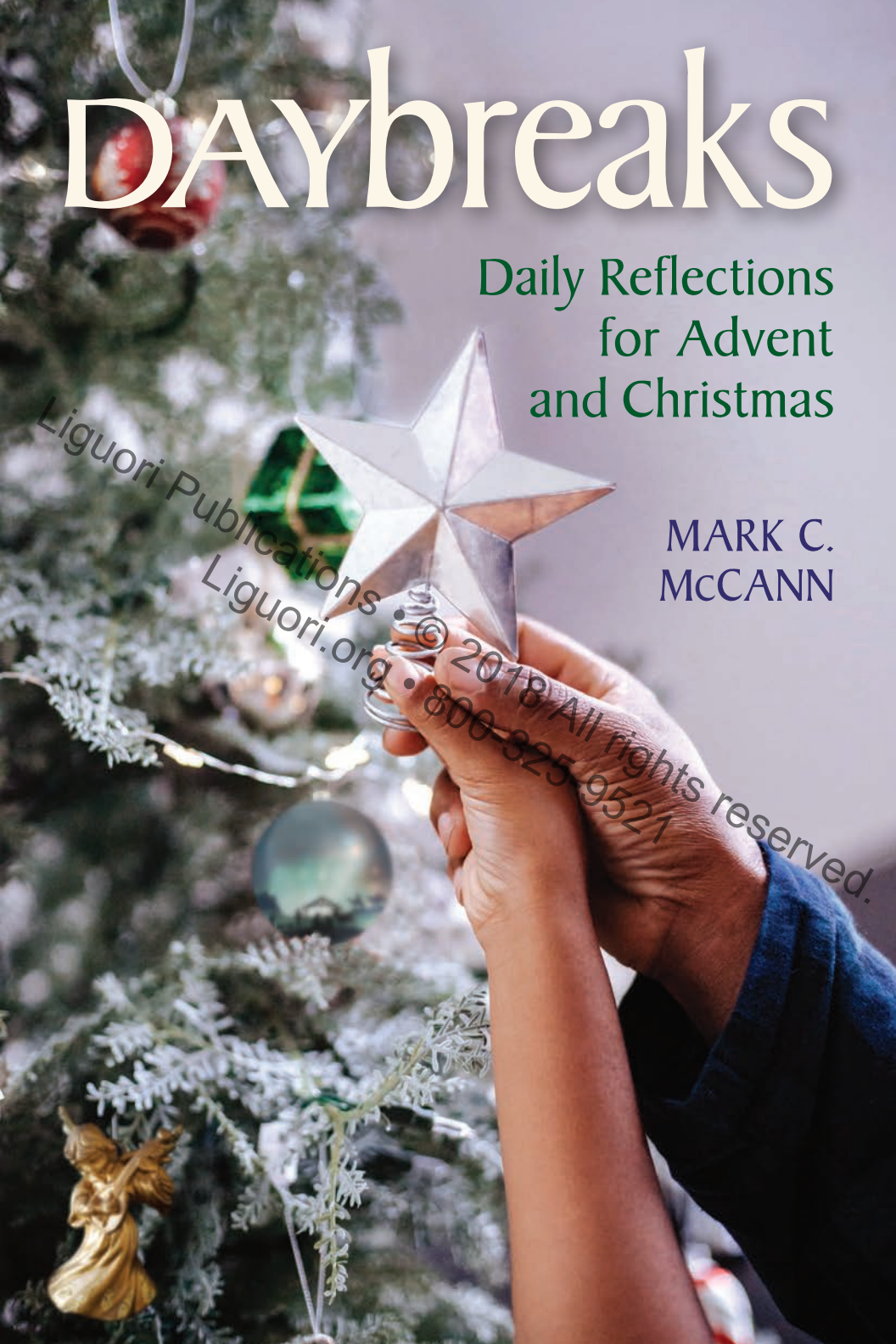


DAYbreaks

Daily Reflections
for Advent
and Christmas

MARK C.
McCANN

Liguori Publications • © 2018 All rights reserved.
Liguori.org • 800-325-9521



Introduction

Love Song for a Weary World

Every year as Advent begins, our family gets out the holiday decorations and transforms our old home into a place where memories of Christmases past meet our hope for the future as believers. Once again, we celebrate the coming of the infant King into our lives. Each ornament on the tree is a reminder of what we have shared together: the laughter and the tears, the triumphs and the trials, and all the many moments that have made us a family united in the love of the One who will one day come again.

