

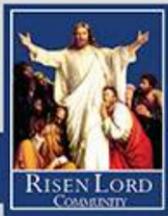
DECEMBER  
2021



# ON OUR KNEES IN HIS HANDS



*Merry Christmas*



DAILY READINGS & REFLECTIONS



# ON OUR KNEES IN HIS HANDS

DECEMBER  
2021

God never gives someone a gift  
they are not capable of receiving.  
If he gives us the gift of Christ-  
mas, it is because we all have the  
ability to understand and receive  
it.  
(Pope Francis)

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## Wednesday December 01

First Week of Advent

Isaiah  
25:6-10a

Psalm  
23:1-6

Matthew  
15:29-37

### Seeking the Kingdom.

Those who met Jesus were either attracted by his love and amazing power or they were deterred by his claim to holiness. Jesus' miracles confirmed the magnitude of his mercy. When Jesus confronted the disciples with the task of feeding four thousand people, they said: Where in this remote place can anyone get enough bread to feed them? The Israelites were challenged with the same dilemma when they fled Egypt and found themselves in a wilderness. Jesus himself provides bread for the hungry crowd who came to seek him. The Gospel says that all were content and they took up what was leftover. Are we content with God's provision? In the Gospel we see a sign and a symbol of what God always does. From the meal, the leftovers were more than seven times the amount they began with. When God gives, he gives until we are pleased; more than we need. He nurtures us with his word and with the bread of heaven. In the kingdom of heaven God will feast us at his dinner table. Do we hunger for God and his kingdom?

Prayer: Abba Father, may I desire your kingdom and find joy in your presence.  
Amen.

## Thursday December 02

First Week of Advent

Isaiah  
26:1-6

Psalm  
118:8-9,19-21,25-27

Matthew  
7:21,24-27

### Living fruitful lives.

There are millions of people who love soccer and dream of becoming a soccer star one day, however only a very few end up becoming good soccer players, many of us love the game, we spend most of our life talking about it, analysing, criticising, but never actually making an effort to play the game. Sometimes it is our own laziness, lack of self discipline, fear, ego and lack of commitment that can prevent us from actually walking the walk instead of talking the talk. Our spiritual life can also be the same. A servant of God, Takashi Nagai writes in his book, "If you make the vital decision to live humbly and lovingly you will live fruitful lives and be happy." All of us will have to render an account of our lives when we die. God will not be interested in who or what we were. Only in this: how did we live? That will be the sole matter for judgement. Let us remember that the Lord said: "Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven but only the one who does the will of my father in heaven."

Prayer: Abba Father, transform me to do your perfect will in this world, give me the strength to persevere till the end. Amen.

## Friday December 03

Solemnity of St. Francis Xavier

Jeremiah  
1:4-8

Psalm  
17:1-5.15.17

2 Corinthians  
4:7-15

Luke  
10:1-16

Call to ministry.

Today we celebrate the Solemnity of St Francis Xavier, one of the greatest Christian missionaries. His ministry of teaching and preaching has extended from India to Japan. He was a co-founder of the Jesuits and was a companion of St. Ignatius of Loyola. Francis Xavier was one of the first Jesuits who took vows of poverty and chastity. He led an extensive mission into Asia during the time of the Portuguese empire and was influential in evangelization work, most notably in India. Then he continued to Southeast Asia: Japan and China. While he was waiting to enter mainland China as an Apostolic nuncio on behalf of the Portuguese prisoners, he died of fever at the age of 46 on an island 14 km away from the southern coast of mainland China. This is a reminder that we are called from our birth to carry out good works as priests, prophets, lay people to evangelize wherever the Lord has commissioned us. The promise He has given is the spirit of faith in accordance with the scriptures.

Prayer: Abba Father, as your grace extends to more people, may it increase thanksgiving to your glory. Amen.

## Saturday December 04

First Week of Advent

Isaiah  
30:19-21,23-26

Psalm  
147:1-6

Matthew  
9:35--10:1,5-8

The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.

The coming of Jesus Christ is proclaimed as a new kingdom by Prophet Isaiah, one in which there is joy, peace, love, and healing of all wounds. We plead for the coming of the son of God when in fact he has already come. Caught up in the ceaseless activity and demands of this world we have lost him. We never cease needing him and his healing compassionate touch. Today as the world faces the challenge of complete helplessness in a situation where there is so much chaos with the Pandemic taking over and people's seemingly loss of control on what we thought we had, gives us an opportunity to relook at their lives. This season of Advent is a time to prepare, for the Word to be made flesh in our hearts that he will truly be God with us. The Gospel tells us at the sight of the crowds Jesus' heart was moved with pity. This pity is everlasting and just as effective now as it was thousands of years ago. The psalmist reiterates that God, the Lord of the planets and stars will continue healing the broken hearted till time itself ends.

Prayer: Abba Father, we welcome you into our hearts and may the Word be made flesh in us. Amen.

## Sunday December 05

Second Sunday of Advent

Baruch  
5:1-9

Psalms  
126:1-6

Philippians  
1:4-6, 8-11

Luke  
3:1-6

Turn away from your sins.

