

Alongsiders' Prayers for January 2021

January 03, 2021

The Epiphany of the Lord

On coming to the house, they saw the child with His mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped Him. They opened their treasures and presented Him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Matthew 2: 11

Scripture Readings:

Isaiah 60: 1-6

Psalm 72: 1-7, 10-14

Ephesians 3: 1-12

Matthew 2: 1-12

Through these scriptures, we read of the foretelling divine Saviour of the world. The prophet Isaiah tells us to rise and shine in His glory. He is the light of the world. We are His servants, and by His free gift of grace, we can do anything through Him in faith, to rise above any circumstance in our lives. He is our ruler, the Shepherd who guides us each and every day. In faith and trust, let your light shine! Talk with the Lord each and every day.

Collect: Eternal God, who by a star led wise men to the worship of your Son. Guide by your light the nations of the earth, that the whole world may know your glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Jesus, the promised Messiah, let us pray to the God who loves us and knows the terrain we travel. We thank God for all those who brought the good news of Jesus to us, and all who nourish our faith today. We pray that the whole people of God may work in unity and openness for the coming of God's Kingdom.

Lord God: we offer ourselves.

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We thank God that salvation is for all people, and pray for a just and accepting world where none is rejected, despised or treated with contempt.

Lord God: we offer ourselves.

We thank you, God, for the privilege of parenting and of living in communities. We pray that our home and churches may be welcoming and generous-hearted.

Lord God: we offer ourselves.

We thank you, God, for all who care with such thoughtfulness and practical loving for those who are vulnerable, especially for the very young. We pray for healing and wholeness, peace of mind, protection and hope.

Lord God: we offer ourselves.

We thank you, God, for all who have reached the end of their earthly journey in faith that they may be welcomed into eternity. May we use the time left to us here as good stewards of God's gifts.

Lord God: we offer ourselves.

We thank you, God, for including us in the plan of salvation, and pray that we may be made worthy of our calling. Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

The Grace

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January 10, 2020

The Baptism of the Lord

At that time, Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. As Jesus was coming out of the water, He saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on Him like a dove, and a voice came from heaven “you are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”

Mark 1: 9-11

Scripture Readings:

Genesis 1: 1-5

Psalm 29

Acts 19: 1-7

Mark 1: 4-11

These scriptures speak of God's voice, how His voice gives instruction and direction in all circumstances. His voice can be powerful, gentle and comforting. I pray we will always be open to hearing God's voice, either in the stillness of our prayers or the silence, when we just sit to listen and discern the thoughts in our minds and hearts. What is God's voice saying to us?

Collect: Eternal Father, who at the baptism of Jesus revealed Him to be your Son, anointing Him with the Holy Spirit, keep your children, born of water and the Spirit, faithful to their calling; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus is affirmed at His Baptism as God's beloved Son, and we, too, are given the Spirit of God which affirms us as God's adopted daughters and sons. Let the Spirit of God in our hearts plead for the Church and for the world. Great God of all time and space, fill the

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Church with such joy in believing that all Christians overflow with love, compassion, generosity and humility.

May the Spirit of God: fill us to overflowing.

Great God of power and justice, fill the arenas of leadership and conflict with sharpened consciences and with courage, so that wise decisions are made, needs met and wrongs righted.

May the Spirit of God: fill us to overflowing.

Great God of gentleness and truth, fill every home with new insight and greater understanding. Break down the divisive barriers and build up our capacity to love.

May the Spirit of God: fill us to overflowing.

Great God of attentive caring, fill us with your practical compassion. May all who suffer be heard, comforted and cared for. Heal both their situation and hardness of heart.

May the Spirit of God: fill us to overflowing.

Great God of unending being, fill death with your life and the dying with hope in you. Prepare us all for life which lasts for ever.

May the Spirit of God: fill us to overflowing.

