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COLORING ADVENT

An Adult Coloring Book for the
Journey to Bethlehem



ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

COLORING ADVENT

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CRIB NOTES FROM BETHLEHEM: A THEOLOGICAL INTRODUCTION¹

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

Galatians 4:4-7 (NRSV)

These words of Paul are probably everything we need to theologically know about Christmas in just a few sentences, that God submits to the logic of sacrifice to undo the logic of sacrifice, to be sacrificed on the cross by entering human form, and submitting to the law or logic of humanity. As a result, we are all children of the same divine parent: no longer slaves to the ways of the world but heirs to inherit the Kingdom of God by building the Kingdom of God for ourselves and for future generations.

Has this ever been realized? Have we ever realized the brotherhood and sisterhood of humanity in our time? Have we ever found a way to subvert the system of violence and crucifixion that this world has known? Many of our nations and much of humanity may believe that we have achieved this first step of bringing peace on earth and goodwill to humankind, but we know we have really cheated the full sense of what it means to acknowledge that God is born in a manger.

There is something special about the Christmas carol "Away in a Manger."

When we sing that as a lullaby to children, we sometimes miss that when we sing the song, we are, in essence, ordaining them to lead us, as children, to become bearers of the Christ-child.

What would this world be like if we recognized the Christhood and the Godhood present in the new flesh of babies and children, and honored the sacredness of this humanity God has come to save? With the number of children living in poverty and hunger in our country and everywhere in the world, we have not only turned our backs upon the world; we have turned our backs upon God-made-flesh. Stated more accurately, the behavior of this world has in fact stolen the divinity and sacredness of cribs of unsuspecting children throughout the world.

A first step for us to move forward is to recognize that we too have had our Christhood stolen from the crib. We too are victims of this world even as we participate in the victimization of the world. The God-who-is-made-known-to-us-in-newborn-flesh is God-with-us and God-in-us, God living and breathing and perishing with us.

If the Christ-child has been abducted from our lives, the time has arrived to return it to our hearts, and to our spirits. If we have cheated in responding to the Good News of Christmas, it is now time to rectify our commitment to the Kingdom of God, whose birth pangs are ringing loudly around us in Christmas bells, festive lights, and carols, and in anticipation of the Christhood delivered to us as a child being born on this dark and cold night.

