

THE BIDDING PRAYER *

Beloved in Christ,
this Christmas Eve it is our duty and delight
to prepare ourselves to hear again the message of the angels,
and to go in heart and mind to Bethlehem,
and see this thing which is come to pass,
and the Babe lying in a manger.

Therefore let us remember again from Holy Scripture
the tale of the loving purposes of God from the first days of our sin
until the glorious redemption brought us by this holy Child;
and let us make this house of prayer glad with our carols of praise.

But first, because this of all things would rejoice Jesus' heart,
let us pray to him for the needs of the whole world, and all his
people;
for peace upon the earth he came to save;
for love and unity within the one Church he did build;
for goodwill among all peoples.

And particularly at this time let us remember
the poor, the cold, the hungry, the oppressed;
the sick and them that mourn; the lonely and the unloved;
the aged and the little children;
and all who know not the Lord Jesus, or who love him not,
or who by sin have grieved his heart of love.

Lastly let us remember all those who rejoice with us,
but upon another shore and in a greater light,
that multitude which no one can number,
whose hope was in the Word made flesh,
and with whom, in this Lord Jesus, we for evermore are one.

AMEN *

THE GREAT THANKSGING

(with carols)

The Lord be with you.

And Also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to
give thanks to you, Almighty God, creator of heaven and earth.
You created light out of darkness and
brought forth life to earth. You formed us in your image and
breathed into us the breath of life. When we turned away and our
love failed, your love remained steadfast. You delivered us from
captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God, and spoke to
us through your prophets.

In the fullness of time you came to us as a helpless, little baby
and so we sing:

**What child is this who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, while shepherds
watch are keeping?**

**This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and
angels sing; haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son
of Mary.**

And witnessing the birth of Christ were angels and heavenly
hosts singing:

**Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains.
And the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains.
Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!**

And so with all your people on earth and all the company of heaven we praise your name and join their unending hymn:
**Hark the herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King;
peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!”
Joyful all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies,
with th’angelic host proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”
Hark! the herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”**

Holy are you and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ. As Mary and Joseph went from Galilee to Bethlehem and there found no room, so Jesus went from Galilee to Jerusalem and was despised and rejected. As we remember that journey of the holy family, so we sing:

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

Shepherds witnessed the poverty of the stable where Jesus was born, and by the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection, you gave birth to your church, delivered us from sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit. As your Word became flesh, born of a woman, on that night long ago, so

on the night in which Jesus gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, saying: “Take eat, this is my body which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

Likewise, when the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, saying: “Drink this all of you. This is the blood of the new covenant poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in remembrance of me.”

And so in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ’s offering for us, as we sing:
**Glorious now behold him arise; King and God and sacrifice:
Alleluia, Alleluia, sounds through the earth and skies.
O star of wonder, star of light, star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.**

Pour out your Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood. by your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world singing:
**Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere;
Go, tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born.**

Until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet. Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty God, now and forever.

**Christ by highest heaven adored; Christ, the everlasting
Lord; late in time behold him come, offspring of the virgin’s
womb.**

**Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail th’incarnate Deity,
pleased with us in flesh to dwell, Jesus our Emmanuel,
Hark, the herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”**