God of all creation, fill our mouths with praises and our hearts with gratitude, for all the glory that surrounds us. Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

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January 17, 2021

2nd Sunday after the Epiphany

We have found the Messiah: Jesus Christ, who brings us truth and grace.
John 1:41

Scripture Readings:

- 1 Samuel 3: 1-10
- Psalm 139: 1-5, 12-17
- 1 Corinthians 6: 12-20
- John 1: 43-51

These scriptures affirm for me that we belong to our God and Saviour, being aware of who we are. We are His vessels, formed by Him, and called to be His servants here on earth to spread His love and kindness to everyone we meet.

Collect: Almighty God, your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ is the light of the world. May your people, illumined by your word and sacraments, shine with the radiance of His glory, that He may be known, worshipped, and obeyed to the ends of the earth; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Jesus the Christ unlocks the mystery of God. Let us pray to God, who knows us better than we know ourselves. Lord, we know we are called to be the body of Christ. Make us worthy of that calling, fervent in all our prayer and worship, loving, faithful and honest in our lives, so that the whole church displays what God is like.

Draw us closer: closer to the heart of God.

We pray for the grace and wisdom to care for this world we have been given as our home; for perception in the difficult decisions, and commitment to justice and peace.

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Draw us closer: closer to the heart of God.

We pray for the homes of our parish families whose hopes and struggles, sorrows and fears are already known to you. May each home be blessed as we pray, and may your love fill each life.

Draw us closer: closer to the heart of God.

We pray for all who do not yet know you, and all whose hearts are poisoned with hate or weighed down with despair. May your light scatter their darkness and bring them hope and healing.

Draw us closer: closer to the heart of God.

We pray for those who have died to this life and who are born into your heaven; comfort those who miss their physical presence. Bring us all to share in the fullness of your life.

Draw us closer: closer to the heart of God.

We give you thanks for all that points us towards the beauty of your love and draws us closer to you. Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

The Lord's Prayer

The Grace.

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January 24, 2021

3rd Sunday after Epiphany

The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.

Mark 1: 15

Scripture Readings:

Jonah 3: 1-5, 1-

Psalm 62: 6-14

1 Corinthians 7: 29-31

Mark 1: 14-20

Just as God called Jonah and sent him to Nineveh, so He calls us today to follow in the footsteps of the disciples, declaring that our God is compassionate and loving, and wants His children to do what is right. Be happy and content in God's love, rightfully handling the word of truth. Be thankful for all the spiritual gifts we are offered, for He is our rock, our fortress and our salvation.

Collect: Almighty God, by grace alone you call us and accept us in your service. Strengthen us by your call; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Signs of glory lead us to believe in Jesus as our Lord and Saviour. Drawn here by God, let us bring to Him our concerns for the Church and the world. We pray that the Church may be a vibrant sign of God's life in every generation and locality, serving, listening and loving, with the human face of ordinary people lit with the brightness of God.

Direct us Lord: and we will follow.

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We pray that the world's attention may be refocused on what is of lasting value; that in humility, all in authority may hear the real needs, honour them and act on them.

Direct us Lord: and we will follow.

We pray that all households and neighbourhoods in our parish may be alerted to the signs of glory around them in the ordinary, daily miracles, and come to welcome Jesus as Lord.

Direct us Lord: and we will follow.

We pray that all who are searching for God may realize His closeness to them; that wrong lives may be courageously righted, and damaged lives and attitudes mended.

Direct us Lord: and we will follow.

We pray that the dying may turn to you and be safely led through that last journey to the peace and joy of eternal life. We pray that we may all one day experience God's heaven.

Direct us Lord: and we will follow.