During the season of Advent, the Church invites us to prepare ourselves for the birth of Christ. Many of us begin our Christmas preparations by cleaning our houses, getting out our Christmas trees and pulling out boxes of decorations in preparation for the celebration of Christmas.

Externally as we do these things, there are many things we can do internally to prepare for Christmas and the Lord's birth in our hearts. In the first reading, the Prophet Baruch tells us how we can begin our preparations: "Jerusalem, take off the clothes you have worn in your mourning and distress, and put on the eternal splendour of God's glory." The Lord is inviting us to come to Him in repentance. Instead of wallowing in our self-pity and focusing on the sin or sorrow that took us away from God throughout the year, the Lord is inviting us to give up our mourning and replace it with the eternal splendour of His glory. The Lord is calling us to come to Him in repentance and to receive His mercy and love. The Catholic Church has given us the Sacrament of Reconciliation to help us find our way back to God.

Today's Gospel reading speaks about John the Baptist calling the people to repent for their sins. In Luke 3:3 John calls out, "Turn away from your sins and be baptized, and God will forgive your sins." John is saying what we must do is turn to God in repentance because He is waiting to forgive our sins and bring us closer to Him. Pope Francis once said, "The Lord never tires of forgiveness. It is we who tire of asking His forgiveness because He never tires of forgiving." God never tires of forgiving our sins. No matter how many times we fall into sin, we can go to the Lord, through the Sacrament of Reconciliation and receive His forgiveness and love.

The Second Reading from St. Paul's letter to the Philippians explains how this gift of reconciliation changes our lives. Philippians 1:6 says, "I am sure that God, who began this good work in you, will carry it on until it is finished on the Day of Christ Jesus." When we come to God with the ugliness of our lives, He not only forgives our sins, but with every confession we do, He shapes us into the image of Himself. He carries out this good work until the end of our lives. He is never finished with us. This is good news for us because it means we can come to Him in confession as many times as we like, receive His forgiveness and each time come closer to being more like Him.

Prayer: Abba Father, I pray that with each confession, I may come closer to becoming more like You. Amen.

## Monday December 06

Second Week of Advent

Isaiah  
35:1-10

Psalm  
85:9-14

Luke  
5:17-26

Our God will come to save us!

Today's First Reading is a prophecy of the future reign of God, what beautiful imagery is used to communicate the true beauty of God's kingdom. During this season of Advent, we often only prepare to celebrate Jesus' birth in Bethlehem. But the Church invites us to prepare for His second coming as well. Therefore it is important that we prepare our hearts for Jesus' return in glory. As we respond in the Responsorial Psalm: Our God will come to save us. He will not condemn us. In today's Gospel proclamation we see a miracle that is performed because of the faith of friends. It is not the paralytic's faith that moved Jesus, but the faith of his friends, who lowered him into the house that Jesus was in. Are we such friends? Do we help others to receive healing? Or do we keep our spiritual life selfishly? In this season of grace, let us resolve to become true friends to those around us, thereby contributing to make the Kingdom of God a reality in our midst.

Prayer: Abba Father, may I become a true friend to others. Amen.

## Tuesday December 07

Memorial of St. Ambrose, Bishop and Doctor of the Church

Isaiah  
40:1-11

Psalm  
96:1-3,10-13

Matthew  
18:12-14

"I have wondered far away from God, now I'm coming home"

Today's Parable awakens us to the Lord's concern for those who have gone astray. He leaves everyone else and goes after that one person. Probably that person has tremendous potential in the Lord's eyes, or maybe the Lord knows what terrible experiences they have gone through. Others who confine themselves to armchair or comfortable Christianity lose out. Parishes and Christian communities should constantly reach out to the unchurched and marginalized, instead of just working with those comfortable church goers. One having tasted the bitter cup of alienation, uncertainty and bondage to sin, wants to get out of it. Lessons are learnt when a child told to not touch the hot kettle, but due to an exploratory and disobedient spirit, is tempted to do so, they learn through experience never to touch it again. Obedience is learnt the hard way. Once learnt, others benefit too.

Prayer: Abba Father, having experienced the terrible effects of disobedience, may I warn others too, of its dangers. Amen.

## Wednesday October 08

Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Genesis  
3:9-15,20

Psalm  
98:1-4

Ephesians  
1:3-6,11-12

Luke  
1:26-38

### The example of Mary.

Today is the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. What does it mean by the Immaculate Conception? It means that Mary was conceived without the stain of original sin. This is the teaching of the Catholic Church. It was in the year 1854 that Pope Pius IX declared the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception. There are many arguments regarding the Dogmatic Teachings of the Catholic Church. However when we read the Sacred Scriptures we realize the truth that the Heavenly Father chose the Blessed Mother to be the Mother of His only begotten Son; Christ Jesus. The Gospel according to St. John explained the "Word" became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth (Jn1:14) and today's Gospel proclamation said, "Hail, full of grace" (Lk 1:28). Both Mother and Son were called "Full of Grace". Therefore two persons without original sin are presented by the Sacred Scripture as full of God's Grace.

