

Wednesday of the Fourth Week of Advent

The Liturgical Year

Dom Prosper Gueranger

The Lord is now nigh: come, let us adore.

From the Prophet Isaiah Chapter 51

Give ear to me, you that follow that which is just, and you that seek the Lord: look unto the rock whence you are hewn, and to the hole of the pit from which you are dug out. Look unto Abraham your father and to Sara that bore you; for I called him alone, and blessed him, and multiplied him. The Lord therefore will comfort Sion, and will comfort all the ruins thereof, and he will make her desert as a place of pleasure, and her wilderness as the garden of the Lord. Joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of praise. Harken unto me, Oh my people, and give ear to me, Oh my tribes: for a law shall go forth from me, and my judgement shall rest to be a light of the nations. My just One is near at hand, my Saviour is gone forth, and my arms shall judge the people: the islands shall look for me, and shall patiently wait for my arm. Lift up your eyes to heaven, and look down to the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish like smoke, and the earth shall be worn away like a garment, and the inhabitants thereof shall perish in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my justice shall not fail.

Oh Jesus, Thou Flower of the field, Thou Lily of the valley, Thy visit is to change our barren parched earth into a garden of delights! We had lost Eden and all its lovely magnificence, by our sins; and lo! Eden is restored to us; Thou art coming, that Thou mayst set it in our hearts. Oh heavenly plant, tree of life, transplanted from heaven to earth, Thou first takes root in Mary, that fruitful soil; and thence Thou wilt come to us, and we must be to Thee a grateful land, cherishing the divine seed and making it fructify. Let it be so, Oh divine Husbandman, who did appear to Magdalene under the form of a gardener. Thou knows how far are our hearts from being ready for Thy working in them. Move, and break, and water this land; the season is come; our hearts long to be fertile, and to have growing within them that exquisite Flower which makes the beauty of all heaven, and comes down to hide its splendour for a time here below.

Oh Jesus, let our souls be fertile; let them be crowned with the flowers of virtue; let them become flowers growing around Thee, Oh divine Flower, and forming to the heavenly Father a garden, which He may unite with that which He formed from all eternity. Oh flower of heaven, Jesus! Thou art also the Dew, refresh us; Thou art the Sun, warm us; Thou art the fragrant Perfume, impart to us Thy sweetness; Thou art the sovereign Beauty, give us of Thy fair and ruddy bloom, and make us cluster round Thee in eternity, as a crown Thou hast wreathed to Thyself.

Hymn of Preparation for Christmas

(Compoaed by St. Ambrose. It is in the Ambrosian breviary for first Vespers of Christmas, and in the ancient Roman French breviaries)

Come, Oh Redeemer of mankind, reveal to us the Virgin's delivery: let all ages be in admiration: for what other birth would have been worthy of God?

Not of man, but of the Holy Ghost, was the Word of God made flesh, and the fruit of the womb ripened.

The Virgin has become Mother, and yet the Mother is still a Virgin. It is the banner of omnipotence which here shines; God has come into his temple.

He comes forth from the royal palace of virginity, as from his bride-chamber, that he may exultingly run the way, as a giant, who is both God and Man.

He comes forth from the Father; he returns to the Father; he descends into hell; he ascends to the throne of God.

Co-equal Son of the eternal Father, gird thee with the trophy of the flesh; strengthening the weaknesses of our flesh by thy unfailing power.

Thy crib is already resplendent, and the night breathes forth a new light, the light of faith; let no night interrupt it, let its brightness be incessant.

Glory be to thee, Oh Lord, who wast born of the Virgin, and to the Father and the Holy Ghost, for everlasting ages. Amen.

**Prayer from the Mozarabic Missal
(Second Sunday of Advent)**

Lord God omnipotent, who, for the redemption of the human race, didst deign to send even unto us, by the message of an angel and by the Virgin Mary's womb, thy co-eternal and co-equal Son; grant us, in this time of the advent of thy only Son, that same grace of peace which thou has mercifully bestowed upon the past ages, and number us among those who, at the first beginning of the faith, were acceptable to him by embracing the faith; and who, being washed in the water of penance by John, were afterwards baptised by thee, through thy Son, in the Holy Ghost and fire.