



Thou Long-Expected Jesus

Throughout Advent we have been preparing for Christmas, for the celebration of the birth of Christ. In such hymns as *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel; Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus: Maranatha!* *Come, Lord Jesus*, we have invited Jesus to come to us.

During this Holy Season we were invited to cultivate the attitude of the holy, humble and faithful people of the Old Testament times who longed for the coming of the promised Savior and prayed that he might come in their lifetime. We were invited to join the Magi as they journeyed to Bethlehem asking, "Where is the newborn

king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage." (Mt. 1:1) We were invited, in the words of John the Baptist to "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths" into our own hearts and lives and through us into the world.

Two thousand years ago God the Son, Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity was, by the power of the Holy Spirit, conceived in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Nine months later Mary gave birth to him in Bethlehem. As we celebrate his birth we come to Jesus and he comes to us, bringing us his Graces and Blessings. His greatest Grace and gift to us was our Redemption through his Passion, Death and Resurrection. He came as Redeemer and Savior.

As we participate in the Christmas Mass, as we celebrate Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, the Christmas Season; as we reflect on the scene presented in our parish and home Nativity Sets, let us worship the Lord as did the Magi and Shepherds. Let us offer him the best that we are and will be. Let us welcome him into our hearts and lives. Let us bring him into our families, our communities, our world. "O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant, O come ye, o come ye to Bethlehem. Come and behold him born the King of angels; come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!"

A Christmas filled with many blessings to all.

Fr. Patrick J. O'Connor