

Nun Komm der
Heiden Heiland Disc.
(BACH)

This morning I've ~~begin~~ ^{begin} our prayers with an Advent hymn, in a setting of Bach. In the spirit of longing & looking forward to His coming, let us now pray together our familiar midday prayer.

PRAYERS

Listen now to another Advent hymn, in Latin: *Rorate Coeli*.

Rorate Coeli Ye heavens open from above, that clouds may rain the Just One.
(Abby of No Angel) (read Trans.)

I must confess I don't know exactly how many more shopping days there are till Christmas or posting days to get all my Christmas ^{mail} ~~cards~~ out in time. I suspect I'm not alone in finding myself usually caught up in one last-minute mad rush of Christmas preparations, and then at New Year wondering where Christmas has gone to (or perhaps breathing a sigh of relief that at least it's over for another year), and making a vague resolution to start preparing earlier next year. For most people,

even those for whom the ~~the~~ meaning of the Christian festival is irrelevant, it is a happy, cheerful season of presents and parties and general good-will.

Christmas is coming — shops and streets are decorated, post-naster are appealing to us to post early, newspaper advertisements and columnists advise about what gifts we should get & for whom.

People are preparing for something. For something, yes: but shouldn't we really be preparing for some-one?

It's no good bewailing the take-over of Christmas by commercial interests, or clamouring to put Christ back into Christmas, unless we ourselves try to live in the spirit of the Advent season — longing for Christ's coming, looking forward eagerly to it and receiving Him, recognizing Him when He does come.

This is not make-believe or mere sentiment. We're living in the 1960s, not in the last days of the Old Testament.

Christ has come — he was born in Bethlehem 2,000 yrs. ago.

It's not that event we're waiting for. Yes, we're going to celebrate and recall it in a few weeks' time — but it mustn't be a return to the past. The mystery of His coming to share our human life and heal the world's suffering and ills, is still with us today. Christ is here, working through ~~the~~ those who bring his love and his message of hope to their fellow men. He is here, waiting to be met and recognized in

the poor, the lonely, the suffering, the homeless, the outcasts.
What He came to do, to renew creation, to reunite
mankind in the love of His Father, is gradually being brought
about through His power & spirit working in Christians.

Yet, with a very ancient Christian phrase, we can still
say "Come, Lord Jesus". And this is what Advent now is
about. We've to get ready for the Lord's coming, try to
realise how much we and our world need Him, bestir our
hope and longing for the final renewal of all things which
His promised 2nd coming will bring. Meanwhile our own
contribution, through Him, to that renewal must go on — in our
own lives and the bit of the world's life into which we should
be bringing Christ's love. "Come, Lord Jesus"

Eternity, about time 2000 years ago. With Christ we're
living in eternity now — only the veils of time hide this fact
from our eyes. When Christ comes again ^{in majesty}, these veils will be
finally removed. Until then, for ^{each} ~~all~~ of us He's still coming
in other, personal ways — in the sacraments, in prayer, in the
chance meetings & events of our lives where, briefly, those veils of
time seem removed and we can see His face, and finally when He
calls us to Himself.

"Come Lord Jesus" and by your coming more completely into my
life ^{transform} ~~transform~~ this Advent & Christmas into a time of grace and true love of
God to me & for those I love.