As I sit by the fire, a mug of warm tea in my hand, and my wife and children around me, I reflect that what makes these moments so memorable are the Christmas hymns playing in the background. The songs of the season call to mind the Advent and Christmas Scriptures that speak to my soul on a level too marvelous for words. They lift me up to the heavenlies, where I hear, with the Apostle John, the Father singing his purest song of love into the world as he sends Jesus, his Son, to save us from our sins.

I confess that, for me, there is a certain sadness to the season of Advent. Though I am anticipating the coming of Christ at Christmas with profound joy, I find myself being drawn to a weary place within, where I grieve over what has come and gone and ache for the joys that await us when we open our eyes to God's presence all around us and the Savior calls his people home. It is that sweet song of longing, announced each Advent, that carries me to experience the One who makes his dwelling in the dusty manger of my heart. There, my soul sings a melody both old and new as the mystery of the Incarnation reveals itself once more.

I pray that the poetry of the simple devotions on these pages will draw you to that same place of longing, where the Christ Child may speak to your solemn soul and sing his grace anew in your life. Immerse yourself in the daily Scriptures of this beautiful liturgical season and join your personal story to the ever-unfolding story of salvation. Ascend to the heights of heaven where the wonder of Christmas will once again take hold of your yearning heart.

MARK C. MCCANN

An Advent Prayer

Savior God, who sang a song of love into the world,
may your grace carry me to the place where all my longings
find their meaning in you.

May each day of this sacred season kindle in my heart the
wonder, the hope, and the joy of the Incarnation.

May I rediscover the true purpose and purity of living an
Incarnational life, and may I look with greater hope for the day
when you will come again to call me home.

This I ask in Jesus' name. Amen!

DAYbreaks

Imprimi Potest: Stephen T. Rehrauer, CSsR, Provincial, Denver Province, the Redemptorists

Imprimatur: "In accordance with CIC 827, permission to publish was granted on May 19, 2021,
by the Most Reverend Mark S. Rivituso, Auxiliary Bishop, Archdiocese of St. Louis.

Permission to publish is an indication that nothing contrary to Church teaching is contained
in this work. It does not imply any endorsement of the opinions expressed in the publication;
nor is any liability assumed by this permission."

Published by Liguori Publications, Liguori, Missouri 64057

Liguori Publications, a nonprofit corporation, is an apostolate of
the Redemptorists (Redemptorists.com).

To order, call 800-325-9521, or visit Liguori.org.

Copyright © 2021 Liguori Publications

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or
transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any
other—except for brief quotations in reviews, without the written permission of Liguori Publications.

ISBN: 978-0-7648-2846-1

Scripture texts herein are taken from the *New American Bible*, revised edition © 2010, 1991, 1986,
1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, DC, and are used by permission of the
copyright owner. All Rights Reserved. No part of the *New American Bible* may be reproduced in
any form without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

Printed in the United States of America

First Edition

25 24 23 22 21 / 5 4 3 2 1

Cover image: iStock



A Song of Promise

The days are coming...when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah.

JEREMIAH 33:14

In 2007, my wife, **Christina**, became very ill and was hospitalized for more than a month. During that time, she came very close to dying. I thought about what would happen if God took her home. How could I go on without her love? How would I be able to raise three young children alone? And had I shown her a lifetime of devotion worthy of the love she had given me in the years we had been together?

The light of our redemption bursts forth upon the world.