Christopher D. Rodkey

Notes

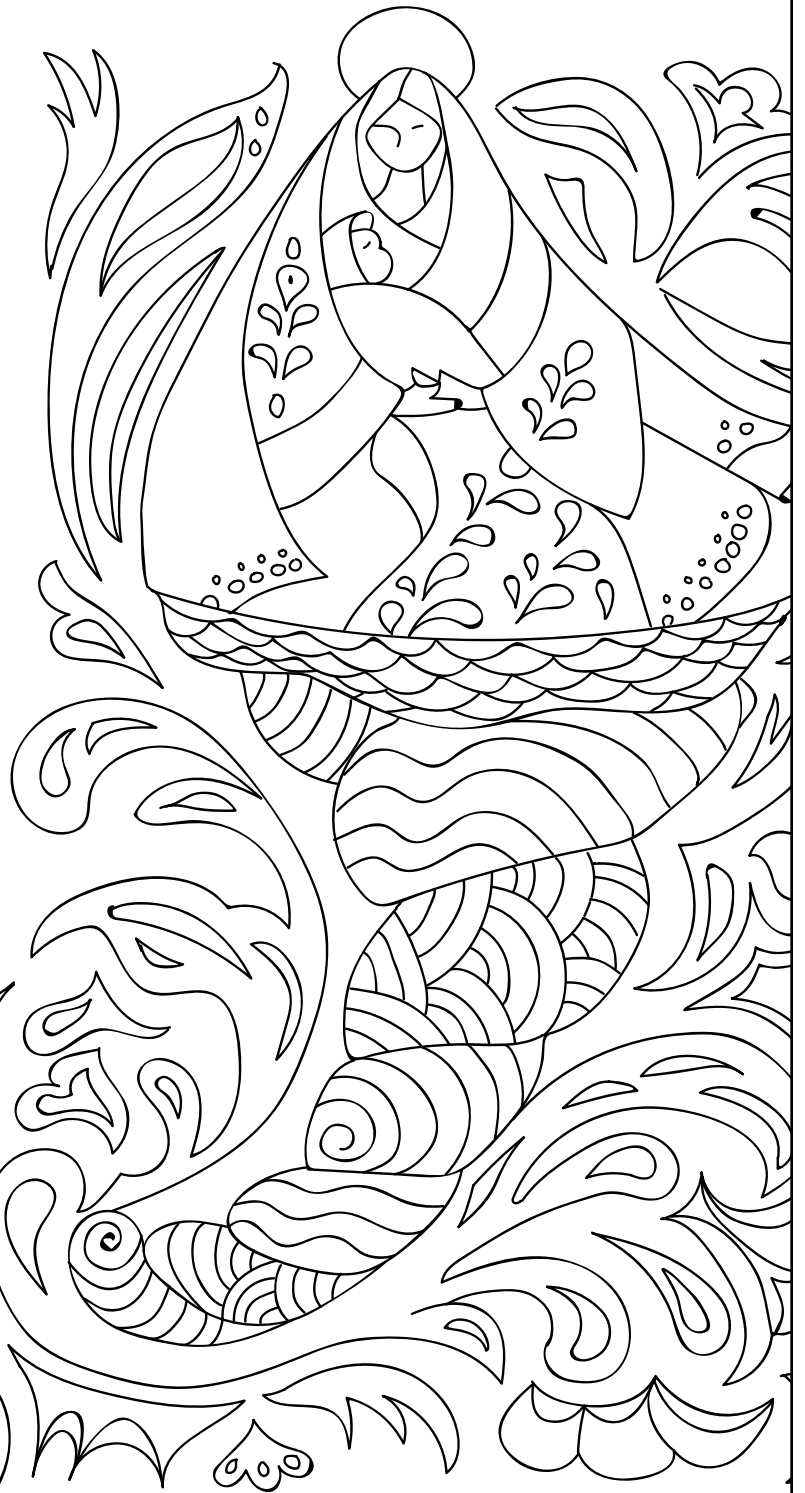
1. I have cribbed this title from Laurel Schneider's excellent essay of the same title, "Crib Notes from Bethlehem," in *Polydoxy: Theology of Multiplicity and Relation*, ed. Catherine Keller and Laurel Schneider (New York: Routledge, 2011): 19-35. This essay is adapted from Christopher Rodkey, *The World is Crucifixion: Radical Christian Preaching, Year C* (Aurora, CO: Noesis, 2016), 41-42.

