

Prepare a Way!



**A HOLY CROSS PARISH RESOURCE
FOR A SPIRITUALLY NOURISHING ADVENT SEASON**

MAKING THIS ADVENT SEASON

Meaningful!



'*Prepare a Way!*' is a daily companion designed to deepen your spiritual journey during this sacred season.

Within these pages, you will find:

Daily Scripture Readings:

Carefully selected passages from the Bible to inspire and nourish your faith.

Reflective Thoughts:

Thought-provoking meditations to help you connect with the deeper meaning of the Advent season.

Prayer Prompts:

Simple yet powerful prayers to guide your personal devotions.

The resource also makes use of the '*O Antiphons*' 7 in total, traditionally prayed in the 7 days leading to the Solemnity of Christmas. These Antiphons have been described as a "unique work of art...filled with the Spirit of the Word of God."

As we anticipate the coming of Christ, let us open our hearts to the hope, peace, joy, and love that He brings. May these daily reflections inspire you to deepen your faith and draw closer to God.

May this holy season be a time of grace, renewal, and spiritual growth, and may you Prepare a Way for the Lord in your life and home this Advent!

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR A SPIRITUALLY NOURISHING ADVENT

- * Pray the Christmas Novena (*located at back of this booklet*)
- * Attend Sunday Mass
- * Acts of Good Works (Almsgiving in support of the Church and in support of those in need),
- * Fast one day each week or fast from one meal
- * Seek the Sacrament of Penance (Confession)
- * Add a Weekday Mass to your spiritual devotions
- * Attend the December First Friday of the Month Devotions (including Adoration)
- * Attend the December Mass in Latin
- * Pray the Holy Rosary in your homes as a family
- * Set up a prayer space in your home which can help to focus thoughts on Advent
- * Create or set up an Advent wreath in your home and light a candle each week of Advent
- * Pray daily for the Souls of the Faithful Departed, the Holy Souls in Purgatory and all Forgotten Souls.
- * Pray for Persecuted Christians who are forbidden from celebrating Christmas.
- * Pray the Litany of St. Joseph
- * Set up a nativity scene in your homes

Welcome!



THE HOLY SEASON OF ADVENT

Advent, the liturgical season preceding Christmas, is a time of profound spiritual significance for us as Catholics. It is a period of hopeful anticipation and joyful preparation for the celebration of the birth of Our Lord. Advent invites us to delve deeper into the true meaning of this sacred event.

Advent's unique dual focus is its strength: the historical commemoration of Jesus' birth and the anticipation of His glorious return at the end of time. This perspective infuses Advent with both historical remembrance and eschatological hope; that being the hope that God's ultimate plan for humanity will be fulfilled, and that all who trust in Him will be saved.

The Church's liturgical practices during Advent reflect this dual nature. The violet vestments symbolize penance and preparation, encouraging us to examine our lives and make necessary changes. The Advent wreath, a circular wreath with four candles, symbolises God's eternal nature and the liturgical year's cyclical nature. Each week, a candle is lit, representing a different aspect of Advent. The O Antiphons, ancient chants sung during Evening Prayer, express longing and anticipation for the Messiah's coming.

The Scripture readings during Holy Mass focus on themes of hope, repentance, and the Kingdom of God's arrival.

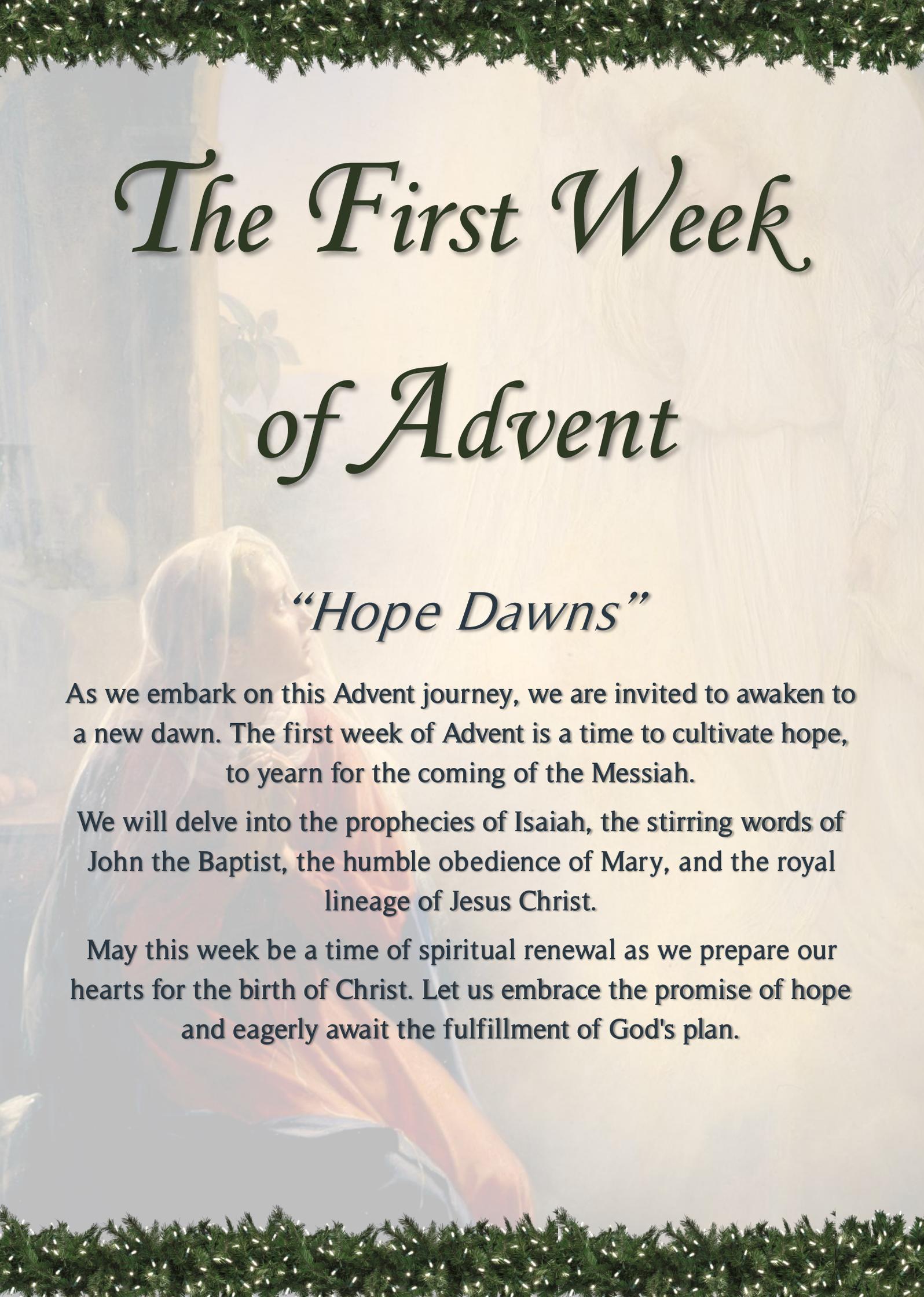
To fully embrace Advent's spirit, we can incorporate spiritual practices into our daily lives. Spending time in prayer, reflecting on Advent's meaning, and seeking a deeper relationship with God is crucial. Practicing self-denial, such as fasting or giving up a favourite activity, prepares our hearts for Christ's coming. Sharing our blessings with those in need, imitating God's generosity, is essential. Attending a retreat or taking up the ideas listed on the previous page helps increase our spiritual understanding.

