

I AM THERE

Now God says to us
What He has already said to
the earth as a whole
Through His grace-filled birth:

I am there. I am with you.

I am your life. I am your time.

I am the gloom of your daily routine.

Why will you not hear it?

I weep your tears - pour yours out to me.

I am your joy.

Do not be afraid to be happy; ever since I wept, joy is the standard of living

That is really more suitable than the anxiety and grief of those who have no hope.

I am the blind alley of all your paths,

For when you no longer know how to go any farther,

Then you have reached me,

Though you are not aware of it.

I am in your anxiety, for I have shared it.

I am in the prison of your finiteness,

For my love has made me your prisoner.

I am in your death,

For today I began to die with you, because I was born,

And I have not let myself be spared any real part of this experience.

I am present in your needs;

I have suffered them and they are now transformed.

I am there.

I no longer go away from this world.

Even if you do not see me now, I am there.

My love is unconquerable.

I am there.

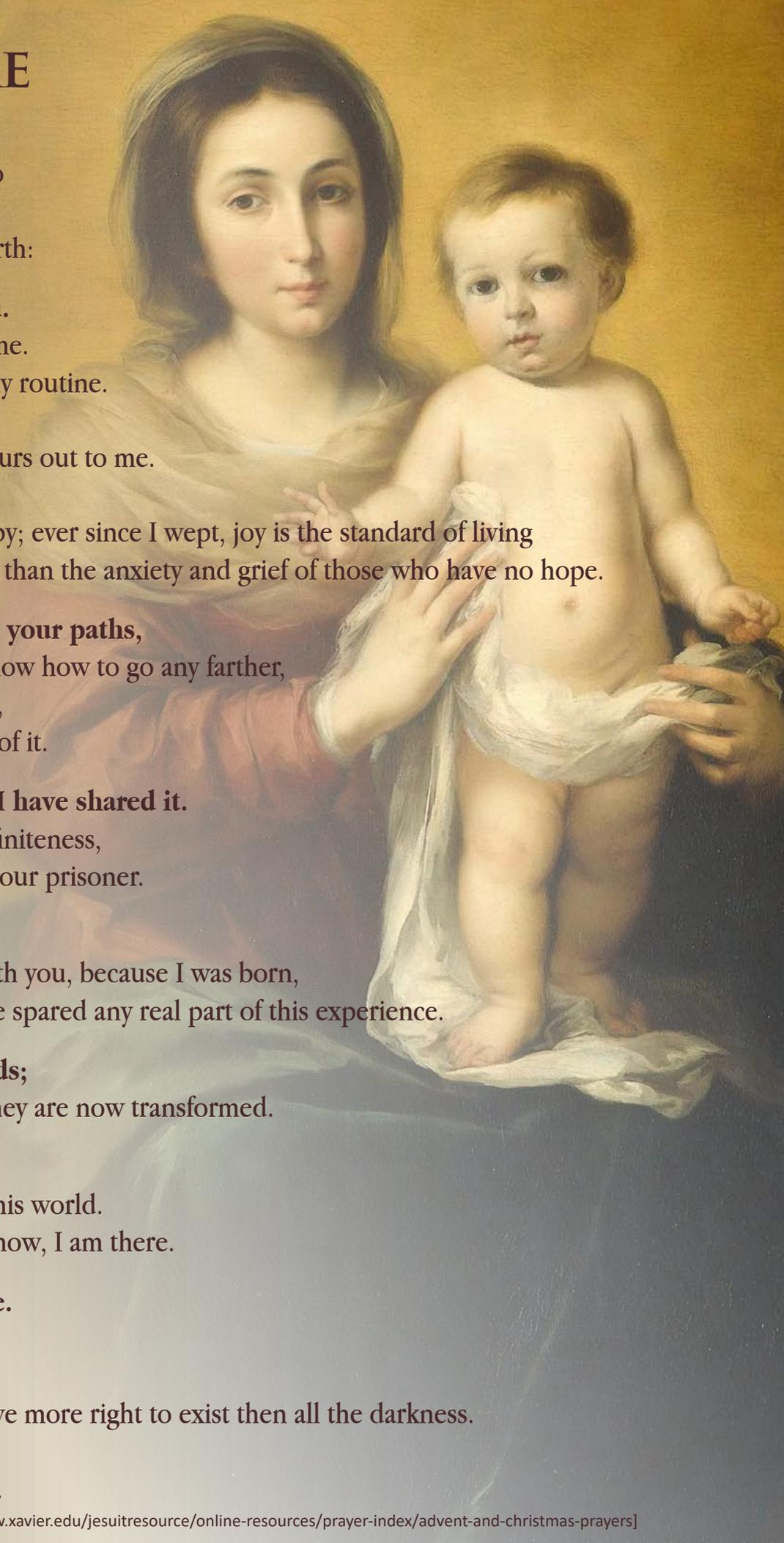
It is Christmas.

Light the Candles! They have more right to exist than all the darkness.

It is Christmas.

Christmas that lasts forever.

[Karl Rahner, S.J., "The Eternal Year" www.xavier.edu/jesuitresource/online-resources/prayer-index/advent-and-christmas-prayers]



Keeping Christmas



Are you willing...

To forget what you have done for other people,
and to remember what other people have done for you?
To ignore what the world owes you, and to think what you owe the world?
To put your rights in the background, and your duties in the middle distance
and your changes to do a little more than your duty in the foreground?
To see that men and women are just as real as you are,
and try to look behind their faces to their hearts, hungry for joy?
To own up to the fact that probably the only good reason for your existence
is not what you are going to get out of life, but what you are going to give to life?
To close your book of complaints against the management of the universe,
and look around you for a place where you can sow a few seeds of happiness?
Are you willing to do these things even for a day? Then you can keep Christmas.

Are you willing..

To stoop down and consider the needs and desires of little children?
To remember the weakness and loneliness of people growing old?
To stop asking how much your friends love you,
and ask yourself whether you love them enough?
To bear in mind the things that other people have to bear in their hearts?
To try to understand what those who live in the same home with you really want,
without waiting for them to tell you?
To trim your lamp so that it will give more light and less smoke,
and to carry it in front so that your shadow will fall behind you?
To make a grave for your ugly thoughts,
and a garden for your kindly feelings, with the gate open?
Are you willing to do those things, even for a day? Then you can keep Christmas.

Are you willing...

To believe that love is the strongest thing in the world,
stronger than hate, stronger than evil, stronger than death
- and that the blessed life which began in Bethlehem two thousand years ago
is the image and brightness of the Eternal Love?

Then you keep Christmas.

And if you can keep it for a day, why not always?
But you can never keep it alone.