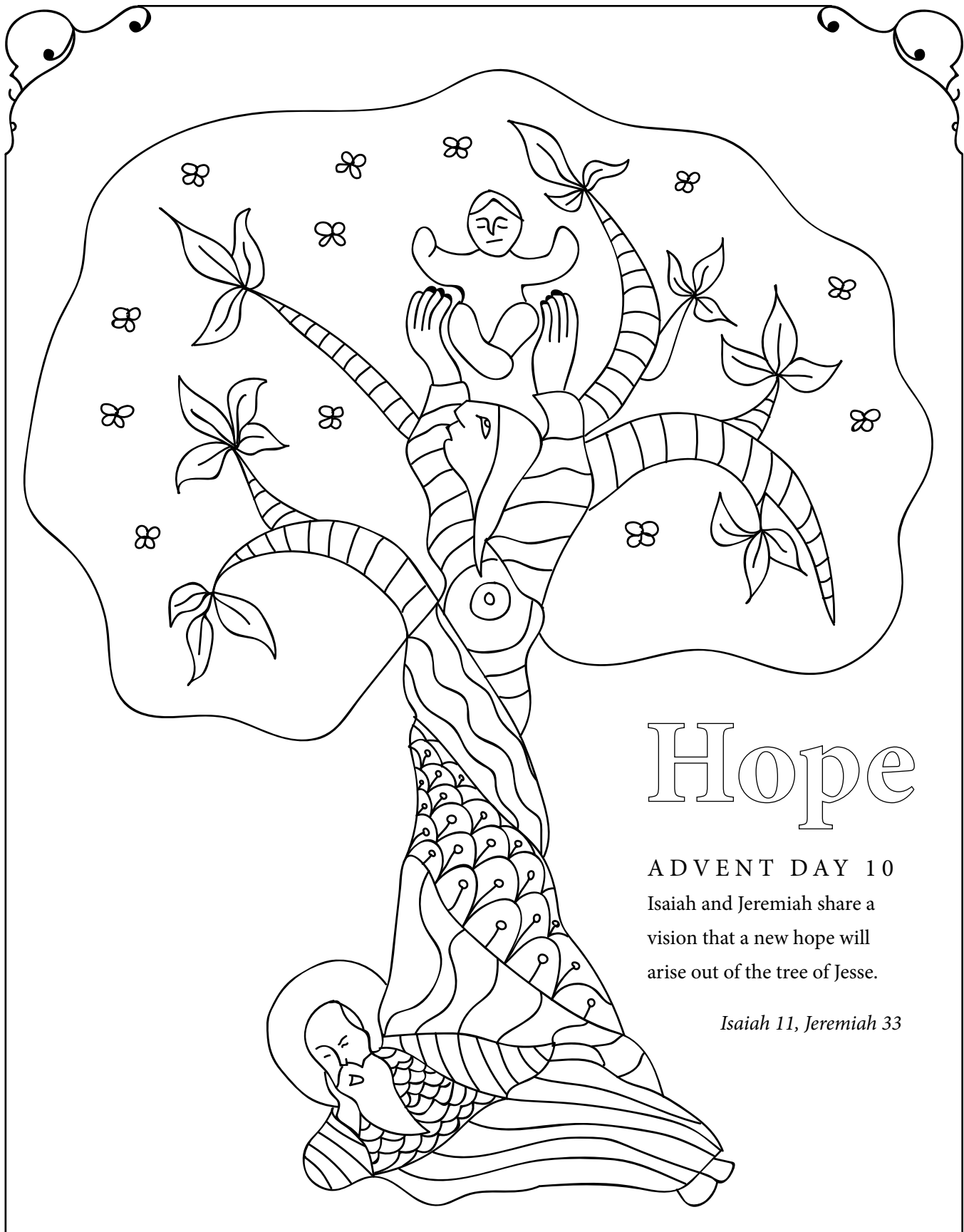
God Enters The World

AUTUMNAL EPIGRAPH

When the fullness of time arrives, God enters the world as a cloud descending upon the flesh of a woman, so that we might all receive the same Holy Spirit and the entire world will call upon God as our universal Parent.

Galatians 4





Hope

ADVENT DAY 10

Isaiah and Jeremiah share a vision that a new hope will arise out of the tree of Jesse.

Isaiah 11, Jeremiah 33

Praecursor Altus Luminis

INTERRUPTION (EMBER DAY 3)

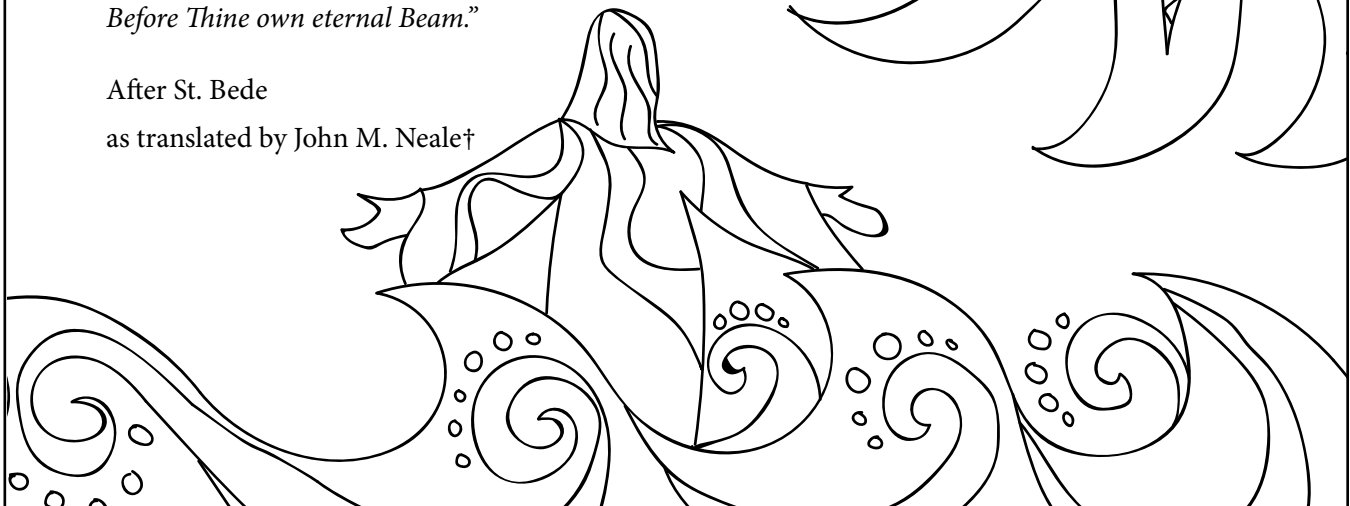
*The great forerunner of the morn,
The herald of the Word is born:
And faithful hearts shall never fail
With thanks and praise his light to hail.*

