

# PRAYER FOR LIVING

DAILY REFLECTIONS FOR ADVENT AND  
CHRISTMAS FOR LITURGICAL YEAR B



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Prayer for Living  
Daily Reflections for  
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**First Sunday of Advent, 29th November.  
Isaiah 63: 16b-17, 19b; 64: 2-7; 1 Corinthians 1:  
3-9; Mark 13: 33-37**

Watch!

The key word in today's gospel is "watch", but what are we to watch for? On this first day of Advent, Jesus calls each of us to watch and welcome the presence of God who is with all of us, especially with the sick, the poor, the people whom we avoid to be with.

To love and serve others is not an option, but rather a sign of the authenticity of our faith in God. At the start of this Advent season, let us keep watch and see that Jesus continues to be present in those who are suffering the most. Be alert that our hearts are not hardened by indifference. Instead, let us put on our apron and serve our Master who is present in those in need.

Question for reflection:

How can I live this Advent in a more meaningful way?

**Monday, 30th November. Feast of St. Andrew.  
Romans 10: 9-18, Matthew 4: 18-22**

Jesus calls again

*"Jesus saw two brothers who were fishermen, Simon (called Peter) and his brother Andrew, catching fish in the lake with a net. Jesus said to them, "Come with*

*me, and I will teach you to catch people.” At once they left their nets and went with him”*

The call of the fishermen is also our story today. At the start of Advent, Jesus calls us again to a renewed commitment to be His disciples and follow Him. He wants us to live this Advent time with Him and also to participate in His same mission of being fishermen, i.e. to tell others, through our actions and words, that God is Love who walks with them in their daily life. As a parent, a retiree, a friend, a spouse, a parishioner, Jesus entrusts us to the mission of drawing people to life, to love, to God.

**Question for reflection:**

What nets do I need to leave behind in order to be a fisherman for God?

**Tuesday, 1<sup>st</sup> December.**

**Isaiah 11:1-10, Luke 10:21-24**

True humility is to have an open mind to know God  
Jesus rejoices because God reveals Himself to the unlearned and the simple-hearted people. The “*wise and learned*” of this world, i.e. those who are too puffed up with pride, tend to think that they know everything, including God and His ways.

In this time of prayer, let us ask God for the grace to dare to be small in His sight, and to listen to what He wants to reveal to us today. May we never tell God, “*I know*” but to have the humility to pray, “*Lord, I don’t*

*know. Teach me, surprise me, show me. I am here to learn from you”.*

**Question for reflection:**

Do I see the need always to be seen as “*wise and learned*” or do I recognise that it is alright to be “*unlearned*” in front of God and even others?

**Wednesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> December.**

**Isaiah 25:6-10, Matthew 15:29-37**

Be compassionate as God is

The Prophet Isaiah proclaims these words of hope today as we face many uncertainties in today’s world that is struggling with the pandemic, “*The Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces*”. God, wipes away all tears because He is God of compassionate love who comforts us and suffers with us.

In the gospel, Jesus revealed the heart of God the Father. He was moved with compassion because He saw the hunger of the crowd, and He took action to feed them. These passages are not for us to become sentimental, rather it challenges us, as Christians, to have the same compassionate love for others. Today, let us experience the compassionate love of God in our own disappointment and sadness. From this experience of being loved, we go out and show compassion to those around us. Let us stop turning our back on human suffering!

**Question for reflection:**

As I pray with the passages, what is the message that I have understood from Jesus today?

**Thursday, 3<sup>rd</sup> December. Feast of St. Francis Xavier.**

**1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-23, Mark 16:15-20**

I too can participate in this work of evangelisation

Today, we have the readings for the Feast of St. Francis Xavier, the patron for missionaries, who travelled to Southeast Asia, India, Japan, in order to proclaim the Good News. St. Francis Xavier dedicated his whole life to the work of evangelisation because He heard and responded to the call of Jesus, “*Go into the whole world and proclaim...*”.

Today, we too have the responsibility to the same work of evangelisation. As parents, grandparents, worker, friend, we can share our faith with others. Even in our sickness, we can offer our suffering for many missionaries who are doing the work of preaching in different parts of the world. Each of us has a part to play, just as St. Francis Xavier did his part faithfully to the end.

**Question for reflection:**

What is preventing me to be part of this work of evangelisation?

**Friday, 4<sup>th</sup> December.**

**Isaiah 29:17-24, Matthew 9:27-31**

A gift of new sight

We might not be physically blind but we can be spiritually blind. Spiritual blindness prevents us from seeing our faults and limitations as well as prevents us from recognising that God loves us no matter what and that He desires us to live life to the fullness. Being spiritually blind also stops us from using our gifts for the good of others. Today, Jesus asks us, *“Do you believe that I can do this?”* Do we believe that He can open the eyes of our faith to perceive His presence in our lives and in the lives of others?

**Question for reflection:**

Do I allow Jesus to heal me from my spiritual blindness so that I can celebrate Christmas with a new heart of faith?

**Saturday, 5<sup>th</sup> December.**

**Isaiah 30:19-21,23-26, Matthew 9:35-10:1, 5-8**

A life for others

*“Jesus went around to all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom, and curing every disease and illness”.* Jesus was *“the man for others”* (Bonhoeffer) who never stopped going around doing good by giving hope and peace to those who are weary, bringing people to encounter the God of love, healing the sick, being with the outcasts. Today,

Jesus, “*the man for others*” is here for us too as we struggle with the ups and downs of life.

At the same time, we are also called to stop merely living for ourselves and start being people for others. Let us follow the compassionate gaze of Jesus as He looks at the crowds of today and invites us to follow Him by going out and doing good.