Prayer: Abba Father, grant us the grace to imitate the Blessed Mother in obeying your Word. Amen.

## Thursday December 09

Second Week of Advent

Isaiah  
41:13-20

Luke  
145:1,9-13

Matthew  
11:11-15

### Is God getting better?

On her grandpa's lap a little girl asks, "Did God make you, Pop?" "Yep! He did long ago". She asks again, "And did He make me too?" "Yep! He did recently". Then the girl says, "Well, God is getting better at it, isn't He? In the first reading, God promises to make things better for His exiled people. He will make the weak strong, provide the essentials for life: water, food and herb trees. As we know, no matter how faithfully we serve God and his Kingdom, things do not get better but rather worse: more evil than good, destruction than restoration. Is God really getting better? John the Baptist was the forerunner of Jesus, concluding the old time and the Lord beginning the new era of the Kingdom. Though John was the greatest among the old time servants, he was beheaded. Our service for the Kingdom in confronting the growing evil, no matter what it costs, ultimately makes us greater in the Kingdom of heaven. God is getting better, isn't He?"

Prayer: Abba Father, let your hand be on me today. Amen.

## Friday December 10

Second Week of Advent

Isaiah  
48:17-19

Psalms  
1:1-4,6

Matthew  
11:16-19

Those who follow the Lord, will have the light of life.

The unfathomable love of God continues to amaze us generation after generation. The messages or prophecies were given to the hopeless nation while they were still in exile. God spoke through the prophet and urged the people to hearken to the commandments and that they would be saved. The promises of God are not limited to one generation. These unceasing promises will be applied to us only if we accept them and do what God tells us to do. If we are open to accepting and receiving them, we will experience God's love. We often witness situations of God's love manifested to us in a tangible manner. In unknown ways we experience the love of God, imagine how beautiful life could be when we are open to the love of God. The Psalmist beautifully depicted this experience to a tree planted near a stream of water. When we are connected to our Creator and when our life on earth ends, our relationship with Him will continue to eternity.

Prayer: Abba Father, may Your Holy Spirit cause us to turn from the wisdom of the world and accept Your divine wisdom. Amen.

## Saturday December 11

Second Week of Advent

Sirach  
48:1-4,9-11

Psalms  
80:2-3,15-16,18-19

Matthew  
17:9-13

Can we recognize Jesus?

How sensitive are we to the signs and voice of the Holy Spirit? If we put ourselves in the time of Jesus, how would we react to the calling of John the Baptist and the call to repentance? Would we pause and take stock of our lives and how we are leading it? Or would we dismiss this calling and continue walking in the flesh? The Jews were so rigid in following the law that the Spirit did not have a chance to work in them, for them to realize that something great was unfolding right in front of their eyes. Jesus is calling us to a life in the Spirit, a life that is so led by the word of God that His Spirit dwelling in us can increase and our own desires can decrease. That same Spirit can open our eyes to SEE Jesus in our brothers and sisters in need, and respond accordingly. We can joyfully say "YES LORD!" when he asks us: "When I was hungry you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, a stranger and you invited me in..."

Prayer: Abba Father, guide me to be sensitive to your voice and leading in my life. Amen.

## Sunday December 12

Third Sunday of Advent

Zephaniah  
3:14-18

Isaiah  
12:2-6

Philippians  
4:4-7

Luke  
3:10-18

The Lord your God is with you.

“The Lord, your God is with you” – what an amazing promise. The Lord God, the Mighty Warrior who saves – He is with us! Emmanuel – God with us. We do not have to run around looking for Him. We do not have to beg and plead for His Presence. We do not have to perform endlessly in the hope that He will come and stay a while with us. Instead He promises us that He is already with us.

Not only is He with us but He takes great delight in us! This seems almost too good to be true but that does not reduce the truth of the statement. The Lord takes great delight in us! We have the capacity to bring delight into His heart. We run around trying to please those in power over us. We try our best to live a life that at least seems perfect on the surface in an attempt to gain the approval of those around us. But how utterly amazing is it that we, as we are, can bring delight to the most powerful, holy, beautiful Being in the entire universe? He takes delight in us!

The Lord promises that He will quieten us with His love. When we are anxious, when we are overwhelmed, when the frustration builds up and threatens to burst out of us – He promises that His love will quieten us. I have a toddler who recently went through the developmental stage of tantrums and overwhelming emotions – this promise reassured me greatly. That the Lord can come alongside her and quieten her with His love. And even as I declare it over her, I hear Him promising the same great promise to me. That no matter what I face, He can quieten me, settle me and reassure me with His love. And He further goes on to say that He rejoices over us with singing. His joy about us is so great that He bursts into songs over us!

