



Leader

Lord have mercy
Christ have mercy
Lord have mercy

Jesus, you are the light of the world.
Son of God, save us from our sins.
Son of Mary, deepen our love.
Bring hope into the lives of all people.
Give your peace to all nations.

Be the joy of all who love you.
Bring unity among all who believe in you.
Bless us as we gather here in your name
Lord Jesus, stay with us always

ALL:

Lord have mercy
Christ have mercy
Lord have mercy

Come, Lord Jesus
Come, Lord Jesus
Come, Lord Jesus
Come, Lord Jesus
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Come, Lord Jesus

Intercessions

- Let us praise God who has given us Mary as a model of holiness. We pray: **Mother of Christ, teach us to hear the word of God.**
- Be praised O God in Mary, mother of mercy; teach us to be a healing presence in the lives of others. **Mother of Christ, teach us to share the light of Christ.**
- Be praised in Mary, help of Christians; help us to proclaim the Gospel with our lives. **Mother of Christ, teach us to listen to the word of God.**
- Be praised in Mary, Queen of Peace; give us forgiving hearts and bless our world with the peace that only you can give. **Mother of Christ, teach us to live the word of God.**

Prayer ALL:

Loving God, you have given us Mary, the mother of Jesus to encourage and guide us on the way to union with you. Let her life of loving obedience & prayer be a beacon of light for us as we seek to follow Christ, the light of the world.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, the Eternal Word, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, forever. *Amen*

Leader: As we sing we pray that Christ will be our Light, and we go carrying the Light and Hope of Christ into our families and communities this Christmas.

ALL: Amen. We go carrying the light and hope of Christ within us.

Conclude with a favourite Christmas Carol to end. Advent Blessings.



Begin by singing - or listening to the hymn:

Longing for light, we wait in darkness. Longing for truth, we turn to you. Make us your own, your holy people, light for the world to see.

Refrain: *Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness. Christ, be our light! Shine in your church gathered today.*

Longing for peace, our world is troubled. Longing for hope, many despair. Your word alone has power to save us. Make us your living voice.

Refrain:

Longing for food, many are hungry. Longing for water, many still thirst. Make us your bread, broken for others, shared until all are fed. **Refrain:**

Leader: Advent invites us to look back in thanksgiving and forward in hope as we wait expectantly for Christ to come again.

Leader: *In pairs share "one thing from 2016 you are grateful for and one thing you are anticipating in hope."*



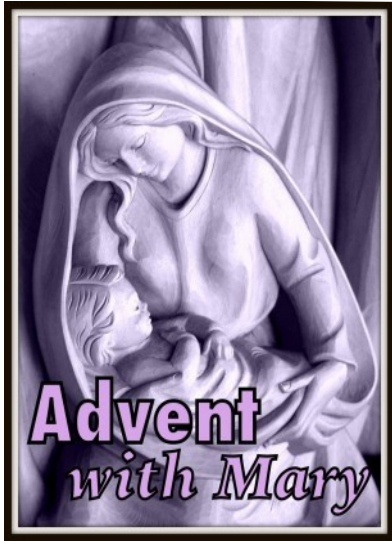
Leader: Loving God, you made the stars, the moon and the sun which give light and rhythm to our lives. Through your Son, you offer us the season of Advent so that we may prepare our hearts and homes to receive the Light of the World, Jesus Christ, Send us your Holy Spirit, like a guiding star to lead us this Advent season so that we may be ready to celebrate with great joy the birth of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Light four white candles

ALL: *Twilight, then darkness, night falls and a candle glows,
Gently surrounding us, light in the darkness,
Watching, waiting, awakening a new birth of hope.*

Leader: Gracious God, may pondering the life of Mary, help us to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Open our hearts to your Word, and help us to respond generously, as Mary did.



Reading 1: A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah 9: 2-4

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with the joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. The Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

Reading 2: From *'In Her Arms or in Her Heart'* Br Seán Sammon, FMS

Like you and me, the mother of Jesus searched and was uncertain. She had her share of anxiety, frustration, and disappointment...

Mary lived out her whole life in the spirit of her "Fiat", (her 'YES'). She is blessed because she listened to the word of God and carried it out.

As Marists, we come to Mary, the Handmaid of the Lord, to be schooled by her, and we respond to her call: "Do whatever he tells you".

Faithful handmaid, she lives out her YES even to the Cross. Mother; she ponders in her heart what Jesus does, and relates his actions to the words of Scripture.

We contemplate her, hidden and unknown in the world, faithful in her mission of bringing God to us. Patiently she awaits God's hour.

ALL: Mary, wellspring of Hope, lead us to Christ. **Woman of mercy**, teach us to be merciful. **Woman of faith**, help us in our unbelief. **Woman of vision**, open our eyes to see the light of Christ and be bearers of Hope.



The FOUR CANDLES by Aino Makoto

(Choose Narrator (N) voices (V) of each candle, Child (C) or simply read this poem.)

N- The Four Candles burned slowly giving a soft glow to the room. Their Ambiance was so soft you could hear them speak...

The first candle said: (V1) " I am Peace! The world is full of anger and fighting. Nobody can keep me lit." **(N)** Then the flame of Peace went out completely. **(Blow out 1st candle)**

N- The second candle said:**(V2)** "I am Faith! I am no longer indispensable. It doesn't make sense that I stay lit another moment." **(N)** Just then a breeze softly blew Faith's flame...**(Blow out 2nd Candle)**

N-Sadly the third candle began to speak:**(V3)**" I am Love! People don't understand my importance so they simply put me aside. They even forget to love those who are nearest to them." **(N)** And waiting no longer, Love's flame went out ... **(Blow out 3rd Candle)**

N-Suddenly... a child entered the room and saw the three unlit candles. **(C)** "Why aren't you burning? You're supposed to stay lit till the end." **(N)** Saying this, the child began to cry...

N- Then the fourth candle answered: **(V4)** " Don't be afraid, I am Hope! While I am still burning we can re-light the other candles."

N- With shining eyes the child took the candle of hope and lit the other candles. **(Using the last candle have someone relight the other three)**

(N) The Greatest Of These Is Love... .. but the flame of Hope should never go out of our lives! With hope in Christ each of us can live with Peace, Faith and Love

... and each one of us is called to exercise our Hope to keep peace, hope and love burning brightly in our world.

