

Priest: The Lord bless us, and keep us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. *All: Amen.*

Scripture Readings for Silent Meditation

1. “He shall endure like the sun and the moon from age to age.”

The sun is 4.6 billion years old and has 5 billion more to go. The moon is slightly younger at 4.4 billion and will end when the sun does. Consider the majesty and “dignity” of these great lights. Consider the Risen Son in his vast superiority over them: He created them; they are but dots in the universe; He created the universe. What beauty, what majesty, what splendour must be His!

2. “He shall descend like rain on the meadow, like raindrops on the earth.”

Now it’s the opposite extreme. The tiny raindrops, cool, hardly visible, gone as soon as they come. Consider the exquisite gentleness of the Son of God as he falls to the earth in the womb of the Virgin, as the grain of wheat which dies and bears abundant crop for eternity. Majestic in his gentleness, splendid in his littleness. The least is the greatest.

3. “He will have pity on the weak and save the lives of the poor.”

Having considered Him in Himself, now consider Him in relation to human beings. His eye is drawn, His great majesty and power are exercised in favour of the weak and the poor. Despite pretences, that describes us all. If we glory in our weakness and poverty, then the One greater than the sun and the moon pours the rains of his mercy on us. Imagine the majesty and splendour of the Risen Son of God falling gently upon you as the rain on the meadows. How can you not love Him? How can you not adore Him?

4. “Every tribe shall be blessed in him; all nations bless his name.”

Now consider that rain of His glorious grace falling across the whole earth, first as a light shower, then as heavy persistent rain, then as torrential downpours, entering every heart of every tribe and people and nation; cleansing, healing, refreshing, quenching every thirst for love and acceptance, justifying every soul, glorifying every last human being.

THURSDAY AGAPE

EVENING PRAYER (VESPERS)
THURSDAY, WEEK 2
ADVENT SEASON

Introduction (All stand)

Priest: O God, come to our aid.

People: O Lord, make haste to help us.

Priest: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,

People: as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Alleluia.

Hymn

*On Jordan’s bank the Baptist’s cry
Announces that the Lord is nigh;
Come then and hearken, for he brings
Glad tidings from the King of kings.*

*For thou art our salvation, Lord,
Our refuge and our great reward;
Without thy grace our souls must fade,
And wither like a flower decayed.*

*Then cleansed be every Christian breast,
And furnished for so great a guest!
Yea, let us each his heart prepare
For Christ to come and enter there.*

*Stretch forth thine hand, to heal our sore,
And make us rise to fall no more;
Once more upon thy people shine,
And fill the world with love divine..*

*All praise, eternal Son, to thee,
Whose Advent sets thy people free,
Whom, with the Father, we adore,
And Holy Ghost, for evermore*

Psalms and Canticle (All sit)

Psalm 71 (72)
The Messiah's royal power

“They opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh” (Mt 2:11).

Priest: I will make you the light of the nations to bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.

Men: O God, give your judgement to the king,
to a king's son your justice,
that he may judge your people in justice
and your poor in right judgement.

Women: May the mountains bring forth peace for the people
and the hills, justice.
May he defend the poor of the people
and save the children of the needy
and crush the oppressor.

Men: He shall endure like the sun and the moon
from age to age.
He shall descend like rain on the meadow,
like raindrops on the earth.

Women: In his days justice shall flourish
and peace till the moon fails.
He shall rule from sea to sea,
from the Great River to earth's bounds.

Men: Before him his enemies shall fall,
his foes lick the dust.
The kings of Tarshish and the sea coasts
shall pay him tribute.

Women: as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

All: The one who will come after me already existed before I was born. I am not fit to undo his sandals

Prayers and intercessions

Priest: God is light: if we live and move in light, there is love between us.
All: Lord Jesus, help us to love one another.

Priest: May we who are called Christians, be known by our love.
All: Lord Jesus, help us to love one another.

Priest: Without love the world cannot be at peace: rid our world of hatred and fear.
All: Lord Jesus, help us to love one another.

Priest: Help husbands and wives to find comfort in sorrow and strength in trials; grant them enduring love.
All: Lord Jesus, help us to love one another.

Priest: Lord, keep all the dead in your care: those we have loved and those no one remembers.
All: Lord Jesus, help us to love one another.

Our Father

Priest: Clear a pathway, Lord, in our hearts to make ready for your only Son, so that when he comes we may serve you in sincerity of heart. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. *All: Amen.*

Priest: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.
All: Come to us and save us, Lord God almighty.

Canticle (*All stand*)

Magnificat

My soul rejoices in the Lord

Priest: The one who will come after me already existed before I was born. I am not fit to undo his sandals

Women: My soul glorifies the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour.
He looks on his servant in her lowliness;
henceforth all ages will call me blessed.

Men: The Almighty works marvels for me.
Holy his name!
His mercy is from age to age,
on those who fear him.

Women: He puts forth his arm in strength
and scatters the proud-hearted.
He casts the mighty from their thrones
and raises the lowly.

Men: He fills the starving with good things,
sends the rich away empty.

Women: He protects Israel, his servant,
remembering his mercy,
the mercy promised to our fathers,
to Abraham and his sons for ever.

Men: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,

Women: The kings of Sheba and Seba
shall bring him gifts.
Before him all kings shall fall prostrate,
all nations shall serve him.

Men: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,

Women: as it was in the beginning,
is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

All: I will make you the light of the nations to bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.

Psalm 71 (72)

Priest: The Lord will save the poor; from oppression he will rescue their lives.

Men: For he shall save the poor when they cry
and the needy who are helpless.
He will have pity on the weak
and save the lives of the poor.

Women: From oppression he will rescue their lives,
to him their blood is dear.
Long may he live,
may the gold of Sheba be given him.
They shall pray for him without ceasing
and bless him all the day.

Men: May corn be abundant in the land
to the peaks of the mountains.
May its fruit rustle like Lebanon;
may men flourish in the cities
like grass on the earth.

Women: May his name be blessed for ever
and endure like the sun.
Every tribe shall be blessed in him,
all nations bless his name.

Men: Blessed be the Lord, God of Israel,
who alone works wonders,
ever blessed his glorious name.
Let his glory fill the earth.
Amen! Amen!

Women: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,

Men: as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without
end. Amen.

All: The Lord will save the poor; from oppression he will rescue their lives.

Canticle

Apocalypse 11

The Judgement

Priest: Victory and empire have now been won by our God.

Women: We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty,
who are and who were,
that you have taken your great power
and begun to reign.

Men: The nations raged,
but your wrath came,
and the time for the dead to be judged,
for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints,
and those who fear your name,
both small and great.

Women: Now the salvation and the power
and the kingdom of our God
and the authority of his Christ have come,
for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down,
who accuses them day and night before our God.

Men: And they have conquered him
by the blood of the Lamb
and by the word of their testimony,
for they loved not their lives even unto death.
Rejoice, then, O heaven,
and you that dwell therein.

Women: Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit,

Men: as it was in the beginning,
is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

All: Victory and empire have now been won by our God.

Short Reading

James 5:7-8,9

Be patient, brothers, until the Lord's coming. Think of a farmer: how
patiently he waits for the precious fruit of the ground until it has had the
autumn rains and the spring rains! You too have to be patient; do not lose
heart, because the Lord's coming will be soon. The Judge is already to be
seen waiting at the gates.

Short Responsory

Priest: Come to us and save us, Lord God almighty.

All: Come to us and save us, Lord God almighty.

Priest: Let your face smile on us and we shall be safe.

All: Come to us and save us, Lord God almighty.