Advent is not merely a season of anticipation but a time for renewal and transformation. By embracing Advent's spirit, we open our hearts to the true meaning of Christmas and prepare ourselves for the coming of Christ, both in the past and in the future. As we make our way through Advent, we are invited to deepen our faith, strengthen our hope, and renew our commitment to living a Christ-centred life. By doing so, we can experience the true joy and peace that Advent has to offer.

As Pope Benedict XVI said, Advent is "a period of joy, an interiorised joy that no suffering can diminish." It's a time to "reawaken within ourselves the true meaning of waiting" and "return to the heart of our faith which is the mystery of Christ."

Let this Advent be a time of profound spiritual renewal. May we open our hearts to God's grace and prepare ourselves for the Lord's coming. Let us embrace the spirit of Advent and allow it to transform our lives, and be open to the grace of God that will allow Him to work in our hearts. May we be patient and persevering in these spiritual days, and be generous and compassionate to others. Let us be joyful and hopeful in the midst of our trials, and be faithful to our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.





The First Week of Advent

“Hope Dawns”

As we embark on this Advent journey, we are invited to awaken to a new dawn. The first week of Advent is a time to cultivate hope, to yearn for the coming of the Messiah.

We will delve into the prophecies of Isaiah, the stirring words of John the Baptist, the humble obedience of Mary, and the royal lineage of Jesus Christ.

May this week be a time of spiritual renewal as we prepare our hearts for the birth of Christ. Let us embrace the promise of hope and eagerly await the fulfillment of God's plan.



SUNDAY OF THE

First Week of Advent

As Advent begins, let us awaken to the hope of the Lord's coming.
We are called to watch and pray, to be ready for the Lord's return.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION (Isaiah 2:1-5)

It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it, and many peoples shall come, and say:

“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.” For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. Judgment Pronounced on Arrogance

O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord.

PRAYER

O Lord, grant us the grace to be vigilant and watchful.
Fill our hearts with hope as we await your coming. Amen.
Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory Be...



ANTIPHONS

(Joel 3:18)
In that day the mountains shall drop down sweetness,
and the hills shall flow with milk and honey, alleluia.

(Zach 9:9)
Shout for joy, O daughter of Sion, rejoice greatly,
O daughter of Jerusalem, alleluia.

(Zach 14:5)
Behold, the Lord shall come, and all His Saints with
him: and there shall be in this day a great light,
alleluia.

(Isaiah 55:1)
All you that thirst come to the waters,
seek the Lord while He may be found, alleluia.

Behold there shall come the great Prophet,
and it is He that shall build Jerusalem anew,
alleluia.

MONDAY OF THE

First Week of Advent

The prophet Isaiah proclaims a message of comfort and hope.
Let us trust in the Lord's promise of salvation.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION (Isaiah 40:1-5)

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

A voice cries:

"In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

PRAYER

O Lord, comfort us in our trials and strengthen our hope.
May we trust in your promises and await your coming with joy. Amen.

Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory Be...

In the heart of Advent, Isaiah offers a powerful message of hope and consolation. The prophet invites us to listen to the comforting words of God: "Comfort, comfort my people, says your God." This divine invitation calls us to embrace the promise of redemption and the assurance of God's enduring love.

The passage speaks of a future filled with divine glory, a future where the way of the Lord is prepared. The prophet envisions a landscape transformed, a path cleared for the coming of the Messiah. This imagery resonates deeply with the Advent season, as we anticipate the arrival of Christ, the long-awaited Saviour. The promise of God's glory, revealed to all people, inspires hope and fills our hearts with joy.

As we journey through Advent, let us embrace the comforting words of the prophet and open our hearts to the promise of God's love. May we prepare our hearts to receive the Christ child, the source of true peace and joy.



TUESDAY OF THE

First Week of Advent

The Lord's messenger brings good news of peace and salvation.

Let us be ready to receive this message with joy and gratitude.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION (Isaiah 52:7-10)

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good tidings, who publishes peace, who brings good tidings of good, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."

Hark, your watchmen lift up their voice, together they sing for joy; for eye to eye they see the return of the Lord to Zion.

Break forth together into singing, you waste places of Jerusalem; for the Lord has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem.

The Lord has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

PRAYER

O Lord, send your messenger to prepare the way for your coming.

Fill our hearts with joy as we await your salvation. Amen.

Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory Be...



The prophet Isaiah's words paint a vibrant picture of the coming Messiah, a figure of peace and salvation. As we journey through Advent, we eagerly anticipate the birth of Christ, whose arrival heralds a new era of hope and redemption.

The watchmen, like the shepherds, stand ready to herald the arrival of the long-awaited Saviour. Their joy mirrors our own as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ, the fulfillment of God's promise.

Isaiah proclaims the revelation of God's saving power to all nations. This message of hope extends to all humanity, a promise that transcends time and space. As we reflect on these words, let us embrace the spirit of Advent, filled with expectant waiting and joyful anticipation.

May we, like the watchmen of old, be ready to welcome the coming of Christ, the source of our salvation and the fulfillment of our hope.

WEDNESDAY OF THE

First Week of Advent

Mary, filled with grace, responds to God's call.

Let us imitate her faith and obedience.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION (Luke 1:26-38)

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.

He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end." And Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no husband?" And the angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, your kinswoman Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible." And Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

PRAYER

O Lord, fill us with your grace and help us to respond to your call.

May we be faithful to your word and live a life of holiness. Amen.

Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory Be...



Luke invites us to reflect on the extraordinary mystery of the Incarnation. The angel Gabriel's visitation to Mary, a young woman from Nazareth, marks a pivotal moment in the history of salvation. The announcement of her divine motherhood, though perplexing, is met with humble acceptance.

Mary's response, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word," is a model of faith and obedience. Her willingness to surrender her will to God's plan echoes the theme of Advent, as we prepare our hearts to receive the Christ child. Mary's "fiat," her "yes," is a powerful affirmation of God's sovereignty and a source of inspiration for all.

Today, let us meditate on Mary's example and strive to imitate her faith and obedience. May we, like Mary, be open to the unexpected workings of God's grace in our lives.

THURSDAY OF THE

First Week of Advent

Mary's visit to Elizabeth reveals the power of God's grace.

Let us be filled with joy and gratitude for the gift of God's love.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION (Luke 1:39-56)

In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a city of Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her from the Lord."

And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden. For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. And his mercy is on those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm, he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts, he has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted those of low degree; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his posterity for ever." Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her home.

PRAYER

O Lord, fill our hearts with joy and gratitude. May we be filled with the Holy Spirit and proclaim your goodness to the world. Amen.

Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory Be...



The encounter between Mary and Elizabeth, as described in Luke 1:39-56, is a powerful testament to the transformative power of God's grace. Mary, filled with the Holy Spirit, hastens to visit her cousin Elizabeth, who is also expecting a child. Upon Mary's greeting, the unborn John the Baptist leaps in Elizabeth's womb, a sign of recognition and joy.

Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, proclaims Mary's blessedness and the blessedness of the child she carries. Mary, in response, sings her Magnificat, a beautiful hymn of praise to God. In this song, she extols God's mercy, power, and faithfulness. She celebrates God's humble regard for the lowly and His ability to overturn the powerful.

As we journey through Advent, let us meditate on Mary's Magnificat and allow her words to inspire our own hearts.

IMAGE:

The Visitation: Gerónimo Antonio de Ezquerra, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

FRIDAY OF THE

First Week of Advent

Zechariah, filled with the Holy Spirit, prophesies about the coming of the Messiah.

Let us be filled with the same hope and anticipation.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION (Luke 1:57-80)

Now the time came for Elizabeth to be delivered, and she gave birth to a son. And her neighbours and kinsfolk heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they would have named him Zechariah after his father, but his mother said, "Not so; he shall be called John." And they said to her, "None of your kindred is called by this name." And they made signs to his father, inquiring what he would have him called. And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, "His name is John." And they all marvelled. And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God. And fear came on all their neighbours. And all these things were talked about through all the hill country of Judea; and all who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, "What then will this child be?" For the hand of the Lord was with him.

And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all who hate us; to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant, the oath which he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life. And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God, when the day shall dawn upon us from on high to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness till the day of his manifestation to Israel.

PRAYER

O Lord, fill us with the Holy Spirit and grant us the gift of prophecy. May we be inspired to proclaim your word with boldness and conviction. Amen.

Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory Be...



Luke recounts the birth of John the Baptist, a significant figure in the history of salvation. His birth, like Jesus', is a miraculous event, foreshadowing the coming of the Messiah. The angel Gabriel's prophecy to Zechariah, John's father, is a testament to God's divine plan. The child, filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb, is destined to prepare the way for the Lord.

As we journey through Advent, let us reflect on the life of John the Baptist, a man who prepared the way for the Lord. His example of repentance and humility inspires us to prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ. May we, like John, be filled with the Holy Spirit and live a life of faith and devotion.

IMAGE: Nativity of Saint John the Baptist, Zechariah writing, "His name is John". Pontormo, on a desco da parto, c. 1526., Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

SATURDAY OF THE

First Week of Advent

*From Abraham to David, from David to the exile,
and from the exile to Christ,
the Lord has kept his promise.
Let us rejoice in the lineage of our Saviour,
Jesus Christ.*

*A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew
(Mt 1:1-17)*

Abraham was the father of Isaac,
Isaac the father of Jacob,
Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers,
Judah was the father
of Perez and Zerah, Tamar being their mother,
Perez was the father of Hezron,
Hezron the father of Ram,
Ram was the father of Amminadab,
Amminadab was the father of Nahshon,
Nahshon the father of Salmon,
Salmon was the father of Boaz, Rahab being his mother,
Boaz was the father of Obed, Ruth being his mother,
Obed was the father of Jesse;
and Jesse was the father of King David.

David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had
been Uriah's wife,
Solomon was the father of Rehoboam,
Rehoboam the father of Abijah,
Abijah the father of Asa,
Asa was the father of Jehoshaphat,
Jehoshaphat the father of Joram,
Joram the father of Azariah,
Azariah was the father of Jotham,
Jotham the father of Ahaz,
Ahaz the father of Hezekiah,
Hezekiah was the father of Manasseh,
Manasseh the father of Amon,
Amon the father of Josiah;
and Josiah was the father of Jechoniah and his brothers.
Then the deportation to Babylon took place.

After the deportation to Babylon:
Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel,
Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel,
Zerubbabel was the father of Abiud,
Abiud the father of Eliakim,
Eliakim the father of Azor,
Azor was the father of Zadok,
Zadok the father of Achim,
Achim the father of Eliud,
Eliud was the father of Eleazar,
Eleazar the father of Matthan,
Matthan the father of Jacob;
and Jacob was the father of Joseph the husband of
Mary; of her was born Jesus who is called Christ.

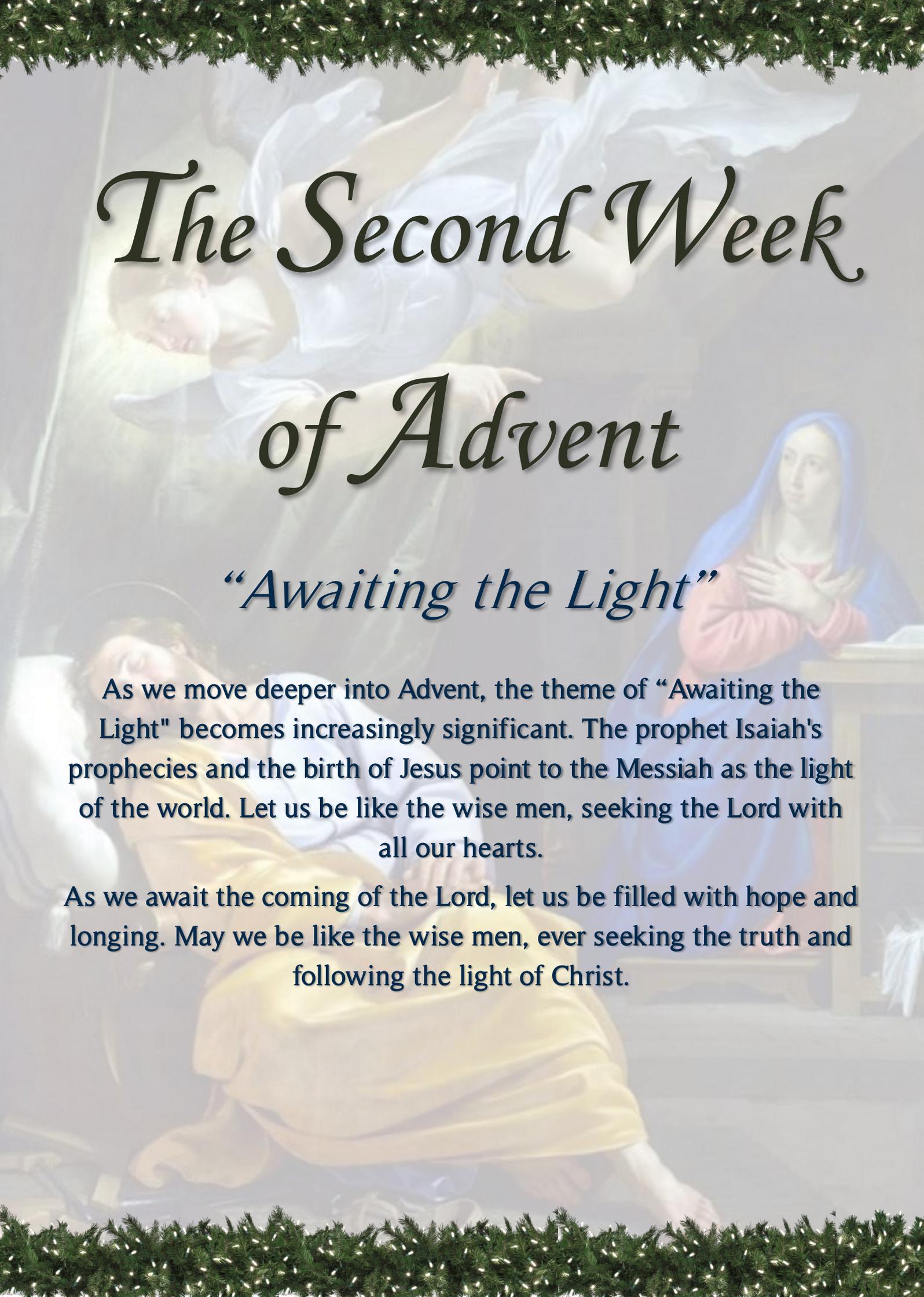
The sum of generations is therefore: fourteen
from Abraham to David; fourteen from David to
the Babylonian deportation; and fourteen from
the Babylonian deportation to Christ.