His peace is able to keep our hearts and minds safe in Christ Jesus. Different translations state that His peace will guard our minds and our hearts. The peace of God is active, it is protective and it is also offensive to the enemy. When the finances don't add up, when our health is suddenly under attack, when the heartbreak seems almost too much to bear and the betrayal is too deep – His peace is able to protect us. It wraps around our hearts and our minds. His peace is able to keep our hearts from being offended, from being calloused, from being overwhelmed and from being turned to stone. His peace covers our mind like a wrap around shield constantly bringing every thought captive to Christ so that nothing can overwhelm or break us down. His peace is powerful, protective and precious. It surpasses our understanding so we might as well stop trying to understand it and simply give in and rest in it.

Prayer: Abba Father, embrace me deeper with Your peace and allow Your peace to mark my day. Amen.

## Monday December 13

Memorial of Saint Lucy, Virgin and Martyr

Numbers  
24:2-7,15-17

Psalm  
25:4-9

Matthew  
21:23-27

Being an authentic Christian.

In today's Gospel reading the Pharisees demanded to know where Jesus got his authority from. If Jesus said his authority came from God, they would accuse him of blasphemy. If he said that he was acting on his own authority, the crowds would be convinced that the Pharisees had the greater authority. But Jesus answered them with a seemingly unrelated question that exposed their real motives. They did not really want an answer to their question; they only wanted to trap him. Jesus showed that the Pharisees wanted the truth only if it supported their own views and causes. As I went into prayer, I was a little concerned about some work I had to do with house maintenance. But Jesus helped me in taking the right decisions. I realized that Jesus is more interested in our inner motives, than our external displays and masks. Since he can see through our hearts, it is no use trying to hide anything from him.

Prayer: Abba Father, may I be authentic in your sight. Amen.

## Tuesday December 14

Memorial of Saint John of the Cross, Priest and Doctor of the Church

Zephaniah  
3:1-2,9-13

Psalm  
34:2-3,6-7,17-19,23

Matthew  
21:28-32

How do we respond to our calling?

Today's gospel proclamation talks about a simple parable, but it speaks volumes about our faith. Both sons in the parable were given the same instructions and both of them gave quite contrasting answers. The first one refused at the beginning, many of us have been like this son at some point in our lives. We have refused the call of God in our lives. I myself have done this when I knew the Lord calling me to choose teaching as my profession. But I found myself rejecting the idea for many years before I finally accepted the will of the Father. The second son on the other hand accepts the call but doesn't do anything about it. This happens to most of us Christians. We seem like we accept the call in our lives and are diligently in church every week, but our hearts have not changed. We still live in the flesh not heeding to the call. Are we ready to answer the call of our Lord today?

Prayer: Abba Father, help me to hear your voice and heed your call in my life. Amen.

## Wednesday December 15

Third Week of Advent

Isaiah  
45:6-8,18,21-25

Psalm  
85:9-14

Luke  
7:18-23

Children of God.

“Are you the one who is to come or should we look for another?” This question underlies some of our daily actions. When we choose to be worried or discouraged, we imply that the Lord Jesus has not won our battles. We act in doubt, fear and unbelief. Today we have a beautiful opportunity to re-decide our actions and thoughts. If we are Christians, let us strive to give the rightful place to Jesus in our lives. As Isaiah says in the first reading, the Lord alone forms everything. All our thoughts and feelings are known to him. Yet in our weakness sometimes we try to pretend in God’s presence. We try to use lengthy scripture quotations as if to teach God. We are children of God, and therefore let us be simple and honest before him. Let us try to become authentic disciples this Season of Advent. As we prepare for the second coming of Jesus, let us remember that each new day is a potential day of the Lord’s second coming. Are we ready? Or will we keep postponing? Let us hope that we will not be too late.

Prayer: Abba Father, I eagerly wait for the Second Coming of your Son. Amen.

## Thursday December 16

Third Week of Advent

Isaiah  
54:1-10

Psalm  
30:2,4-6,11-13

Luke  
7:24-30

True greatness in the Kingdom of God.

Jesus is fully human and fully divine. No one knows the prerequisites for what it takes to be part of his Kingdom than Him. In today’s Gospel, Jesus is setting some high standards for us by taking John the Baptist as an example. John was well known among the people for being a righteous man who lived a spiritual life while chosen to be the one who prepares the way for Jesus. Yet Jesus says the least person in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John the Baptist, logically suggesting that he is not part of the kingdom. In the passage Jesus is not making a point about John so much as he is making a point about the significance of being included in the Kingdom of heaven. It is not a matter of what John the Baptist lacked or that made the other disciples great. Greatness or smallness of our lives from an earthly view has no bearing on our status in the Kingdom. All these show us that any earthly rankings in honour are utterly irrelevant when it comes to our membership in the Kingdom.

Prayer: Abba Father, continue to guide us to be part of your plan for each of us so we can inherit the Kingdom as your sons and daughters. Amen.

## Friday December 17

Jesus is the Wisdom of God!

Third Week of Advent

Genesis  
49:2,8-10

Psalm  
72:1-4,7-8,17

Matthew  
1:1-17

We are loved beyond measure.

