

Affirmation Prayer...

The presence of God burns in our midst: come, let us adore him!

All: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen. Alleluia!

Hymn **Meter: LM**

From all that dwell below the skies,
Let the Creator's praise arise;
Let the Redeemer's name be sung,
Through every land, by every tongue.
Eternal are your mercies, Lord;
Eternal truth attends your Word.
Your praise shall sound from shore to shore,
Till suns rise and set no more.
Your lofty themes, you mortals, bring,
In songs of praise divinely sing;
The great salvation loud proclaim,
And shout for joy the Savior's Name.

Psalm 97 **1-6, 9-12**

I have come to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing! (Lk 12:49)

In the Bible, God often appears in the form of fire. Jesus has come to light the world with the fire of God's love. Fire is a powerful and ambivalent gift: it can give light and strength, it can purify, it can destroy. God is preparing us to live a life of eternal love. His fire burns away all that cannot live in the presence of such love.

The Lord is king, let earth rejoice,
let all the coastlands be glad.
Cloud and darkness are his raiment;
his throne, justice and right.
A fire prepares his path;
it burns up his foes on every side.
His lightnings light up the world,
the earth trembles at the sight.
The mountains melt like wax
before the Lord of all the earth.
The skies proclaim his justice;
all peoples see his glory.
For you indeed are the Lord,
most high above all the earth,
exalted far above all spirits.
The Lord loves those who hate evil:
he guards the souls of his saints;
he sets them free from the wicked.
Light shines forth for the just
and joy for the upright of heart.
Rejoice, you just, in the Lord;
give glory to his holy name.

All: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Lo, I am sending my messenger/ to prepare the way before me;/ And suddenly there will come to the temple/ the Lord whom you seek,/ And the messenger of the covenant whom you desire./ Yes, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts./ But who will endure the day of his coming?/ And who can stand when he appears?/ For he is like the refiner's fire,/ or like the fuller's lye.

I will refine your dross in the furnace,/ removing all your alloy. (cf. Is 1:25)

Canticle of Zechariah

You, O God, have tested us,/ you have tried us as silver is tried. (cf. Ps 66:10)

All: Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel; he has come to his people and set them free. He has raised up for us a mighty savior, born of the house of his servant David.

Through his holy prophets he promised of old that he would save us from our enemies, from the hands of all who hate us. He promised to show mercy to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant.

This was the oath he swore to our father Abraham: to set us free from the hands of our enemies, free to worship him without fear, holy and righteous in his sight all the days of our life.

You, my child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way, to give his people knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins.

In the tender compassion of our God the dawn from on high shall break upon us, to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

All: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Intercessions

God's love burns like a fire in the hearts of those who love him. Let us pray:

R/ Burn in us, O Lord!

When our faith grows weak: **R/**

When our love grows cold: **R/**

When our hope grows dim: **R/**

Personal intentions

All: Our Father, Who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

O God, the fire of your love prepares your path before you. Purify us by the sanctifying power of your Holy Spirit, that we may be made worthy to offer prayer and sacrifice through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

