

For Longing by John O'Donohue

Blessed be the longing that brought you here
And quickens your soul with wonder.

May you have the courage
to listen to the voice of desire
That disturbs you when you
have settled for something safe.

May you have the wisdom to enter
generously into your own unease
To discover the new direction your
longing wants you to take.

May the forms of your belonging-in love,
creativity, and friendship-
Be equal to the grandeur
and the call of your soul.

May your dreams gradually
reveal the destination of your desire.

May a secret Providence
guide your thought
and nurture your feeling.

May you come to accept
your longing as divine urgency.

May you know the urgency
with which God longs for you.

silence

OPENING

During Advent we ready ourselves to welcome Christ afresh in our hearts. You are now invited to come, as you feel led, and pick up a folded piece of paper from the centre. When seated, prayerfully unfold the paper as a symbolic gesture of opening your heart to God. Contemplate the word(s) at the center of the paper. When prompted we will share the word(s) with others by reading them aloud.

silence

O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

silence

BENEDICTION

Advent 2018

Open my heart, O Lord



WELCOME

Thank you for entering into a contemplative space with us at the beginning of Advent. During the service there will be intentional times of silence. In these pauses we invite you to center yourself and simply sit in the presence of God. If you find your mind wandering, feel free to contemplate the images on the screen or simply repeat the breath prayer, "Open my heart, O Lord." As the season begins to get busy, let us pause and prepare ourselves to receive the love, joy, hope and peace of Christ.

AMEN

WELCOME

ALL MY HEART LIES OPEN TO YOU

OPEN MY HEART, O LORD

silence

OPENING PRAYER

A voice calls out “In the wilderness, prepare the way for the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.” As we pray together tonight, let us prepare to welcome God in our midst, in our hearts, in our community, and in all of creation. Amen.

silence

RESPONSIVE READING

Father, as we enter this season of Advent we come scattered. It is difficult to focus on the coming of your son Jesus into our lives. We yearn for your presence to not only break into the world, but into our lives.

Open my heart to you, O Lord.

At times our hearts feel closed to you.

Open my heart to you, O Lord.

In the midst of our worries, loneliness, strained relationships, illness, and grief.

Open my heart to you, O Lord.

In the midst of the hollowness of our consumer society, we find it difficult to share the good news of the coming of Jesus.

Open my heart to you, O Lord.

Deliver us from aimless chatter and from fear of silence.

Open my heart to you, O Lord.

In this season of heightened demands and expectations we yearn for your peace.

Open my heart to you, O Lord.

In the midst of the frenzy of purchasing gifts, visiting friends and family, and arranging activities.

Open my heart, O Lord.

As we find ourselves surrounded by pressures at work or lack of work.

Open my heart to you, O Lord.

In the midst of a suffering world with so many fleeing and seeking refuge, like Mary & Joseph long ago.

Open my heart to you, O Lord.

In the same way that you prepared Mary and Joseph's hearts for the birth of Jesus.

Open my heart to you, O Lord.

silence

SCRIPTURE READING LUKE 1:39-45

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

CANDLE LIGHTING

ALL MY HEART LIES OPEN TO YOU

silence

LECTIO DIVINA

1. Come to silence held in God's presence.
2. Listen to the word of God.

As the passage is read twice, listen for the word or phrase that strikes you. Following the reading there will be a short time of silence. During the silence repeat that phrase softly or silently to yourself.

3. Ask "What resonates in this word? What draws me in or raises questions?"

As the passage is read again, consider how this word or phrase connects to your life at present.

4. Ask, "Is there an invitation in this word? An action for me to take?"

The passage is read a fourth time as we listen for God's invitation to respond.

silence

WAIT FOR THE LORD

*Wait for the Lord, his day is near
Wait for the Lord, be strong take heart*

ALL MY HEART LIES OPEN TO YOU

All my heart lies open to you,
and you know Lord that I love you

O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary,
and gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars together,
proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God the King,
and peace to men on earth!

How silently, how silently,
the wondrous Gift is giv'n;
So God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of His Heav'n.
No ear may hear His coming,
but in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him still,
the dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem,
descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in,
be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Emmanuel!

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LECTIO DIVINA — Luke 1:46-55 (The Voice)

Mary's Song: The Magnificat

My soul lifts up the Lord!
My spirit celebrates God, my Liberator!

For though I'm God's humble servant,
God has noticed me.

Now and forever,
I will be considered blessed by all generations.

For the Mighty One has done great things for me;
holy is God's name!

From generation to generation,
God's lovingkindness endures
for those who revere Him.

God's arm has accomplished mighty deeds.
The proud in mind and heart,
God has sent away in disarray.

The rulers from their high positions of power,
God has brought down low.

And those who were humble and lowly,
God has elevated with dignity.

The hungry—God has filled with fine food.
The rich—God has dismissed with nothing in their hands.

To Israel, God's servant,
God has given help,
As promised to our ancestors,
remembering Abraham and his descendants
in mercy forever.

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