

**UST 2014 Advent Reflection Series**  
**Session 1: The Significance of Advent**

As you read the words of Mary Oliver's poem, *Making the House Ready for the Lord*, reflect on your readiness to invite Jesus to "Come in, Come in." What does the poem say to you about what it means to ready yourself to invite Jesus in? What steps do you need to take?

Dear Lord, I have swept and I have washed but  
still nothing is as shining as it should be  
for you. Under the sink, for example, is an  
uproar of mice – it is the season of their  
many children. What shall I do? And under the eaves  
and through the walls the squirrels  
have gnawed their ragged entrances – but it is the season  
when they need shelter, so what shall I do? And  
the raccoon limps into the kitchen and opens the cupboard  
while the dog snores, the cat hugs the pillow;  
what shall I do? Beautiful is the new snow falling  
in the yard and the fox who is staring boldly  
up the path, to the door. And I still believe you will  
come, Lord: you will, when I speak to the fox,  
the sparrow, the lost dog, the shivering sea-goose, know  
that really I am speaking to you whenever I say,  
as I do all morning and afternoon: Come in, Come in.

## Psalm of an Emerging Emanuel

In the days ahead, you might prayerfully reflect on the words of Edward Hays' *Psalm of an Emerging Emmanuel*:

*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel,  
I pray with upraised eyes.  
Drop down, O Dew of Heaven,  
that God might walk and talk on earth,  
might heal and feed our sin-soaked world.*

*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel,  
my prayers like searchlights  
comb the starry winter skies.  
Descend from the black hole of some neighboring galaxy  
to green with your grace  
our barren earth.*

*Such an Advent waiting prayer  
can be a lifelong profession of patient longing,  
unless I know, with all my heart,  
that Emmanuel not only comes down  
but also comes forth and emerges.*

*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel,  
come forth from deep within me  
with Christmas luminous beauty.  
For my heart has become the sacred crib,  
the birthing place of God-among-us.*

*Peace on earth and justice for all  
will only become manifest in our lives  
when enough of your sons and daughters  
awaken to your divine design  
that has made each of us  
an emerging Emmanuel.*

What do these words mean to you as you prepare for the coming of Christ?

What challenges do you need to overcome to “wait in joyful hope” for the coming of Christ?

How might this Advent be a time of preparation for you?