*John, still unborn, yet gave aright
His witness to the coming Light;
And Christ, the sun of all the earth,
Fulfilled that witness at His birth.*

*But why should mortal accents raise
The hymn of John the Baptist's praise?
Of whom, or e'er his course was run,
Thus spake the Cloud through the sun?*

*"Behold, My herald, who shall go
Before Thy face Thy way to show,
And shine, as with the day-star's gleam,
Before Thine own eternal Beam."*

After St. Bede
as translated by John M. Neale†

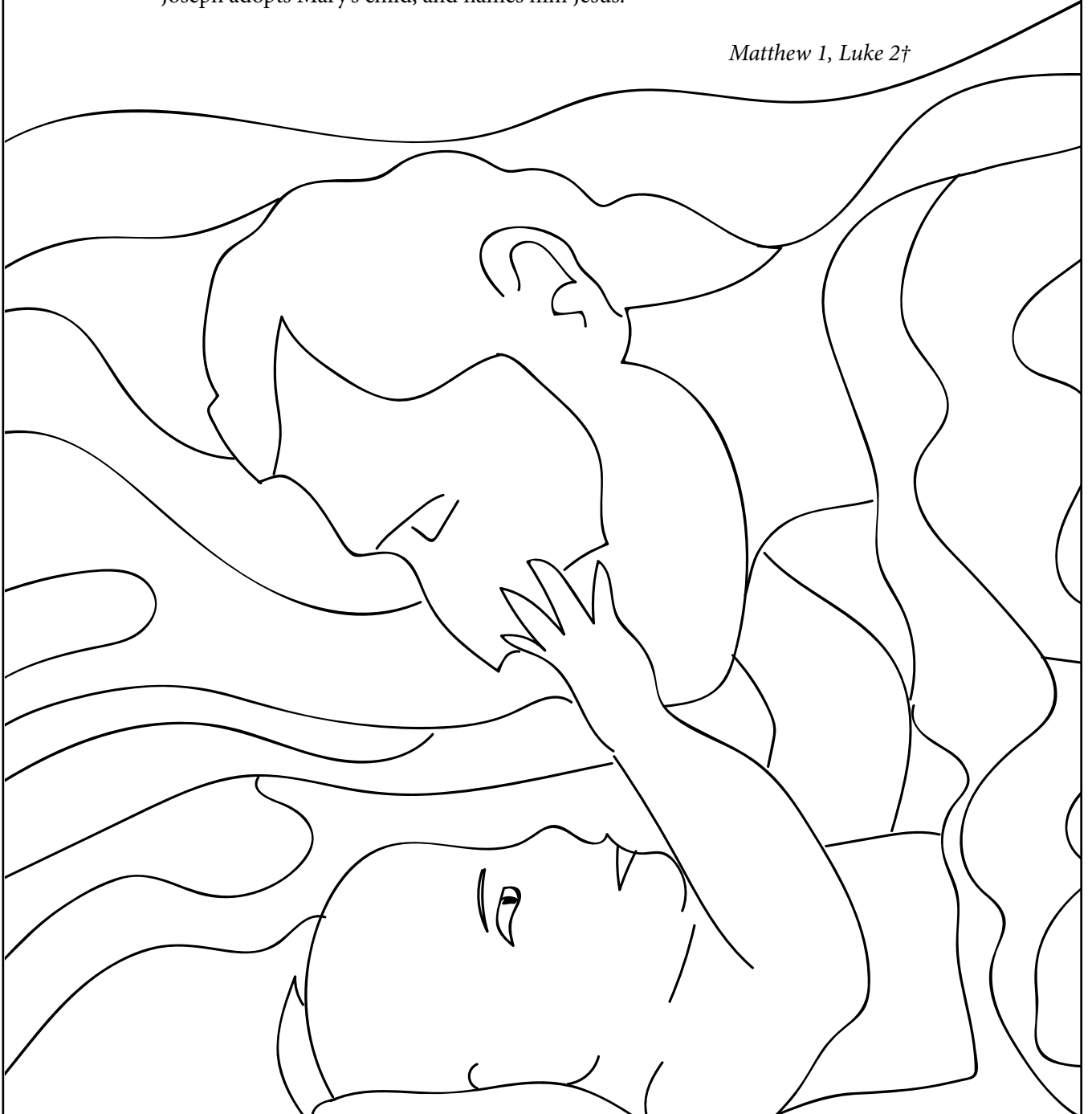


The Holy Name

CHRISTMASTIDE DAY 3 (DECEMBER 27)

Joseph adopts Mary's child, and names him Jesus.

Matthew 1, Luke 2†



Herod's Conspiracy

CHRISTMASTIDE DAY 6 (DECEMBER 30)

King Herod, having heard that the Messiah had arrived, feels threatened and summons the star-following wise men. Herod asks them to return to him with the location of the baby.

Matthew 2



NOTES

Opening Prayer: Celestial Innocence

Jacob Böhme, *Three Principles* (§xviii, 42), as quoted in Franz Hartmann, *The Life and Doctrine of Jacob Boehme* (London: Paul and Trench, 1891), 242.

Jacob Böhme (1575-1624) was a noted Christian esotericist and mystic.

Advent Day 3: The Logos

“The arc of the universe is long but it bends toward justice” is a famous quote by Unitarian minister Theodore Parker (1810-1860), in his *Ten Sermons on Religion* in 1853, although it is often attributed to Albert Pike (1809-1891); Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968); and Barack Obama (1961-).

Advent Day 8: Baruch Writes

The Book of Baruch is part of the Old Testament canon of Catholicism and is considered a deuterocanonical text by most Protestants. The lection employed on this page, Baruch 5:1-9, appears in the Catholic lectionary on Year C, Advent 2.

Interruption: St. Nicholas *Kontakion*

A “kontakion” is a kind of liturgical hymn used in the Eastern Orthodox and Byzantine Catholic Churches. This particular kontakion is adapted from a Byzantine Rite hymn.

The Feast of St. Nicholas is observed on Dec. 6 by Western Churches and Dec. 19 by Eastern Churches, celebrating the life of the historical St. Nicholas of Myra (270-343 CE). The deuterocanonical Sirach 45:3 is a common liturgical reading for St. Nicholas Day.

