

Countdown to Christmas: It's Christmas Eve: Waiting for baby, Christmas with two popes, Santa's prayer poem, prayers for Christmas Eve, and more great Christmas music



"Today you will know the Lord is coming, and in the morning you will see his glory."

— Invitatory to Morning Prayer, Christmas Eve

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.



Our baby countdown:

Pope Francis compared the Church to an expectant mother in his homily on Monday morning at the Casa Santa Marta. "Like the Virgin Mary, the Church this week is expecting a birth... Is there space for the Lord or is there space only for parties, shopping and making noise?"

My family is literally expecting a birth as my daughter Meighan is a little more than

three weeks away from delivering her baby girl McKenna. I was delighted to again take her to for her routine check-up this afternoon at the Greater Baltimore Medical Center. It was a thrill to hear my granddaughter's heart beating strong in utero as the nurse-practitioner ran the doppler over Meighan's "baby belly" and counted her heart rate.

The last days are filled with joy and excitement for our family, but we know that Meighan is experiencing back aches, fatigue, and the normal first-time parent anticipation. This beloved baby is already part of our hearts. And as we wait, we know that next Christmas she will be delighted with the sounds and wonders of the season s only a nine-month old can experience. Bring it on, says this proud Grandma!!



"Santa's Prayer on Christmas Eve:" By Warren D. Jennings

The sleigh was all packed, the reindeer were fed,
But Santa still knelt by the side of the bed.

"Dear Father," he prayed "Be with me tonight.
There's much work to do and my schedule is tight.

I must jump in my sleigh and streak through the sky,
Knowing full well that a reindeer can't fly.

I will visit each household before the first light,
I'll cover the world and all in one night.

With sleigh bells a-ringing, I'll land on each roof,
Amid the soft clatter of each little hoof.

To get in the house is the difficult part,
So I'll slide down the chimney of each child's heart.

My sack will hold toys to grant all their wishes.

The supply will be endless like the loaves and the fishes.

I will fill all the stockings and not leave a track.

I'll eat every cookie that is left for my snack.

I can do all these things Lord, only through You,

I just need your blessing, then it's easy to do.

All this is to honor the birth of the One,

That was sent to redeem us, Your most Holy Son.

So to all of my friends, least Your glory I rob,

Please Lord, remind them who gave me this job."



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Christmas visit of Pope Francis to Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI:

I just love the photos taken yesterday when the Holy Father joined Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI for a pre-Christmas visit to his residence, the Mater Ecclesiae monastery. As the four candles of the Advent wreath burned brightly on the coffee table, the two Holy Fathers enjoyed conversation after stopping for prayer in the small chapel. The Vatican statement said that Pope Francis came to "give his best wishes for the Christmas celebrations."



Osservatore Romano / Reuters

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Music for your Enjoyment:

"Hallelujah" chorus from Handel's Messiah

Breathtaking: Sir Colin Davis conducts the Tenebrae Choir with the London

Symphony Orchestra, December, 2006:

Traditional for the audience to stand for the “Hallelujah” chorus, it has long been held that this custom started when King George II was so moved that he stood at the London premier performance.

“O Holy Night” sung by Josh Groban

Enjoy my all-time favorite Christmas hymn “O Holy Night,” sung by Josh Groban and set to scenes from film “The Nativity Story.”

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Prayers for Christmas Eve and Christmas:

Christmas Eve Prayer:

*Loving God, Help us remember the birth of Jesus,
that we may share in the song of the angels,
the gladness of the shepherds,
and worship of the wise men.*

*Close the door of hate
and open the door of love all over the world.*

Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting.

*Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings,
and teach us to be merry with clear hearts.*

*May the Christmas morning make us happy to be thy children,
and Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts,
forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake.*

Amen.

Nativity Prayer of St. Augustine:

Let the just rejoice, for their justifier is born.

Let the sick and infirm rejoice, For their saviour is born.

Let the captives rejoice, For their Redeemer is born.

Let slaves rejoice, for their Master is born.

Let free men rejoice, For their Liberator is born.

Let All Christians rejoice, For Jesus Christ is born.

Amen.

Prayer for Christmas Morning:

*The day of joy returns, Father in Heaven,
and crowns another year with peace and good will.*

*Help us rightly to remember the birth of Jesus,
that we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds,
and the worship of the wise men.*

*Close the doors of hate and open the doors of love all over the world...
Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting.*

*Deliver us from evil, by the blessing that Christ brings,
and teach us to be merry with clean hearts.*

*May the Christmas morning make us happy to be thy children,
And the Christmas evening bring us to our bed
with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake.*

Amen.

Christmas Prayer of Blessed (Soon-to-be-Saint) Pope John XXIII:

*O sweet Child of Bethlehem,
grant that we may share with all our hearts
in this profound mystery of Christmas.
Put into the hearts of men and women this peace
for which they sometimes seek so desperately
and which you alone can give to them.
Help them to know one another better,
and to live as brothers and sisters,
children of the same Father.
Reveal to them also your beauty, holiness and purity.
Awaken in their hearts
love and gratitude for your infinite goodness.
Join them all together in your love.
And give us your heavenly peace.*

Amen.

