

## Official Prayer of the Congress

God our Father,  
We bless you and give you thanks  
For your Son Jesus, the gift of your love  
For the life of the world.

Watch over your Church as it celebrates in joy and hope  
The 49<sup>th</sup> International Eucharistic Congress.

Renew our faith in the Holy Eucharist,  
The memorial of your Son's death and resurrection.

May your Holy Spirit shed its light upon us  
And grant us strength  
To serve as faithful witnesses to the Gospel.

Nourish us with your Word and your Bread of Life  
So that united with Mary,  
The Mother of your Divine Son and Mother of the Church,  
We will bear much fruit  
For the salvation of the world.

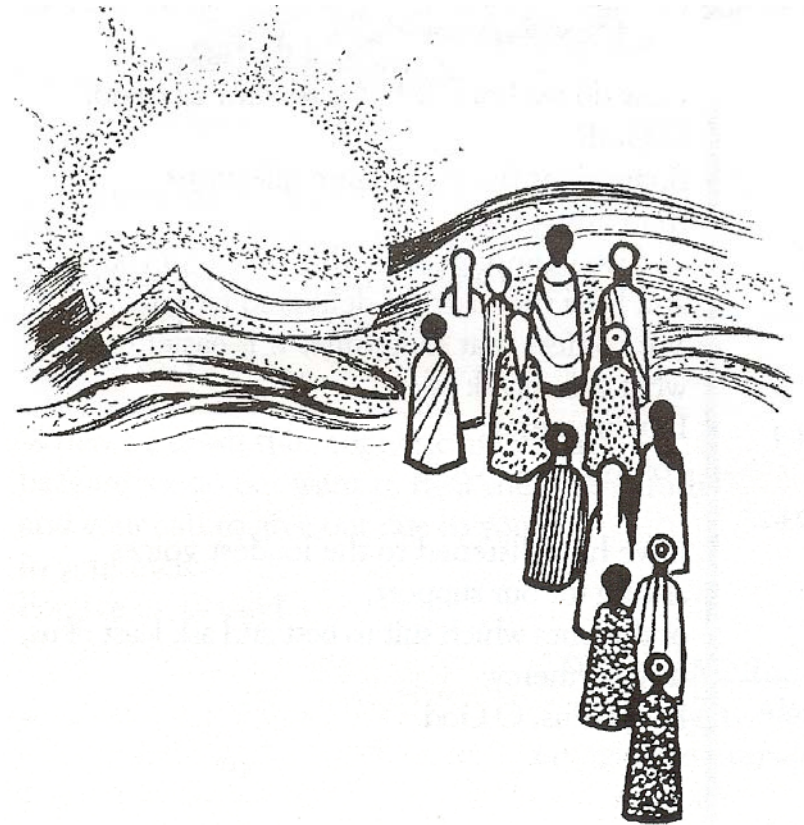
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.



## The Catholic Women's League of Canada



## An Advent Prayer Service



## AN ADVENT PRAYER SERVICE

**LEADER:** "Advent being a season established by the Church to prepare the faithful to celebrate properly Our Lord's coming into this world and to draw him into their hearts so that they may no longer live save by his Spirit, it would be very proper for us today and on the following Sundays to apply ourselves to prayer in order to prepare our hearts to receive Our Lord . . ."



### OPENING PRAYER

**ALL:** We long for your coming, Lord Jesus. Our hearts are empty until you fill them with your coming. As we prepare to celebrate again the feast of your historical coming, fill us with your Spirit so that we may be prepared for your Second Coming and enjoy your presence forever. AMEN.

**FIRST READING** - *Bread for the Journey*, Henri J. Nouwen

Waiting is essential to the spiritual life. But waiting as a disciple of Jesus is not an empty waiting. It is a waiting with a promise in our hearts that makes already present what we are waiting for. We wait during Advent for the birth of Jesus. We wait after Easter for the coming of the Spirit, and after the Ascension of Jesus we wait for his coming again in glory. We are always waiting, but it is a waiting in the conviction that we have already seen God's footsteps.

Waiting for God is an active, alert - yes, joyful - waiting. As

## CLOSING PRAYER



### CLOSING PRAYER

**ALL:**

I have come to bring you peace,  
Peace of the ordinary, the daily, the homely,  
Peace for the worker, the driver, the student,  
Peace in the office, the kitchen, the farm.

I have come to bring you peace,  
The peace of accepting yourself as I fashioned you.  
The peace of knowing yourself as I know you,  
The peace of loving yourself as I love you,  
The peace of being yourself as I am who I am.

I have come to bring you peace.  
The peace that warms you at the completion of a task,  
The peace that invades you at the close of the day,  
The peace that sustains you at the beginning of the day,  
The peace that reinforces you when you are reconciled with one another.  
The peace that touches you when your family is in order.