Advent Day 17: Be Prepared

Here I make reference to Friedrich Nietzsche’s apprehension before his madman’s declaration of the death of God; see Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. W. Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1974), §124.

Advent Day 20: The Canticle of Mary

While I deeply appreciate Mary Daly’s radical feminist critique of the Virgin Mary in her phenomenal book, *Pure Lust* (Boston: Beacon, 1984) as an archetype of sexual assault; I take Mary’s answer as offering consent. The Greek Luke 1:38b, “γένοιτό μοι κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμά σου,” contains the unusual form of γένοιτό—aorist optative middle, third-person singular—that is, “let it be” as contractual language. My interpretation is that Luke intentionally offered this subtle hint to his first-century readers to differentiate his story from discourses of abuse found in comparative Greek mythology.

Christmastide Day 3 (December 27): The Holy Name

The Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus is celebrated on different dates by churches, but is most prominently observed on January 1. An important historical spiritual practice is the devotion and dedication of the name, Jesus, which is emphasized on this day.

Christmastide Day 4 (December 28): The Circumcision

During the rule of the Syrian King Antiochus IV over Judea—according to the apocryphal 1 Maccabees 1:60-61—if discovered, a circumcised child and those involved in his circumcision would be put to death and the dead child would be hung around the neck of the mother.

The Feast of the Circumcision of Christ is held on the eighth day of Christmastide, January 1, though it appears earlier in our narrative story. One Eastern tradition is that the foreskin of Christ was kept in an alabaster jar of spikenard, and was the same jar that would appear later in Matthew 26:7 and Luke 7:37. This story is mixed with the coloring page in *Coloring Lent*, Day 22.

Christmastide Day 5 (December 29): The Presentation

The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple is a Great Feast of Eastern Orthodoxy, usually remembered on February 2. Although associated with the season of Epiphany, the historical sequence places it here in our narrative.

