

Advent Lessons & Carols

The Bidding Prayer

Beloved in Christ, as we await the great festival of Christmas let us prepare ourselves so that we may be shown its true meaning. Let us hear, in lessons from Holy Scripture, how the prophets foretold that God would visit and redeem His waiting people. Let us rejoice, in our carols and hymns, that the good purpose of God is being mightily fulfilled. Let us celebrate the promise that our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ will bring those who love Him into the glory of God's eternal kingdom: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them.

But first, let us pray for the world which God so loves, for those who have not heard the good news of Christ, or who do not believe it; for those who walk in darkness and the shadow of death. Let us pray for the Holy Orthodox Church in this place and everywhere, that it may be free from all evil and fear, and may in pure joy lift up the light of the love of God. We pray especially for our Patriarch IGNATIUS, for PHILIP our Metropolitan, for our bishops, ANTOUN, JOSEPH, BASIL, MARK, THOMAS, and ALEXANDER. Finally, we offer our praise and thanksgiving to God for the wonderful grace and virtue declared in all his saints: most especially we give thanks for the woman chosen to be the Mother of our God and Savior, the ever-blessed and glorious Virgin Mary, for St. Joseph, for *St. Gregory the Great* and *St. Sebastian* whose relics we have among us, and for *St. Lazarus the Righteous*, whose memory we celebrate today; who have been the chosen vessels of God's grace and the lights of the world in their generations; and we pray that we may have grace so to direct our lives after their good examples, that this life being ended, we may be partakers with them of the glorious resurrection, and the life everlasting.

These prayers and praises let us humbly offer to God, in the words which Christ himself taught us.

Our Father...

Hail Mary...