We believe with all our hearts that Jesus, the son of God, assumed the human form and came to this earth for us, and today's Gospel gives witness to the lineage that Jesus in his human form became part of. Much to our surprise, we see that this long line of ancestry is far from perfect and is speckled with people of all sorts: Prophets, kings, patriarchs, men and women of faith, and also gentiles, idol worshippers, adulterers, murderers and sinners of all kinds. There are even people who we know nothing about. Yet, to this family was born the Messiah who could have chosen a perfect ancestry made up of people of impeccable characteristics. This is cause enough for our greatest joy. For us who are burdened with a troubled past, who are guilty of unrighteous living, who are struggling to remain faithful through times of trial, whose heads are bowed down in guilt and shame. Our Lord is telling us He is more than pleased to welcome us into His own family.

Prayer: Come Lord Jesus, lead us into your Kingdom. Amen.

## Saturday December 18

Jesus is the Leader of the House of Israel!

Third Week of Advent

Jeremiah  
23:5-8

Psalm  
72:1-2,12-13,18-19

Matthew  
1:18-25

Remain open to God's voice.

Today's Gospel reading speaks of the dream of St. Joseph who had a message from the angel of the Lord. Just like Mother Mary encountered angel Gabriel at the annunciation, St. Joseph too receives a message. This message changes the decision he had taken before, for he had planned to quietly divorce her. St. Joseph being an upright man had a human solution to the problem, yet endowed by the Spirit of God, he had the courage to do the contradicting act of taking Mary as his wife. This decision paved the way for the salvation of humanity. Today, the decisions we take in our flesh can be opposite to the actions we are called to do in the Spirit. Do we hear and obey the leading of the Lord? Are we open enough to accept the will of God as St. Joseph did? St. Joseph's conviction about the plan of God saved the world from sin. Can our faith convictions bring healing and hope to the world in darkness?

Prayer: Come Lord Jesus, save us in your love. Amen.

Micah  
5:1-4Psalm  
80:2-3,15-19Hebrews  
10:5-10Luke  
1:39-45**The Lord fills the hungry with good things.**

We are on the doorstep of the great Feast of Nativity, Christmas! On this last Sunday of Advent, the Church invites us to a deep truth in the Kingdom of God, namely that the Kingdom belongs to little children. (cf. Luke 18:16).

In the First Reading, the prophet speaks the heart of God. The established ruler is being replaced by the eternal ruler who comes from outside of the expected norm of the world. He will be a shepherd, an essential role for everyone in the Kingdom of God, acting in authority. The shepherding is to be done in the strength of the Lord, not by self effort.

The Gospel proclamation brings out the best part of this message. It reveals how the "little flock" or insignificant people of that society were the recipients of a greatly profound moment of the history of our salvation. Mary, the humble virgin, who had just become the Mother of the Saviour of the world, hurries to share the joy of her elderly cousin Elizabeth, of whose supernatural pregnancy she had just learnt. Women and children were considered weak, they were to listen and not speak out. Yet they were specially chosen to be the recipients and proclaimers of heaven's joy. The Blessed Mother's courage and servant heart, to take on a long journey at a very sensitive time of her own life as the bearer of God's Son, teaches us a valuable lesson. The urgency with which she set out to serve her cousin, resulted in a prophecy been fulfilled: the angel's words to Zechariah "he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born." (Luke 1:15) True to those words, the baby in Elizabeth's womb leaped at the greeting of the Bearer of the Son of God, as He met in his spirit the Lord he was meant to go before! Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke words that are repeated each time we pray the Rosary. All this happened because two women submitted to God's creative plan even when they did not understand. They received the Kingdom as little children, wholeheartedly and joyfully.

The Second Reading affirms the essentiality of submitting to God's will. No amount of charity or knowledge would please our Heavenly Father as the joyful submission to His will. And He has made us righteous by faith in His Son, so that we can call Him, Abba! Heaven rejoices at the birth of countless sons and daughters of God through the incarnation of the Son of God! Let us join heaven in the true spirit of Christmas with childlike excitement.

Prayer: Come Lord Jesus, we wait with great hope. Amen.

## Monday December 20

Jesus is the Key of David

Fourth Week of Advent

Isaiah  
7:10-14

Psalm  
24:1-6

Luke  
1:26-38

You are the potter, we are the clay.

“Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.” These words are utterly self-giving, the creature submitting completely at the feet of her Master and Creator, accepting that her destiny lies in the hand of her Lord. These words, spoken by Mother Mary, uniquely show the beauty of her life, her willingness to be molded like clay in every situation and circumstance. Ultimately God raises her to be the Queen of heaven. As I look at my own life, there have been times when I have submitted willingly in God’s hands to be molded by him, as he saw fit, and I have seen the abundant graces he has poured upon those situations. But there have also been other circumstances where I have not been so willing to obey him, and have suffered the consequences of this disobedience. As our hearts yearn in this season of advent for “Emmanuel”, for God with us, let us cry out to God for his grace to be more malleable in his hands.

Prayer: Come Lord Jesus, and free us from the darkness of sin. Amen.