I remember praying for healing and strength, sometimes half out of my mind with worry, guilt, and fear. It was through this experience that I learned to lean on

the promises of God: he will be with us wherever we go, never to leave us or forsake us. He loves us with an everlasting love and will wipe away every tear. Though I was weak, he was infinitely strong. Though I felt absolutely powerless, he was perfectly present—a solid rock holding our family together. Through it all, he was my hope and my refuge. And in the end, he gave my beautiful bride back to me, healthy and happy.

When humanity was at its lowest point, when hope was all but dead, when the human race seemed lost and beyond saving, God fulfilled his great promise of love by sending his Son, Jesus, to earth. In the darkest hour of our despair, the light of our redemption burst forth upon the world as angels sang a song of hope fulfilled.



Liguori Publications • © 2018 All rights reserved.
Liguori.org • 800-323-9527

As we light the first candle of the Advent wreath, God's word brings a message of hope into humanity's seemingly hopeless situation. It is a promise of unity, grace, and forgiveness. It is a call that whispers softly in the quiet sighs of an infant sleeping at his mother's breast. It sings out salvation's song from the skies above as angels proclaim the glory of God entering into this broken world to dwell with humanity.

In the coming of Christ, we have been brought from death to life. We regain an innocence and a beauty we thought we had lost. We have the purest sign that our salvation is sure and our hope is not in vain. In the birth of Jesus, God's greatest promise is fulfilled.

O Father who fulfills his promises, I praise you for the hope that is revealed in Jesus, your Son. May I live each day of Advent as a child of that promise, reaching out to a weary world as I manifest the great sign of your love in all I say and do. I pray in Jesus' holy name, amen!

The Wars Shall Cease

One nation shall not raise the sword against another,
nor shall they train for war again.

ISAIAH 2:4C

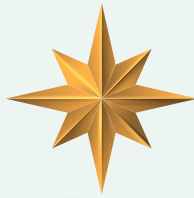
What a glorious thought—when men of war beat their swords into plowshares, when the energy spent on destruction gives way to the productivity of peace and prosperity. What a day it shall be when love reigns in our hearts and the ugliness of sin is forever removed from our lives. Advent is our yearly reminder that the Incarnation of Christ has turned our sorrow into joy and our despair into hope.

As I gaze into this great promise kindled in my soul by the coming of Christ, I am confronted with a profound question. Which wars still rage within my own heart? Whom have I yet to forgive who has wronged me? What prejudices and angry thoughts remain to cloud the vision of peace that I possess in Jesus?

As the Advent season unfolds, perhaps all of us can learn to let go of the anger and fear that have a grip on us and walk the narrow path toward the mountain of the Lord's house, listening for his instruction in the ways of peace.

Lord God, I long for the days to come when I may enter into that house raised high above the hills. May I work to end the battles that rage in my own heart so I may walk the way of peace this day. In Jesus' name, amen!

The Incarnation of Christ turns our sorrow into joy.



DAYbreaks

**Let the mystery of the
Incarnation surround you
and penetrate your soul.**

With his focus on family life, Mark C. McCann unites inspiring scriptural messages of Advent and Christmas with contemporary circumstances. The daily prayers and reflections in *Daybreaks*, beginning with the first Sunday of Advent and continuing through Epiphany, will help you find hope in the birth of Jesus and redemption in the life of Christ on earth.

Mark primarily links the Bible readings from daily Mass with his own observations on the season and invites you to join in heartfelt prayers, raising your petitions to the One who alone can answer them.

Mark C. McCann is an author and ministry consultant with more than thirty years of experience bringing the word of God to children, youth, and families in parishes and dioceses. He has also served as a host and producer of Christian radio programs, and he has written for several Catholic magazines and websites, including *Liguorian*, *Emmanuel Magazine*, *CatholicStand.com*, and the National Catholic Men's Conference website. He lives in Connecticut with his Proverbs 31 wife, and they have three incredible children. Mark devotes each day to his call to be a man of words.



Liguori
PUBLICATIONS

A Redemptorist Ministry

ISBN 978-0-7648-2846-1



9 780764 828461



9 00000 >