

**ADVENT POEMS, PRAYERS
&
REFLECTIONS**



**by
Carol Dixon**

Festival of Light – Advent

Come, loving God,
into our worship and into our world;

Come with the light of love,
Come with the light of peace,
Come with the light of hope.

Come, loving God,
into our worship and into our world
and banish the darkness of night
with the dawn of your coming.

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Word made flesh

How do you
flesh out
a word,
God?

Cover letters
in sinew,
skin?

Is it possible
to produce
pigment
on paper,

Or life-lines
and laughter lines
in script,

So that the impact
resonates throughout
the mists of
time?

*In a word,
Yes.*

LOVE!

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The forerunner

Announce
to the world
'God is coming!'

Proclaim
the message
'The Lord is here!'

Build
new roads,
new avenues of hope
for all people.

Lord of the wild desert places,
we praise and adore you
for your refreshing message
of repentance, forgiveness,
and restoration.

Thank you for sending John,
as messenger -forerunner of Jesus -
to people wandering in the wilderness
of disobedience and despondency.

Cleanse and renew us
with your liberating love;
bathe us in your peace,
so that we are prepared
to take your Word to the world.

Lord of the supermarket and leisure centre
we praise and adore you
for your blazing message
of hope, reconciliation,
and renewal.

Thank you for sending us,
as announcers -followers of Jesus -
to people fumbling in the fog
of despair and disillusionment.

Set us free
with your purifying power;
inflame us with your joy,
so that we are ready
to broadcast your Word in our day.

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Coming

'I'm coming!'
Words of re-assurance
to a frightened child.

'Coming, ready or not!'
Exciting anticipation
of being found.

'It's coming now!'
Time to relax
after a long wait.

Lord Jesus, coming king,
You take away our fear of the future,
You find us when we hide from you,
You fulfil all our longing expectation.

Your coming
comforts us,
thrills us,
settles us.

Come again
into our hearts,
in peace, in joy, in love,
this Christmas.

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Waiting

God, we are waiting,
waiting for your coming
into our lives.

God, we are expecting,
hoping to see you
at work in the world.

Give us patience
to keep on waiting,
hoping, and working

for the coming
of your kingdom,
through Jesus our Lord –

born as a baby in Bethlehem,
living, dying and rising,
reigning with you and the Holy Spirit –
bringing us life and love and peace,
this day, and every day,
to the end of time.

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Expectation

Oh the bliss of a bit of shelter,
some straw to lie down on
after that interminable journey;
somewhere to rest between pains.

I thought we'd never make it
at one stage – the checkpoint
as we entered Bethlehem.

Thank God for a compassionate soldier,
and the kindly innkeeper –
she obviously understood
what I was going through.

Here in the quiet, away from the crowds,
surrounded by the warmth of animals
and the solicitous strength of Joseph,
I can get on with things.

I never imagined when I agreed
to Gabriel's request from God
that it was going to be like this.

I didn't expect a palace
but hoped for a home and maybe
my mother and the local midwife
to help out, or even cousin Elisabeth –
she's been through it recently.

The trouble is, when you say 'Yes' to God,
you never know what to expect!

Incarnation

It should have been so special: the son of God
- announced by an angel heralding his greatness –
growing within her womb; recognised by an unborn child
who, at her greeting, jumped for pure, pre-natal joy.

But then came pointed looks, Joseph's unspoken doubts,
the heavy, sluggish journey to a southern city
- bursting at the seams with teeming humanity - culminating
in doors shut in their desperate faces, frantic arguing,
and the eloquent exhaustion in her pleading eyes.

And now it had come to this: the outhouse of an inn,
blood and sweat and straw; the child, tearing
his way into the world – from darkness into light;
between her pains she watched the cross beam
up above her head, studying its rough-hewn shape.

A strange beginning for the chosen one of God,
coming to life in squalid poverty and deprivation,
in a land oppressed by power of arms; where citizens
- herded like the cattle whose stall she borrowed –
were numbered for a foreign ruler's whim.

Such an ordinary birth: and yet she knew
as he was born, the world would never be the same again.

Christmas Prayer

You came as a baby, Lord,
as a little helpless child
who relied on a human family
to care for him.

You cried because you were hungry,
because you were homeless,
because you were a stranger
far away from home.

You still cry with hunger, Lord,
in the voices of the many starving;
your tears still flow: for the homeless,
the lonely and the forgotten;
you still rely on human families
to care for you.

And so this Christmas, Lord, we pray:
help us to be the kind of people
who look for you in the world,
and joyfully discover you
as we care for one another.

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'A rose Arose'*

In the dark recesses
of winter world
a sleeping seed
germinates.

Cocooned within
the womb, a foetus
flexes fragile fingers
tipped with tiny nails;
birth beckons;
a journey begins:
darkness gives way
to light.

Hidden in the humus
of a stable yard,
a simple rose grows
and, on Christmas morning,
blossoms.

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**From the 15th century Carol 'Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen'*