We pray that we may become increasingly aware of God's amazing love for each of us until our hearts are overflowing with thankfulness and praise. Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

The Grace

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January 31, 2021

4th Sunday after the Epiphany

The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, "What is this? A new teaching and with authority! He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey Him." Mark 1: 27

Scripture Readings

Deuteronomy 18: 15-20

Psalm 111

1 Corinthians 8: 1-13

Mark 1: 21-28

In the Old Testament scripture, Moses declared that the Lord would raise up other prophets, who will declare the word of the Lord to His people. In the New Testament scripture, God sent His Son, Jesus Christ to be the Saviour of the world. He was especially known to the evil spirits, who wanted nothing to do with Him. May we who love Him be steadfast and true to the gospel, to never shy away from doing what is right and good. There is only one true God. Glorious and majestic are His deeds!

Collect: Living God, in Christ you make all things new. Transform the poverty of our nature by the riches of your grace, and in the renewal of our lives make known your glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Jesus displays all the signs that mark Him out to be God's chosen one. As we gather in the presence of the Almighty all-known God, let us pray.

Holy God, great Spirit of all, may the whole Church honour and glorify your name in our daily lives, private prayer and public worship.

Holy God: may your will be done.

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May the whole world resound with your truth, activate your compassion and be soaked in your peace.

Holy God: may your will be done.

May all homes and households make plenty of room for kindness and forgiveness. Clear the clutter of discontent and make us more thankful.

Holy God: may your will be done.

May the dying be surrounded with our prayers, and those who have passed beyond death remain safe for ever in your keeping.

Holy God: may your will be done.

As we step into each new day, may our thanks and praise give joy to our loving God. Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

The Grace

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A Prayer for the New Year

Our Father and our God, as we stand at the beginning of this new year we confess our need of Your presence and Your guidance as we face the future.

We each have our hopes and expectations for the year that is ahead of us—but You alone know what it holds for us, and only You can give us the strength and the wisdom we will need to meet its challenges. So help us to humbly put our hands into Your hand, and to trust You and to seek Your will for our lives during this coming year.

In the midst of life's uncertainties in the days ahead, assure us of the certainty of Your unchanging love.

In the midst of life's inevitable disappointments and heartaches, help us to turn to You for the stability and comfort we will need.

In the midst of life's temptations and the pull of our stubborn self-will, help us not to lose our way but to have the courage to do what is right in Your sight, regardless of the cost.

And in the midst of our daily preoccupations and pursuits, open our eyes to the sorrows and injustices of our hurting world, and help us to respond with compassion and sacrifice to those who are friendless and in need. May our constant prayer be that of the ancient Psalmist: “Teach me, O Lord, to follow your decrees; then I will keep them to the end” (Psalm 119:33).

We pray for our nation and its leaders during these difficult times, and for all those who are seeking to bring peace and justice to our dangerous and troubled world. We pray especially for Your protection on all those who serve in our armed forces, and we thank You for their

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commitment to defend our freedoms, even at the cost of their own lives. Be with their families also, and assure them of Your love and concern for them.

Bring our divided nation together, and give us a greater vision of what You would have us to be. Your Word reminds us that “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord” (Psalm 33:12).

As we look back over this past year we thank You for Your goodness to us—far beyond what we have deserved. May we never presume on Your past goodness or forget all Your mercies to us, but may they instead lead us to repentance, and to a new commitment to make You the foundation and center of our lives this year.

And so, our Father, we thank You for the promise and hope of this new year, and we look forward to it with expectancy and faith. This I ask in the name of our Lord and Savior, who by His death and resurrection has given us hope both for this world and the world to come. *Amen.*

Written by Billy Graham

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The New Year

Dear Lord, as this new year is born
 I give it to Thy hand,
Content to walk by faith what paths
 I cannot understand.
Whatever coming days may bring
 Of bitter loss, or gain,
Or every crown of happiness;
Should sorrow come, or pain,
Or, Lord, if all unknown to me
 Thine angel hovers near
To bear me to that farther shore
 Before another year,
It matters not — my hand in Thine,
 Thy light upon my face,
Thy boundless strength when I am weak,
 Thy love and saving grace!
I only ask, loose not my hand,
 Grip fast my soul, and be
My guiding light upon the path
 Till, blind no more, I see!

--Martha Snell Nicholson