O Lord, our God,
You chose a lineage of faithful souls to prepare
the way for Your Divine Son.

We thank You for the generations of hope and
promise that led to His holy birth.
May we, too, be instruments of Your grace,
carrying the light of Christ to the world. Amen.

Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory Be...

*"In the tapestry of time,
a lineage unfolds, leading
to the birth of a Saviour.
From the dust of ages,
a divine promise takes shape."*



The Second Week of Advent

“Awaiting the Light”

As we move deeper into Advent, the theme of “Awaiting the Light” becomes increasingly significant. The prophet Isaiah's prophecies and the birth of Jesus point to the Messiah as the light of the world. Let us be like the wise men, seeking the Lord with all our hearts.

As we await the coming of the Lord, let us be filled with hope and longing. May we be like the wise men, ever seeking the truth and following the light of Christ.

SUNDAY OF THE

Second Week of Advent

The prophet Isaiah foretells the coming of the Messiah, the light of the world.

Let us prepare our hearts to receive this light.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION (Isaiah 9:1-7)

But there will be no gloom for her that was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined. Thou hast multiplied the nation, thou hast increased its joy; they rejoice before thee as with joy at the harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, thou hast broken as on the day of Midian. For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire.

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called "Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David, and over his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and for evermore.

The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

PRAYER

O Lord, light up the darkness of our hearts. Grant us the grace to see you in all things. Amen.

Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory Be



ANTIPHONS

(Lk. 21:27) Behold, the Lord shall come in the clouds of heaven with great power, alleluia.

(Is. 26:1-2) Behold the Lord shall appear, and shall not lie: if He make delay wait for Him, for He shall come, and shall not tarry, alleluia.

(Is. 55:12) The mountains and the hills shall sing praise before God, and all the trees of the woods shall clap their hands, for the Lord of all that hath dominion shall come into His everlasting kingdom, alleluia, alleluia.

(Is. 40:10) Behold our Lord shall come with strength, and shall enlighten the eyes of His servants, alleluia.

MONDAY OF THE

Second Week of Advent

The Lord is our strength and our refuge.
Let us trust in his power to sustain us.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION (Isaiah 40:27-31)

Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, “My way is hid from the Lord, and my right is disregarded by my God”? Have you not known? Have you not heard?

The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary, his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength.

Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted;
but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength,
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,
they shall run and not be weary,
they shall walk and not faint.

PRAYER

O Lord, be our strength and our shield. Protect us from harm and guide us on the path of righteousness. Amen.
Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory Be



Today, Isaiah offers a profound reflection on God's enduring love and care for His people. The prophet reminds us that God's power and wisdom are infinite, transcending human understanding. He invites us to trust in His unwavering love, even in times of weariness and despair.

God, the creator of all things, sustains and strengthens His people. He gives power to the faint and increases the strength of the weary. His love endures forever, and His compassion never fails.

As we continue our spiritual pilgrimage through these days of Advent, let us draw strength from God's promises and trust in His divine providence. May we find solace in His enduring love and renew our faith in His power to transform our lives.

IMAGE:

Journey to Bethlehem

Artist: Daniel Rodgers

Source: (<https://daniel-rodders.blogspot.com/2010/04/journey-to-bethlehem.html>)

TUESDAY OF THE

Second Week of Advent

The suffering servant bears our sins.

Let us meditate on the mystery of Christ's passion and death.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION (Isaiah 53:1-12)

Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or comeliness that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people. And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the will of the Lord to bruise him; he has put him to grief; when he makes himself an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, he shall prolong his days; the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand; he shall see the fruit of the travail of his soul and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous; and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out his soul to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

PRAYER

O Lord, help us to carry our crosses with patience and humility. May we find strength in your suffering. Amen.

Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory Be



The prophet Isaiah paints a portrait of the Suffering Servant, a figure who bears the sins of humanity. This enigmatic figure, often understood as a prefiguration of Christ, offers a profound meditation on the nature of suffering and redemption.

The Servant's suffering is not in vain. His sacrifice paves the way for the ultimate act of redemption, the coming of the Messiah. Through the Servant's suffering, we glimpse the depth of God's love and the power of sacrificial love to transform lives. This image resonates deeply during Advent, as we anticipate the birth of Christ, the ultimate fulfillment of the Servant's prophecy.

IMAGE:

Christ wearing the Crown of Thorns, supported by Angels
Annibale Carracci, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

WEDNESDAY OF THE

Second Week of Advent

The shepherds, filled with wonder, worship the newborn King.

Let us imitate their humility and faith.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION (Luke 2:8-20)

And in that region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them, “Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

“Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!”

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” And they went with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they saw it they made known the saying which had been told them concerning this child; and all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

PRAYER

O Lord, fill our hearts with wonder and awe. May we worship you with humility and reverence. Amen.

Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory Be.



The shepherds' visit to the newborn Jesus, as recounted in today's reflection is a poignant reminder of God's love and grace. These humble figures, chosen to witness the extraordinary, invite us to open our hearts to God's presence. As we prepare for Christmas, let us emulate their faith and humility, leaving behind distractions to encounter Christ in prayer and the sacraments. The angels' proclamation of "peace on earth" echoes through the ages, urging us to be instruments of peace and goodwill. May the hope and anticipation of Christ's birth inspire us to embrace the true meaning of Advent.

As we ponder the shepherds' journey to Bethlehem, we realize that our own spiritual journey is also a pilgrimage. It's a journey of faith, hope, and love, leading us to the manger where Christ awaits.

May we, like the shepherds, respond with awe and wonder to the invitation to encounter the divine.

IMAGE:

Angels Announcing the Birth of Christ to the Shepherds
Govert Flinck, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

THURSDAY OF THE

Second Week of Advent

The Wise Men, guided by a star, seek the newborn King.

Let us follow the star of faith and seek the Lord with all our hearts.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION (Matthew 2:1-12)

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him.” When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it is written by the prophet:

‘And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will govern my people Israel.’”

Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star appeared; and he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.” When they had heard the king they went their way; and lo, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy; and going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

PRAYER

O Lord, guide us on our journey of faith. May we always be seeking your face. Amen.

Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory Be



The story of the Magi, as recounted in today’s scripture reading from St. Matthew, is a captivating tale that resonates deeply during the holy season of Advent.