## Tuesday December 21

Jesus is the Radiant Dawn

Fourth Week of Advent

Song of Songs  
2:8-14

Psalm  
33:2-3,11-12,20-21

Luke  
1:39-45

Obedience: key to fulfilling the plans of God for humanity.

Today’s Gospel proclamation reminds me of my own climb up the hill in Judea where Mary’s cousin Elizabeth lived. It was a steep climb even in the modern time. We cannot imagine how difficult the terrain would have been 2000 years ago to reach up that hill. Mother Mary was obedient to the leading to visit her cousin who was with child when she herself was with child. Would we do the same if we were prompted to go serve in the same situation? How hard it is for us to say yes to serve where our leadings are less challenging than that of the Blessed Mother, at that time? Let us ponder on this and draw strength and courage from Mary never to say ‘No’ to the leading of the Lord and follow through in obedience. Today we commemorate St. Peter Canisius, who believed in the importance of understanding the Catholic faith. Let us read a portion of the Catechism of the Catholic Church everyday to strengthen our Catholic foundation.

Prayer: Come Lord Jesus, and enlighten our lives. Amen.

## Wednesday December 22

Jesus is King of nations

Fourth Week of Advent

1 Samuel  
1:24-28

1 Samuel  
2:1,4-8

Luke  
1:46-56

### Divine Reversals.

In the first reading Hannah fulfills a promise made to God as she had turned to God in deep distress and years back God had answered her. In today's Gospel proclamation also we see such a divine reversal in the life of the Blessed Mother. Mary sings a song of Praise, echoing Hannah's song over Samuel's birth (1 Samuel 2). Both women lowly in spirit and perhaps undergone pain and hardships were given a reversal of circumstances in their lives. We may be in a valley waiting endlessly on God. For those who love God the valley is a blessed place. God can use our 'waiting rooms' for His glory, just as God was waiting with Hannah, bringing her around, void of the echoes of the world, to where her heart and things were completely towards Him, to which He purposed for them. "The eyes of the Lord go to and fro throughout the entire earth to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are completely towards Him." (2 Chronicles 16:9).

Prayer: Come Lord Jesus, save us from our sinfulness. Amen.

## Thursday December 23

Jesus is Emmanuel

Fourth Week of Advent

Malachi  
3:1-4,23-24

Psalm  
25:4-5,8-10,14

Luke  
1:57-66

### Are we rockstars?

Today we are reminded of our mission through the readings about the calling of St John the Baptist. He was called for a particular mission which he obeyed fully. When looking at his mission, we could think that the chances of been misled were possible as he too had to deal with a lot of love from people which can tempt someone in power. However, he was faithful to transfer the attention he was getting to the Messiah, at the right time and in the right way. St. John the Baptist never tried to steal the limelight from what mattered the most. In his mission and life, he valued his calling. He did not waver at any point. Are we similar in our calling? As we prepare for the coming of our Savior, it is the best time to ponder if we are living according to the calling we have received and how faithful we are. Do we draw attention to our Savior through our lives or are we still our own rock star desiring people's love and attention?

Prayer: Come Lord Jesus, we need you. Amen.

**I am the house of God.**

In the Old Testament, the Ark of the Covenant was moved from place to place in a tent, until it was taken to Jerusalem and had a temple built around it, with guards to protect the ark. This temple, was the House of God. In the New Testament, the temple of God, was sent among us in the person of Jesus. In the First Reading it says, "Your house and Your kingdom shall endure forever". Jesus has come to reign in us forever. Now the house of God is moving in our midst and is transforming our lives making us His temples. As we prepare for Christmas let us not forget to prepare our hearts for His dwelling. Through the Death and Resurrection of Jesus and through our baptism, we have received an extension of being a temple of the Holy Spirit and the House of God. Let us prepare our hearts and our lives to celebrate the birth of Jesus, with whom we now share our heavenly identities as sons and daughters of God.

Prayer: Come Lord Jesus, remain in us. Amen.

**READINGS FOR CHRISTMAS MASSES****Vigil Mass**

Isaiah 62:1-5

Psalm 89:4-5,16-17,27,29

Acts 13:16-17,22-25

Matthew 1:1-25

**Mass at Dawn**

Isaiah 62:11-12

Psalm 97:1,6,11-12

Titus 3:4-7

Luke 2: 15-20

**Mass during the Night (Midnight Mass) - See the next page.**

**Mass during the day**

Isaiah 52:7-10

Psalm 98:1-6

Hebrews 1:1-6

John 1:1-18

**Celebrate his birth within you!**

On the Birthday of our Lord Jesus, we are called to celebrate and contemplate on who He is to us.

My sister has been fascinated with our family history and has dug up various nuggets of information regarding our ancestors many of whom were soldiers in the British India army. The study is like shining a torch down three centuries and the details of their physical attributes, family and life story are fascinating. In the early 1800s one of them in his late teens, set sail on a ship as an enthusiastic rope maker and landed in India.

