

Countdown to Christmas: Four days left: Wisdom from Saint Peter Canisius, first day of winter, Thoreau's 'The Pond in Winter,' today's O Antiphon and prayer, and more great Christmas music



It's almost Christmas... (Photo by Patti Murphy Dohn)

"If you have too much to do, with God's help you will find time to do it all."

— *St. Peter Canisius (1521-1597), whose feast we celebrate today, December 21*

Great advice from today's saint, especially during this hurried week



Saint Peter Canisius (1521-1597)

Introduction:

In the last Advent days leading up to Christmas, I will share some reflections,

prayers, and music for you to enjoy during this very hectic holiday season.



“Heaven is under our feet is well as over our heads.”

—Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862)

It's the first day of winter:

Comedian Steve Martin once joked “A day without sunshine is like, you know, night.”

But it is bright and sunny today and thus hard to believe that it is December 21, the first official day of winter. Almost 60 degrees here in Bel Air....

The Winter Solstice, the shortest day of the year, comes today at 12:11 p.m. (EST). I heard that we will have 9 hours and 32 minutes of daylight. I'm not a fan of winter, so I will be counting down the days until Spring, be assured.

My dear friend Sue, who just retired in June after many years teaching English on the high school and college levels, posted one of her favorite passages this morning from Thoreau's ‘*The Pond in Winter*’ from “**Walden.**” She especially loves the last sentence, as do I!! Enjoy...

“Standing on the snow-covered plain, as if in a pasture amid the hills, I cut ...my way first through a foot of snow, and then a foot of ice, and open a window under my feet, where, kneeling to drink, I look down into the quiet parlor of the fishes, pervaded by a softened light as through a window of ground glass, with its bright sanded floor the same as in summer; there a perennial waveless serenity reigns as in the amber twilight sky, corresponding to the cool and even temperament of the inhabitants. Heaven is under our feet as well as over our heads.” — Henry David Thoreau



Beautiful Lake Moraine, Banff National Park, Alberta, Canada was already a winter wonderland in September (2013) when Dean and Susan Fisher brought their cameras and their joy of travel. (Photo by Susan Fisher)

Today's "O Antiphon"

***"O Radiant Dawn,
splendor of eternal light, sun of justice:
come and shine on those who dwell in darkness and in the
shadow of death!"***

—Today's Antiphon for December 21



Graphic by Look and Learn Catholic Visuals

More Christmas Music for your Enjoyment:

Enjoy this beautiful rendition "Little Drummer Boy" performed by Pentatonix, a cappella group featuring vocalists, Scott Hoying, Kirstie Maldonado, Mitch Grassi, Avi Kaplan and Kevin Olusola.... with over 22 million hits on YouTube.

“Adeste Fidelis (O Come, All Ye Faithful)”

Andrea Bocelli, with 16-time Grammy-winner David Foster, music director and keyboard accompanist, will take your breath away with “Adeste Fidelis (O Come, All Ye Faithful)” in Latin with full orchestra and choir.

“For unto us a child is born” Handel’s Messiah

London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Sir Colin Davis, December 2006;

Susan Gritton, Sara Mingardo, Mark Padmore, Alastair Miles and the Tenebrae choir performing Handel’s Messiah

Prayer for December 21:

Loving God,

It is growing in my heart:

An awareness and gratitude of your constant love for me;

Like the sun rising in the East

to warm and comfort my life

and to bring new growth.

Thank you for these weeks of prayer.

In the spirit of the season

my waiting, my patience,

feels sacred.

*Bless my heart with generosity
and make me ready to receive you.*

Come, Lord Jesus! Come!

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!*

Amen.