These wise men, guided by a celestial sign, embarked on a journey to worship the newborn King. Their unwavering faith and perseverance serve as an inspiration for us as we navigate our own spiritual paths.

Just as the Magi were drawn to the light of the star, we too are called to seek the light of Christ. In the hustle and bustle during these days of Advent, as we prepare for our Lord’s birth, let us pause to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas. By turning our hearts towards God, we can experience the joy and peace that only He can provide.

As we follow the star of Bethlehem, may we be guided by the Holy Spirit to the manger, where the love of God shines brightly.

IMAGE:

Adoration of the Magi;

Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

FRIDAY OF THE

Second Week of Advent

Simeon and Anna, filled with the Holy Spirit, recognize the Messiah.

Let us be open to the Spirit's guidance.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION (Luke 2:22-35)

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

“Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.” And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul, too.”

PRAYER

O Lord, fill us with the Holy Spirit and grant us the gift of discernment. May we recognize your presence in our lives. Amen.

Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory Be



Today, we reflect on the Presentation of the Lord, a reading which offers a profound message to ponder in Advent. As Mary and Joseph present the infant Jesus at the temple, we are reminded of the sacredness of every human life. The elderly Simeon and Anna, filled with the Holy Spirit, recognize the divine nature of the child and proclaim Him as the long-awaited Messiah. Their encounter with Jesus is a powerful testament to the transformative power of faith.

This passage invites us to contemplate the meaning of our own lives. Are we open to the presence of God in our daily experiences? Like Simeon and Anna, are we eagerly awaiting the coming of the Lord? As we journey through Advent, let us strive to cultivate a deeper relationship with Christ. By embracing the spirit of prayer, gratitude, and service, we can truly prepare our hearts for the celebration of His birth.

The story of the Presentation also reminds us of our role as disciples of Christ. We are called to share the good news of salvation with others. Like Simeon and Anna, may we be instruments of God's love, offering hope and comfort to those in need. As we await the coming of the Lord, let us embrace the spirit of Advent and live our lives in a way that reflects the love and mercy of God.

IMAGE:

Andrey Mironov, CC BY-SA 4.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons

SATURDAY OF THE

Second Week of Advent

Jesus, as a child, grows in wisdom and stature.
Let us grow in our knowledge and love of God.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION (Luke 2:39-52)

When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom, and the favour of God was upon him.

Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents were unaware of this. Assuming that he was in the group of travellers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him they were astonished, and his mother said to him, "Child, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously looking for you." He said to them, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand what he said to them. Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was obedient to them, and his mother treasured all these things in her heart.

And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years and in divine and human favour.

PRAYER

O Lord, help us to grow in wisdom and understanding. May we always be seeking to know you more deeply.
Amen.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory Be



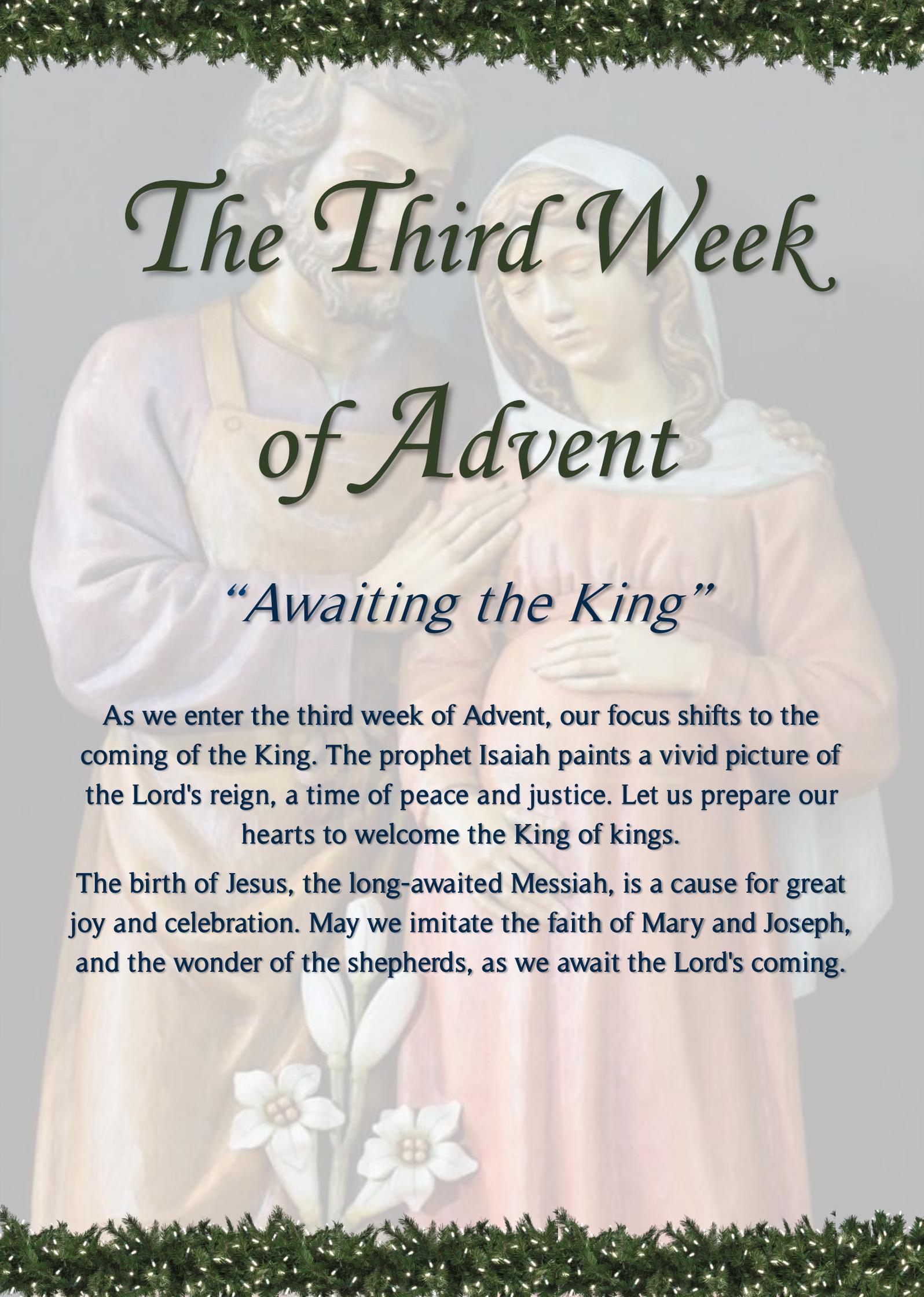
Today's gospel passage tells the story of the young Jesus in the temple. As a twelve-year-old, Jesus displays extraordinary wisdom and understanding, engaging in deep theological discussions with the temple scholars. His parents, Mary and Joseph, are amazed by His precociousness and obedience.

This passage invites us to consider the importance of spiritual growth and discernment. Like the young Jesus, we are called to seek knowledge and wisdom, to deepen our relationship with God, and to live a life of faith and obedience. As we journey through Advent, let us embrace the spirit of wonder and curiosity, seeking to understand the mysteries of God's Word.

May the example of the young Jesus inspire us to grow in our faith and to live our lives in a way that honours God. As we prepare for the celebration of Christmas, let us strive to be more like Christ, filled with love, compassion, and wisdom.