The point is, though I am still getting to know details of his life story, even his life is well known to our Lord and Saviour Jesus because the word tells that "In the beginning was the word. And the Word was with God and the Word was God... all things were made through Him." John 1: 1-2. While we are struggling to uncover details of our ancestry and history, there was one who made each of our ancestors and was the source of life of them all.

Just imagine, the Lord looking at each of the people who preceded you, right down to your time. He knows their weakness and strengths, their triumphs and failures, the baggage they have passed on to us and what we will be passing on to our children. The word says - without Him nothing came to be. If you are fascinated with the giants of the ocean, the rock formations, the glaciers, the deep sea treasures, the volcanoes - all of them came into being through the word of our Lord Jesus. And yet on this day, He who made everything chooses to visit us in the form of a lowly poor child, born into simplicity and in the most humble of circumstances. Now this child had a mission for us - to show us the Father's love and then demonstrate that love by giving His own life for us.

While historically our Lord Jesus was born on this earth more than 2000 years ago, spiritually, He who did the impossible, is capable of yet another miracle. In the Spirit, on this beautiful day, he can be born within our hearts. For what reason? That we may carry His presence as we journey through life and give the Father's love to those we may meet. Just as our Lord was a conduit of the Father's love, we are handed over the baton to give the Father's love to people. When we accept this mission, He will do the supernatural. That is why, Christmas is the festival of giving. Let us choose to carry the presence of Jesus in our hearts and gift Him to others.

Prayer: Abba Father, your son Jesus is truly present within me and I choose to give him to people around me with your grace and power. Amen.

## Sunday December 26

Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

Sirach  
3:2-6,12-14

Psalms  
128:1-5

Colossians  
3:12-21

Luke  
2:41-52

Family...fashioned by God in his love!

In most sci-fi movies, the opponents have laser guns with shafts of light that attack each other and cause specific damage. We too are engaged in a Spiritual battle from the time we enter the world. Many years ago it was predicted that the enemy had one specific target in mind and that has been well revealed: the family unit. God who is one in three, the Father, Son and Spirit have lived in harmony from the creation of the world and that love was meant to be reflected in the nuclear family. Two people pledging to come together in love and from that love, children emerging to be nurtured by the parents. As the future unfolds, the children who were loved and cared for are given the opportunity to give back the love they received from their parents while themselves branching out and beginning their own families. So the family is the God ordained circle of life.

This unit of love and cradle of values has been under lethal attack from the enemy who is all out to destroy the very concept of family life. Through various political movements it has become difficult to maintain a balanced upbringing which makes a child into a holistically formed human being.

Today we celebrate the Holy Family; St. Joseph, the Blessed Mother and the child Jesus. This family came from humble circumstances and was firmly grounded. It was an atmosphere of love, learning and understanding. Our Lord Jesus was with this extended family as he travelled to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. He was with his cousins and must have been having a time of his life and they all walked together rejoicing and enjoying. It was on their return that our Lord went missing from the group and the search for the child Jesus began. Here the parents' love emerged as they were desperate to find our Lord and returned even after having completed a day's journey from Jerusalem.

We are called to have such love, forgiveness and bonds in our families. 1 John 3:1 says, "See what love the Father has for us that we are called children of God and we really are." We try many things to keep our family together and one such thing is prayer. A family that prays together stays together. Saying the rosary meaningfully and spending time together in prayer can unite, bond and heal a family from the flaming darts of the enemy. Let us seek the intercession of the Blessed Mother to keep our families together, protected and safe.

Prayer: Abba Father, we have been adopted into your family and loved by you. May the Holy Spirit overshadow us and unite us in love. Amen.

## Monday December 27

Feast of Saint John, Apostle and Evangelist

1 John  
1:1-4

Psalm  
97:1-2,5-6,11-12

John  
20:1-8

Actions over words.

In the Octave of Christmas we celebrate the feast of the beloved apostle St John. In contrast to the Spirit of Christmas, the Gospel proclamation is about the Resurrection of Christ. It reminds us that we too are to be eager to witness to the great miracles that the Lord performs in our midst. Sometimes we expect huge miracles but fail to see the seemingly smaller miracles. How the Lord has kept us safe through the Pandemic, all of us are affected by it, but we have the spiritual courage to fight the good fight in faith. Christmas is not about Santa Claus and gifts, in these days following that great celebration, can we take some time to share the Good News with some of our neighbors? It does not mean preaching to them, but living a truly Christian way of life, which will inspire them to find out about Christ. Can we spend a few minutes and visit an estranged relative? Can we pick up the phone and call a long forgotten friend? Let us become channels for God's grace to flow into others' lives this Christmas.

Prayer: Abba Father, may my actions speak louder than words. Amen.

## Tuesday December 28

Feast of the Holy Innocents, Martyrs

1 John  
1:5--2:2

Psalm  
124:2-8

Matthew  
2:13-18

He is light and there is no darkness in him.

