to him who by his power within us is able to do infinitely more than we ever dare to ask or imagine – to him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever, amen!

(Ephesians 3:14-21 Phillips)

## **Praying with Mary**

Father in heaven, help me to learn from Mary, who pondered things in her heart. When I need Jesus, let me look with Mary's way of contemplation: attentive, practical, affectionate.

Like Mary, I want to reflect on the mystery of the Incarnation, on how God became man and lived with us, and on how Christ's continuing presence quickens and transforms us. Amen

*(Emile Griffin in God With Us, Greg Pennoyer)*

## A Prayer in the Dark

God of darkness

You must be the god of darkness  
because if you are not, whom else can we  
turn to?

Turn to us now.

Turn to us.

Turn your face to us.

Because it is dark here.

And we are in need. We are people in  
need.

We can barely remember our own truth,  
and if you too have forgotten,  
then we are without a hope of a map.

Turn to us now.

Turn to us.

Turn your face to us.

Because you turned toward us in the body  
of incarnation.

You turned toward us.

Amen.

(From *In the Shelter*. Padraig O Tuama)

## Praying When We Dine Lavishly

Dear Christ, teach me to love your world  
and everyone in it. May I love with an  
unworldly love. Let me understand the  
godly use of material things, to delight  
rightly in your creation. May I remember  
the words from John's first letter; "those  
who do the will of God live forever". Amen  
(Emile Griffin in *God With Us*, Greg Pennoyer)

## Light of the World

Light of the world, we bow before You  
in awe and adoration.

Bless us and our simple faith  
seeking understanding.

Epiphany means manifestation,  
lifting the veil, revelation.

Reveal to us then what we need to know  
to love You, and serve You,  
and keep Your word with fidelity and truth,  
courage and hope, this day and always.

Amen

(Miriam Therese Winter in *O Holy Night! Timeless Meditations on Christmas* A. Jean Lesher)

## The Star

All peoples, all nations shall honour Him.  
His love is so great it aches to receive  
the homage of every heart.

A star led the travellers to Jesus.  
They were seeking for the one life  
that could make a difference  
in their own lives –  
That kind of journey always  
Changes you for ever.

Jesus, now that I've found You,  
let me be like that bright star,  
showing the way to others  
who wonder where You are.  
(Celtic Daily Readings, from the Northumbria  
Community)