IMAGE:

The Twelve-Year-Old Jesus in the Temple. Episode described in the Gospel.
Museum of Natural History (Denmark) Carl Bloch, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons



The Third Week of Advent

“Awaiting the King”

As we enter the third week of Advent, our focus shifts to the coming of the King. The prophet Isaiah paints a vivid picture of the Lord's reign, a time of peace and justice. Let us prepare our hearts to welcome the King of kings.

The birth of Jesus, the long-awaited Messiah, is a cause for great joy and celebration. May we imitate the faith of Mary and Joseph, and the wonder of the shepherds, as we await the Lord's coming.



SUNDAY OF THE

Third Week of Advent

The Lord comes to bring good news to the poor and release the captives.

Let us be instruments of God's mercy and compassion.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION (Isaiah 69:1-11)

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, to provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory. They shall build up the ancient ruins; they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks; foreigners shall till your land and dress your vines, but you shall be called priests of the Lord; you shall be named ministers of our God; you shall enjoy the wealth of the nations, and in their riches you shall glory. Because their shame was double and dishonour was proclaimed as their lot, therefore in their land they shall possess a double portion; everlasting joy shall be theirs.

For I, the Lord, love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. Their descendants shall be known among the nations and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed. I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my whole being shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its shoots and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

PRAYER

O Lord, make us instruments of your mercy. May we bring hope and healing to those in need. Amen.

Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory Be



ANTIPHONS

(1 Cor. 4:5) The Lord will come, and will not tarry, and will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will manifest Himself to all the nations, alleluia.

(Is 52:9) Rejoice, O Jerusalem, with great joy, for there shall come unto thee a Saviour, alleluia.

(Is 46:12) I will give salvation in Sion, and my glory in Jerusalem, alleluia.

(Is. 40:4) The mountains and all the hills shall be made low: and the crooked shall become straight and the rough ways plain: Come, O Lord, and tarry not, alleluia.

Let us live justly and piously, looking for the blessed hope and the coming of the Lord.

MONDAY OF THE

Third Week of Advent

The Lord is our God and our Saviour.

Let us praise him for his goodness and mercy.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION (Isaiah 64:1-9)

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence - as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil - to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence! When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down; the mountains quaked at your presence. From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him. You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways. But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed.

We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. There is no one who calls on your name or attempts to take hold of you, for you have hidden your face from us and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity. Yet, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. Do not be exceedingly angry, O Lord, and do not remember iniquity forever. Now consider, we are all your people.

PRAYER

O Lord, we praise you for your love and mercy. May we always give you thanks and praise. Amen.

Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory Be



Isaiah's scripture passage today is a powerful and poignant reflection on the human condition and God's divine mercy. The prophet laments the inadequacy of human efforts to attain righteousness and holiness. He acknowledges the limitations of our prayers and sacrifices, recognizing that they cannot fully satisfy God's infinite holiness.

This passage invites us to contemplate the depth of our own sinfulness and the limitations of our human nature. We, like the Israelites, often find ourselves longing for God's presence and intervention in our lives. As we continue through Advent, let us humbly acknowledge our need for God's grace and mercy.

In the midst of our spiritual struggles, Isaiah's words offer hope. He anticipates a future day when God will reveal Himself in glory. This promise of divine intervention should inspire us to persevere in our faith, even in the darkest of times. Let us embrace the Advent season as a time of hope and renewal, trusting in God's promise to fulfill His divine plan.

IMAGE:

God the Father; Jacob Herreyns I, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

TUESDAY OF THE

Third Week of Advent

John the Baptist foretells the coming of the Messiah.

He instructs those listening to him to repent and to prepare a way for the Lord.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION (Luke 3:1-9)

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’ ”

John said to the crowds coming out to be baptised by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Therefore, bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor,’ for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.”

PRAYER

O Lord, stir our hearts to repentance and renewal. May we prepare our souls to receive the gift of Your love and grace. Amen

*O Wisdom of our God Most High, guiding creation with power and love:
come to teach us the path of knowledge!*

Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory Be



Today's scripture reflection introduces us to John the Baptist, a prophetic figure who calls people to repentance and prepares the way for the coming of the Messiah. His message of repentance and baptism is a powerful reminder of the need for spiritual renewal. As John proclaims, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2).

John's ministry in the wilderness is a stark contrast to the comfort and security of everyday life. It calls us to examine our own hearts and to consider the direction of our lives.

Are we truly prepared for the coming of the Lord?
Are we willing to let go of our sins and embrace a life of repentance and renewal?

As we continue through this season of Advent, let us heed John the Baptist's call to repentance. By turning away from sin and embracing God's grace, we can prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ. May we, like the people of John's time, respond with faith and hope to the promise of salvation.

IMAGE:

The Sermon of St. John the Baptist.
Bernardo Strozzi, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

WEDNESDAY OF THE

Third Week of Advent

Jesus, Baptised by John the Baptist, begins his public ministry.

Let us follow his example of humility and obedience.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION (Matthew 3:13-17)

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be Baptised by him. John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be Baptised by you, and do you come to me?" But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. And when Jesus had been baptised, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw God's Spirit descending like a dove and alighting on him.

And a voice from the heavens said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased."

PRAYER

O Lord, help us to follow your example of humility and obedience. May we always be seeking to do your will.
Amen.

O Leader of the House of Israel, giver of the Law to Moses on Sinai: come to rescue us with your mighty power!

Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory Be



In the heart of Advent, as we prepare for the birth of our Lord, let us turn our gaze to the banks of the Jordan River. Here, in this sacred space, we witness a pivotal moment in the life of Jesus, a moment that foreshadows the coming of the Kingdom of God. St. Matthew recounts the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist. This act, though seemingly ordinary, carries profound significance. Jesus, the sinless Son of God, submits himself to the baptism of repentance, a ritual meant for sinners seeking forgiveness. In this act, Jesus identifies with humanity, sharing in our struggles and our need for redemption.

John, initially hesitant, recognizes the divinity of Jesus and humbly accepts his request. This exchange highlights the humility of both figures. Jesus, the King of Kings, lowers himself to receive the baptism of a prophet. John, the voice crying in the wilderness, acknowledges his own limitations and the superior authority of Jesus.

As the waters of the Jordan touch Jesus, the heavens open, and the Holy Spirit descends upon him like a dove. A voice from heaven proclaims, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." This divine affirmation confirms Jesus' identity as the Messiah, the long-awaited Saviour of the world.

This scene at the Jordan River serves as a powerful reminder of God's love for humanity. Jesus, the embodiment of divine love, comes to dwell among us, to share in our joys and sorrows, and to ultimately offer us salvation. As we journey through Advent, let us imitate the humility of Jesus and John, recognizing our need for God's grace and mercy. Let us open our hearts to the Holy Spirit, allowing Him to transform us and prepare us for the coming of Christ. May this Advent season be a time of profound spiritual renewal, as we eagerly await the birth of our Saviour and the dawn of a new era of hope and peace.

THURSDAY OF THE

Third Week of Advent

Jesus, tempted by the devil, resists sin and remains faithful to God's will.