In the first reading, we can see how we are qualified to be in the light. It explains that we are all sinners, who can repent and be washed in the blood of Jesus. It is irrelevant what type of sinner we are. One can be a liar, prideful, or even self-righteous, we all have fallen short of the glory of God. How can we be qualified? As it says the wages of sin is death. But the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ alone. We are qualified not through human endeavor, it is only through his grace that we can stand in the light, only through the blood of the lamb. He qualifies us. He has brought us the privilege to escape from the hunter's trap and break free. We are freely given the opportunity to walk in his path, in the light, what we must do is repent. Always have communion with him and have an intimate relationship, this will create an open heaven. Let us desire to do the will of God, walk in his light, and live a life pleasing to him.

Prayer: Abba Father, may we walk in the light of Christ. Amen.

## Wednesday December 29

5th Day in the Octave of Christmas

1 John  
2:3-11

Psalm  
96:1-6

Luke  
2:22-35

A sword shall pierce your own soul.

A few friends have given birth recently, I have seen the love in their eyes for their beloved children. Many of them have subsequently had their babies baptized. Today's Gospel proclamation is about the Presentation of Jesus in the temple. With great love and commitment the blessed Mother bore Jesus in her womb. Having held such a great responsibility she was rightfully given to us as our Mother, as Jesus was dying on the Cross. As Simeon prophesied: Mary's heart was pierced as she witnessed the suffering of Jesus. Even today she is saddened by those who reject her love and maternal protection. Let us try to grow in appreciation for the role of motherhood. Not just our mothers but also our heavenly Mother Mary. Let us seek to imitate her example of total dependence on God. Even when she received a difficult message, she held on to the Lord and pondered on it in her heart. She did not run away from challenges. Let us be like Mary.

Prayer: Abba Father, may I hold onto you, even when I am wounded by others.  
Amen.

## Thursday December 30

6th Day in the Octave of Christmas

1 John  
2:12-17

Psalm  
96:7-10

Luke  
2:36-40

Choice is ours.

As children of the Holy One, we are spiritual beings living in physical temples that we call bodies. Through the Holy Spirit, we are able to share in the vision of God. Anna the prophetess beautifully models a life lived in the supernatural. She saw things that others could not; she saw the infant Jesus and recognised Him as the Messiah. Looking at the little baby, she recognised His holy destiny and divine identity and then took it upon herself to prophesy and declare what she saw in her spirit into the world. Anna's decision to live supernaturally, allowed her to accomplish the purpose of revealing who Jesus is through her surrendered life. Is this not what we are all called to do? Anna challenges us to be the true kingdom workers we are called to be; to help create heaven on earth by being bold and assertive in the Spirit. We get to make the supernatural our reality. We have a choice, like Anna, to see with God's vision, speak with His wisdom, and live in His Kingdom. "Whoever does the will of God remains forever".

Prayer: Abba Father, we surrender our reality for Yours. Amen.

## Friday December 31

7th Day in the Octave of Christmas

1 John  
2:18-21

Psalm  
96:1-2,11-13

John  
1:1-18

Discernment, faith and hope.

The first reading reminds us of the presence of evil in our world and that our anointing makes us aware of that. The psalm is a joyous celebration of our God who brings justice and truth to the world. The Gospel acclamation tells us of God's gift to us of a filial relationship to those who accept Our Lord Jesus Christ as His Son. The Gospel proclamation is a summary of our faith – the divine creation of the world; the heralding of the coming of Jesus as the true light by the testimony of John the Baptist; the advent of Jesus and, despite His glorious and miraculous works, rejection by His own people; His teaching that grace and truth went far beyond a literal interpretation of the law of Moses; and His gift to us of insights into the nature of God, whom no one but Jesus has seen; and whose message He professed during His Ministry on earth; and with Whom He remains for eternity. Let us spend this day in thanksgiving for the year 2021. Let us be grateful for both the positive and negative events of this year.

Prayer: Abba Father, send your Spirit into our hearts to help us to discern good from evil by remembering the teachings of Your Son. Amen.

## Prayer of Thanksgiving for 2021

Abba Father, look kindly on us and receive our heartfelt gratitude on the last day of the year 2021.

Thank you for all the graces and blessings you have bestowed upon us, both spiritual and material. We thank you for sustaining us, providing for us in this time of Pandemic. We thank you for good health and for the company of our family and friends.

We thank you for the Risen Lord Community through which you have spoken to us. Draw us deeper into the experience of your love.

Lord Jesus, thank you for being with us through the Eucharist and the Divine Word.

Holy Spirit thank you for guiding us through the struggles of 2021. Thank you for helping us to take the right decisions which have brought us to this day.

As we stand on the threshold of 2022, we do not know what will happen, but one thing we are sure of, that you Lord will guide us and protect us. Amen.

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# Thank You



We thank you for subscribing to and reading the “**On Our Knees**” magazines throughout this year. We are confident that the Lord has spoken to you through these scripture reflections, specially during the tough times of this year. May he continue to speak to you throughout the next year as well. May you be inspired by the coming editions of the **On Our Knees** in 2022.

**WE WISH YOU A SAFE AND PEACEFUL YEAR AHEAD.**

**GOD BLESS YOU!**