Without peace, my coming is unfulfilled.  
Without peace, my birth is forgettable.  
Without peace, Christmas is a contradiction.  
I have come to bring you peace.

**ALL:** Official Prayer of the 49<sup>th</sup> Eucharistic Congress (back cover)

## ADVENT PRAYER by *Henry Nouwen* (ALL)

Lord Jesus,

Master of both the light and the darkness, send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for Christmas.

We who have so much to do seek quiet spaces to hear your voice each day.

We who are anxious over many things look forward to your coming among us.

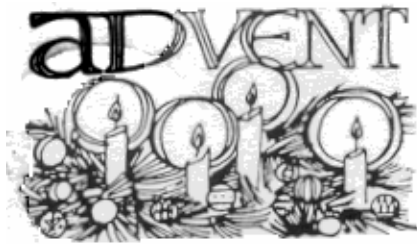
We who are blessed in so many ways long for the complete joy of your kingdom.

We whose hearts are heavy seek the joy of your presence.

We are your people, walking in darkness, yet seeking the light.

To you we say, "Come Lord Jesus!" AMEN.

## LEAGUE PRAYER



we wait we remember him for whom we are waiting, and as we remember him we create a community ready to welcome him when he comes

## RESPONSE - Psalm 80:1-4

**LEFT:** Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock!

**RIGHT:** You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth before E|'phraim and Benjamin and Manas'seh.

**LEFT:** Stir up your might, and come to save us! Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

**RIGHT:** O LORD God of hosts, how long will you be angry with your people's prayers?

## SECOND READING - *Waiting for God*, Simone Weil

Actions prompted by our inclination clearly do not involve an effort of will. In our acts of obedience to God we are passive; whatever difficulties we have to surmount, however great our activity may appear to be, there is nothing analogous to muscular effort; there is only waiting, attention, silence, immobility, constant through suffering and joy. . . .

We cannot take a single step toward heaven. It is not in our power to travel in a vertical direction. If however we look heavenward for a long time, God comes and takes us up. He raises us easily.

## THIRD READING - *Words for the Inner Life*, Enzo Bianchi

*John summoned two of his disciples and sent them to the Lord to ask, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?... Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the*

*blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good news brought to them.*

*Luke 7:19, 21-22*

The verb "to wait", as seen in the Latin word, *ad-tender*, suggests a "stretching toward," and "attention directed toward," a motion of the spirit in the direction of an other, a future. We can even call waiting an action - not an action contained within the present, but one that will bring about a future outcome...

As human beings we *are* expectation. If this basic anthropological dimension of waiting, which reminds us that we ourselves are "unfinished," is not recognized, we come



face to face with the risk of idolatry - in other words, the risk of seeing the present moment as sufficient in itself. The expectation of the Lord's coming. On the other hand, requires Christians to *wait* for what is about to come and to wait with *patience* for what will come at a moment they do not expect. Patience is the art of living the incompleteness and fragmentary

nature of the present moment without giving in to despair. It is the ability to respect time, to live within its limits and to persevere, and it is also the ability to respect others in their weaknesses and limitations and to carry them. The expectation of and ardent desire for the Lord's coming makes us men and women capable of patience, with regard to time and in our relationships with each other.

It is in this context that we discover that patient waiting is a

sign of strength, firmness, stability and conviction, and not weakness. Patience is above all the attitude that reveals a deep love for God and for others. When our waiting is inspired by love, it becomes desire, desire to be with our Lord. As we wait for the Lord, we learn to desire and to discipline our desire, to keep an attitude of sharing and communion, an attitude that is Eucharistic. Waiting for the Lord generates gratitude and thanksgiving in us, and it allows us to open our heart outward to encompass and express the longing of all creation... waiting for new heavens and a new earth, transfiguration, the kingdom of God.

### PRAYERS OF PETITION

**LEADER:** Come, Lord Jesus, to rekindle the flame of faith in our hearts and make us more zealous to proclaim your salvation.

**ALL:** Come, Lord Jesus, come.

**LEADER:** Come, Lord Jesus, direct our vision heaven-ward, from the distractions of the season. Prepare us to seek your Second Coming with the same anticipation that we celebrate the feast of your first coming.

**ALL:** Come, Lord Jesus, come.

**LEADER:** Come, Lord Jesus, to heal the wounds of the sick, the poor, the confused, the marginalized, the lost, the unloved.

**ALL:** Come, Lord Jesus, come.

**LEADER:** Come, Lord Jesus, to accompany our beloved dead to your glorious kingdom.

**ALL:** Come, Lord Jesus, come.