Christmastide Day 9 (January 2): The Holy Family

The Feast of the Holy Family is observed on the first Sunday of Christmastide if it falls between Christmas Day and New Year's Day. Otherwise it is designated for December 30. It is a day of presenting the Holy Family as a model of the Christian family. In this tradition, I depict the family as displaced refugees.

Christmastide Day 10 (January 3): Infanticide

The Holy Innocents' Day or "Childermas" is celebrated by the Western churches on December 28. In the Caribbean some countries use this day to bless the toys of children. For me, it is an important remembrance of those who are victims and survivors of miscarriage and pregnancy loss.

Postscript: The Solemnity of Mary, *Sol Invictus*

"Sol invictus" is a term with a long history of being related to sun gods; in Latin it means "unconquered sun." Following tradition, I interpret the woman of Revelation 12 to be Mary and the red dragon to represent empire, from which Jesus and Mary escape for now. In working through this image I am particularly fond of Jan L. Richardson's depiction of Mary in "Her Glorious Robe," in *Night Visions* (Cleveland: Pilgrim, 1998), 76-77.

John

1:1-14..... Advent Day 3

Romans

13:11-14 Advent Day 17

15:4-13 Advent Day 10

16:25-27 Advent Day 1

Galatians

4:4 Introduction, Epigraph

Philippians

2:5-11..... Advent Day 27

4:4-7..... Benediction

1 Thess.

5:16-24 Advent Day 13

Titus

3:4-7..... Christmas Day

Hebrews

1:1-12..... Advent Day 2

James

5 Advent Day 15

2 Peter

3:8-15a..... Advent Day 14, 16

Revelation

12:1-6..... Advent Day 11, Postscript

Year C

Advent

First Sunday.....	Advent Days 6, 10, 14, 15
Second Sunday.....	Advent Days 8, 12
Third Sunday.....	Benediction
Fourth Sunday.....	Advent Days 20, 21; Ember Day 2

Christmastide

Nativity, prop. 1.....	Advent Days 23, 24, 25; Christmas Eve; Christmas Day; Christmastide Day 12
Nativity, prop. 2.....	Advent Days 23, 24, 25; Christmas Eve; Christmas Day; Christmastide Days 2, 12
Nativity, prop. 3.....	Advent Days 2, 3; Christmas Day

Epiphany

Epiphany.....	Advent Days 7, 26; Christmastide Days 6, 7, 8, 9; Epiphany
Ninth Sunday.....	Christmas Day

Lent

Liturgy of the Passion.....	Advent Day 27
Holy Tuesday.....	Ember Day 3

Easter

Easter Vigil.....	Benediction
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Season after Pentecost

Proper 10.....	Advent Day 6
Proper 27.....	Christmas Day
Proper 28.....	Christmas Day; Benediction
Thanksgiving (USA & Canada).....	Benediction

Special Observances Excluded Above

- Feast of St. Nicholas (Dec. 6): St. Nicholas *Kontakion*
- Advent Ember Week: Ember Days 1, 2, 3
- Feast of the Holy Innocents (Dec. 28): Christmastide Day 10
- Feast of the Holy Family: Christmastide Day 9
- Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Jan. 1): Christmastide Day 12; Postscript
- Memorial of the Holy Name of Jesus (Jan. 4): Epigraph; Advent Day 27; Christmastide Days 2, 3, 4, 12
- Feast of the Three Kings (Jan. 6): Advent Day 26; Christmastide Days 7, 8
- Feast of the Baptism of the Lord: Advent Day 22
- Feast of the Presentation of the Lord (Feb. 2): Christmastide Days 9, 12
- Solemnity of St. Joseph (March 19): Advent Day 18
- The Annunciation of the Lord (March 25): Advent Days 19, 20; Ember Day 1, 2
- Feast of the Visitation of Mary (May 31): Advent Day 21, Ember Day 2
- Nativity of St. John the Baptist (June 24): Advent Day 21, Ember Day 3
- Feast of St. Mary (Sept. 8): Advent Day 20; Ember Day 2; Advent Days 23, 24; Christmas Eve; Christmas Day; Christmastide Day 12; Postscript
- Feast of the Archangels (Sept. 29): Advent Days 18, 19, 25
- Thanksgiving (all years): Epigraph