Let us imitate his example and resist temptation.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION (Matthew 4:1-11)

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was famished. The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" "

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'" Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

PRAYER

O Lord, strengthen us in times of temptation. Help us to resist sin and choose the path of righteousness. Amen.

O Root of Jesse's stem, sign of God's love for all his people: come to save us without delay!

Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory Be



Today's scripture reflection presents us with a powerful image of Jesus' spiritual battle against temptation. After His baptism by John the Baptist, Jesus is led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by Satan. This scripture passage may not be one which we customarily reflect upon during Advent, but it presents us a great lesson of steadfast faith and resistance to the things of this world.

Satan's temptations, though subtle and alluring, aim to divert Jesus from His divine mission. He tempts Jesus to satisfy His physical needs, to seek worldly power, and to compromise His faith. Yet, Jesus, armed with Scripture and the power of the Holy Spirit, resolutely resists each temptation. His responses, rooted in His divine nature and unwavering trust in God's Word, serve as a model for us as we navigate our own spiritual journeys.

This Advent, let us reflect on Jesus' example and seek to emulate His steadfast faith. May we be vigilant against the temptations that surround us, turning to Scripture, prayer, and the sacraments for strength and guidance. By resisting the allure of worldly pleasures and seeking God's will, we can overcome spiritual challenges and emerge victorious, just as Jesus did.

FRIDAY OF THE

Third Week of Advent

John the Baptist bears witness to the light of the world.

Let us be witnesses to Christ's love and mercy.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION (John 1:19-28)

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed and did not deny it, but he confessed, "I am not the Messiah." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"

He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' " as the prophet Isaiah said.

Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, "Why, then, are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" John answered them, "I baptise with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandal." This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

PRAYER

O Lord, make us witnesses to your love. May our lives shine with the light of Christ. Amen.

O Key of David, opening the gates of God's eternal Kingdom: come and free the prisoners of darkness!

Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory Be



Today's scripture passage from St. John offers a profound reflection on the identity of Jesus Christ. In this passage, John the Baptist, a key figure in Advent, testifies to the divine nature of Jesus. He clarifies that Jesus is not merely a prophet or a human being, but rather the eternal Word made flesh. John's witness, grounded in his own experience, invites us to contemplate the mystery of the Incarnation.

As we progress through Advent, let us ponder the significance of Jesus' divine identity. His coming into the world as a human being is a testament to God's immense love for humanity. May we, like John the Baptist, be filled with awe and wonder as we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Saviour. Let us open our hearts to the Word of God and allow Him to transform our lives.

The witness of John the Baptist challenges us to examine our own faith and to deepen our relationship with Christ. Are we truly prepared to receive the Word of God into our hearts? Let us strive to live lives that are worthy of the coming of the Lord, filled with love, hope, and peace.

IMAGE:

St. John the Baptist in the Wilderness.

Artist: Jose Leonardo

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

SATURDAY OF THE

Third Week of Advent

Jesus performs his first miracle at the wedding at Cana.
Let us trust in his power to transform our lives.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION (John 2:1-11)

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what concern is that to me and to you? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the person in charge of the banquet." So they took it. When the person in charge tasted the water that had become wine and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), that person called the bridegroom and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now." Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee and revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.

PRAYER

O Lord, work miracles in our lives. Fill us with your love and grace. Amen.

*O Radiant Dawn, splendour of eternal light, sun of justice:
come and shine on those who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death.*

Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory Be



The wedding at Cana, is a pivotal moment in Jesus' public ministry. It is here that we witness His first public miracle, transforming water into wine. This event not only reveals Jesus' divine power but also symbolizes His role as the bridegroom of the Church.

Mary's role in this miracle is particularly significant. Her trust in Jesus and her simple request, "They have no wine," demonstrates her deep faith and understanding of her Son's divine mission. Her words, "Do whatever he tells you," encourage us to listen to Jesus' teachings and to follow His example.

As we prepare for the celebration of Christmas, let us reflect on the significance of the wedding at Cana. May we, like Mary, trust in God's providence and seek to fulfill His will in our own lives. By opening our hearts to the love of Christ, we can experience the transforming power of His grace.

IMAGE: Marriage at Cana
Giorgio Vasari, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons



The Fourth Week of Advent

“Awaiting the King’s Reign”

As we approach the final week of Advent, our anticipation grows. We await the coming of the King, Jesus Christ, who will establish his eternal kingdom.

The readings for this week remind us of the Lord's mercy and compassion. As we prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ, let us renew our commitment to follow him and to live according to his teachings. May we be filled with hope and joy as we await the dawn of a new day.

O Come O Come Emmanuel!



SUNDAY OF THE

Fourth Week of Advent

Mary, filled with the Holy Spirit, praises the Lord.
Let us join her in singing the praises of God.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION (Luke 1:46-55)

“My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,
for he has looked with favour on the lowly state of his servant.
Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed,
for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name;
indeed, his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly;
he has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty.

He has come to the aid of his child Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,
according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

PRAYER

O Lord, fill our hearts with praise and thanksgiving. May we sing your praises forevermore. Amen.

*O King of all nations and keystone of the Church:
come and save man, whom you formed from the dust!*

Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory Be



ANTIPHONS

(Joel 2:1) Blow ye the trumpet in Sion, for the day
of the Lord is near: behold He shall come to save us,
alleluia, alleluia!

(Agg. 2:8) Behold the Desired of all nations shall come:
and the house of the Lord shall be filled with glory,
alleluia.

(Is. 40:4) The crooked shall become straight,
and the rough ways plain: come, O Lord,
and tarry not, alleluia.

(Is. 9:6) The Lord shall come, go forth to meet Him,
saying: Great is His sovereignty,
and of His kingdom there shall be no end:
God the mighty, the Lord, the Prince of peace,
alleluia, alleluia.

(Wis. 18:15) Thine almighty Word, O Lord,
shall come forth from Thy royal throne, alleluia.

MONDAY OF THE

Fourth Week of Advent

Jesus cleanses the temple, demonstrating his authority over sin and death.

Let us be inspired by his courage and zeal to purify our hearts and minds.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION (John 2:13-22)

The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves and the money changers seated at their tables. Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, with the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. He told those who were selling the doves, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!" His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." The Jews then said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking of the temple of his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

PRAYER

O Lord, purify our hearts and minds. Help us to live holy and righteous lives. Amen.

O Emmanuel, our King and Giver of Law: come to save us, Lord our God!

Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory Be



As the Advent draws to a close, we find ourselves reflecting on the powerful actions of Jesus in the temple. With righteous indignation, Jesus cleanses the temple, driving out those who have profaned it. This act symbolises His desire to purify the hearts of His people and restore the true purpose of worship.

Jesus' actions at the temple serve as a powerful reminder for us as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ. They challenge us to examine our own hearts and to ensure that our worship is pure and sincere. Are we truly focused on God, or are we distracted by worldly concerns? Are we seeking to serve others, or are we primarily concerned with our own needs?

As we approach the end of Advent, let us renew our commitment to following Christ's example. May we strive to live lives of holiness and to worship God in spirit and truth. By doing so, we can truly prepare our hearts for the coming of the Lord and experience the joy and peace of Christmas.

As we celebrate the birth of Christ, let us remember the importance of living a life that reflects His teachings. May we be inspired by His example to love our neighbours, to forgive our enemies, and to seek justice for all. By doing so, we can truly honour the gift of God's love and grace.

IMAGE:

Christ Expelling the Money-Changers from the Temple
Nicolas Colombel, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

TUESDAY OF THE

Fourth Week of Advent

The birth of Jesus Christ is a sign of God's love and mercy.
Let us rejoice in the mystery of the Incarnation.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION (Luke 2:1-7)

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled. This was the first enrolment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be enrolled, each to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to be delivered.

She gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

PRAYER

O Lord, fill our hearts with joy as we celebrate the birth of your Son. May we be inspired by his humble birth and live lives of love and service. Amen.

Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory Be



St. Luke paints a picture of God's providence working through seemingly ordinary events. Mary and Joseph, a young couple filled with anticipation, journey to Bethlehem to fulfill a bureaucratic decree.

This seemingly mundane act becomes a crucial part of God's plan for salvation. The journey to Bethlehem, a city overflowing with people, foreshadows the universality of Christ's message.

The couple's journey to Bethlehem, a city bustling with activity and filled with travellers, mirrors the journey of faith that we undertake as we prepare for the coming of Christ. It is a journey marked by anticipation, hope, and a longing for the fulfillment of God's promises.

As this Advent season draws to a close, let us reflect on the mystery of the Incarnation and the humble beginnings of our Saviour. May we, like Mary and Joseph, be open to God's will and trust in His divine plan.

IMAGE:
Adoration of the Angels.
Charles-André van Loo, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons



St. Andrew Christmas Novena

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Hail, and blessed be the hour and moment at which the Son of God was born of a most pure Virgin at a stable at midnight in Bethlehem in the piercing cold. At that hour vouchsafe, I beseech Thee, to hear my prayers and grant my desires.

(Mention your intentions here)

Through Jesus Christ and His most Blessed Mother. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Traditionally, this prayer is prayed 15 times each day for the duration of the Novena.

Pope St. John XXIII Christmas Prayer

O sweet Child of Bethlehem, grant that we may share with all our hearts in this profound mystery of Christmas.

Put into the hearts of men and women this peace for which they sometimes seek so desperately and which you alone can give to them.

Help them to know one another better, and to live as brothers and sisters, children of the same Father. Reveal to them also your beauty, holiness and purity.

Awaken in their hearts love and gratitude for your infinite goodness.

Join them all together in your love. And give us your heavenly peace. Amen.

Prayer for Christmas

A Root shall come forth from the stock of Jesse
And a Flower shall rise out of his root!
And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him
the spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
the spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and of godliness.

The people that walked in darkness shall see a great light,
For a Child is born to us and a Son
is given to us. To Him all power shall be given.

His Name shall be: Wonderful One, Strong God, Eternal One, Prince of Peace.
He shall sit on the throne of David, And He will found a new Covenant which will last
for ever and ever. Amen.

Litany of St. Joseph

Lord, have mercy on us.
Christ, have mercy on us.
Lord, have mercy on us.
Christ, hear us. Christ, graciously hear us.

God the Father of Heaven,
Have mercy on us.
God the Son, Redeemer of the world,
Have mercy on us.
God the Holy Spirit,
Have mercy on us.
Holy Trinity, One God,
Have mercy on us.

Holy Mary, **pray for us.**
Saint Joseph, **pray for us.**
Illustrious son of David, **pray for us.**
Light of the patriarchs, **pray for us.**
Spouse of the Mother of God, **pray for us.**
Chaste guardian of the Virgin, **pray for us.**
Foster-father of the Son of God, **pray for us.**
Watchful defender of Christ, **pray for us.**
Head of the Holy Family, **pray for us.**
Joseph most just, **pray for us.**
Joseph most chaste, **pray for us.**
Joseph most prudent, **pray for us.**
Joseph most valiant, **pray for us.**
Joseph most obedient, **pray for us.**
Joseph most faithful, **pray for us.**
Mirror of patience, **pray for us.**
Lover of poverty, **pray for us.**
Model of workmen, **pray for us.**
Glory of domestic life, **pray for us.**
Guardian of virgins, **pray for us.**
Pillar of families, **pray for us.**
Solace of the afflicted, **pray for us.**
Hope of the sick, **pray for us.**
Patron of the dying, **pray for us.**
Terror of demons, **pray for us.**
Protector of Holy Church, **pray for us.**

Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world,
Spare us, O Lord.
Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world,
Graciously hear us, O Lord.
Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world,
Have mercy on us.

V. He made him the lord of His household,
R. And prince over all His possessions.

Let Us Pray.

O God, Who in Thine ineffable providence did choose Blessed Joseph to be the spouse of Thy most Holy Mother, grant that as we venerate him as our protector on earth, we may deserve to have him as our intercessor in Heaven, You Who lives and reigns forever and ever. **R.** Amen.



IMAGE: In the Arms of Joseph.
Artist: Simon Dewey

Creator of the Stars of Night

Latin: Creator alme siderum

Creator of the stars of night,
Thy people's everlasting light,
Jesu, Redeemer, save us all,
And hear Thy servants when they call.

Thou, grieving that the ancient curse
Should doom to death a universe,
Hast found the medicine, full of grace,
To save and heal a ruined race.

Thou cam'st, the Bridegroom of the bride,
As drew the world to evening-tide;
Proceeding from a virgin shrine,
The spotless victim all divine.

At whose dread name, majestic now,
All knees must bend, all hearts must bow;
And things celestial Thee shall own,
And things terrestrial, Lord alone.

O Thou whose coming is with dread
To judge and doom the quick and dead,
Preserve us, while we dwell below,
From every insult of the foe.

To God the Father, God the Son,
And God the Spirit, Three in One,
Laud, honour, might, and glory be
From age to age eternally.

1 Cónditor alme síderum,
æténa lux credéntium,
Christe, redémpctor ómnium,
exáudi preces súpplicum.

2 Qui cóndolens intéritu
mortis períre sæculum,
salvásti mundum lánguidum,
donans reis remédium.

3 Vergénte mundi vésperé,
uti sponsus de thálamó,
egréssus honestíssima
Víriginis matris cláusula.

4 Cuius forti poténtiæ
genu curvántur ómnia;
cæléstia, terréstria
nutu faténtur súbdita.

5 Te, Sancte, fide quæsumus,
ventúre iudex sæculi,
consérva nos in témpore
hostis a telo pérfidí.

6 Sit, Christe, rex píssime,
tibi Patríque glória
cum Spírítu Paráclito,
in sempitérna sæcula. Amen

Traditional 7th Century Hymn translated into English by J.M Neale in 1852



IMAGE: Artist Unknown
Source: Approved to God (online)



IMAGE: La Natividad
José Campeche, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Stay Connected!

Wishing you, your families and your loved ones,
many blessings throughout these Advent and Christmas Seasons.

Please join Holy Cross Parish in celebrating the
Solemnity of Christmas.

We look forward to seeing you at our churches.

For more information about Christmas Mass Times
and other celebrations, connect with us:

www.holycrossgranville.org.au

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