**Question for reflection:**

What prevents me from living a life for others?

**Second Sunday of Advent, 6<sup>th</sup> December.**

**Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11, 2 Peter 3:8-14, Mark 1:1-8**

A new heart

John the Baptist’s mission was to prepare the people to welcome the coming of the Lord by preaching repentance. As we enter into the second week of Advent, we are called to walk this path of repentance. True repentance starts with the recognition of God’s opening arms of love for us and the desire to have a new heart to love Him and love others once again. It is not enough to be Christians who follow simply rules and norms but strive to become loving people.

As we draw closer to celebrate Christmas, let us ask for the grace to open ourselves to walk in this process of conversion. It is time to have a new heart of love that lives for God and for others.



**Question for reflection:**

How can I prepare myself to welcome the coming of Christ?

**Monday, 7<sup>th</sup> December. Memorial of St. Ambrose.  
Isaiah 35: 1-10, Luke 5: 17-26**

A link in a chain

The Gospel passage defines what true friendship is all about, i.e. to bring our friends to encounter Jesus so that they can find in Him the healing, forgiveness, joy, peace that they need. In the passage, the friends recognised the obstacles that prevented them from laying their sick friend before Jesus. They did not give up. They used their creativity to ensure that their friend had the opportunity to meet Jesus because they had faith that He could help their incapacitated friend.

All of us have friends who might be paralysed with fear, depression, sickness, loneliness, anxiety. As people of faith, we can be the connecting link between Jesus and them. Indeed, as Christmas draws closer, the greatest gift we can ever give to those we love is the gift of Jesus, Immanuel, God with us.

**Question for reflection:**

What kind of friend am I?

**Tuesday, 8<sup>th</sup> December. Feast of Immaculate Conception of Mary**

**Genesis 3:9-15,20, Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12, Luke 1:26-38**

To say "Yes"

Today, as we celebrate the beautiful feast of the Immaculate Conception, we see in Mary a woman who said "Yes" to God because she loved Him and trusted in Him to the point of surrendering herself to the mission of becoming the Mother of God. The words she uttered expressed her profound trust she had in God: "*You see before you the Lord's servant, let it happen to me as you have said*". She did not ask to see what the future might be or to understand the whole picture of God's plan but she willingly accepted to be His instrument in the plan of salvation.

Let us ask for the grace to love God so much to the point that we are free to say "Yes" to undertake our mission to play a part in bringing His presence of love into our family, our workplace, our parish, our society of today.

**Question for reflection:**

What does it mean to me to say "Yes", like Mother Mary, to God's call to be an instrument of His love at this point of my life?

**Wednesday, 9<sup>th</sup> December. Juan Diego.  
Isaiah 40: 25-31, Matthew 11: 28-30**

The Master is waiting...

*“Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest”.* Today, Jesus extends this invitation to draw close to Him because He wants to give rest to all who are tired and overburdened with worries and troubles. The rest that He wants to share with us is His companionship that refreshes us.

*“Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light.”* A yoke is a wooden beam that ties two oxen together, to help them carry a load. Jesus, who is gentle and humble, wants to be our partner to carry our burden with us. He is not here to remove our load, rather He is with us to carry it with us.

**Questions for reflection:**

What is the load that I am carrying? What is stopping me from responding to the invitation of Jesus to go and find rest in Him?

**Thursday, 10<sup>th</sup> December.  
Isaiah 41: 13-20, Matthew 11: 11-15**

To be great in the Kingdom

Jesus affirms the greatness of John the Baptist but He goes on to say that *“the least in the kingdom of*

*Heaven is greater than he*". By saying this, Jesus wants us to know that to be "great" in the Kingdom of God is different from how the world understands it to be. To be great in this world is to be seen as a superhero who is strong, powerful, ambitious. However, to be great in the eyes of God is to be the least, i.e. to dare to be vulnerable, to be work for peace and justice, to be compassion, to suffer with the poor and the outcasts. In short, to model ourselves after Jesus Himself.

This Advent, let us not be busy with buying presents, but to yearn to live each day working towards being great in God's Kingdom.

**Question for reflection:**

What is Jesus' invitation for me in this time of prayer?

**Friday, 11<sup>th</sup> December. Damasus I, Pope.  
Isaiah 48: 17-19, Matthew 11: 16-19**

Does it matter?

*"For John came, neither eating nor drinking, and they say, "He is possessed." The Son of man came, eating and drinking, and they say, "Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.""* John the Baptist and Jesus were regarded as a possessed, a glutton, a drunkard even though their whole lives were dedicated to bring the Kingdom of justice and love into their society.

The truth is that we cannot please anyone. In the eyes of some, we might be a saint. In the eyes of others, we might be the world's greatest sinner. Thus, we need to accept that we cannot control the way others regard us. No matter the opinions of others, we must never stop doing what is good, what is just and what is loving.

**Question for reflection:**

Do I tend to act and speak in order to get the good approvals of others, even if this means that I have to compromise on my values and beliefs?

**Saturday, 12<sup>th</sup> December. Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe.**

**Zechariah 2: 14-17 or Revelation 11: 19a; 12: 1-6a, 10ab, Luke 1: 26-38 or Luke 1: 39-47**

An ordinary woman with an extraordinary faith

What was extraordinary about Mary was her great faith in God. Her faith led her to walk the path of self-giving love. She knew that her choice to do God's will would cause her to be in lots of trouble. In her village and among her family members, she would be disgraced and shamed for having a child outside of marriage. With Joseph, she risked losing Him as He would most likely leave her. Yet, she fixed her eyes on God and His promise.

As we journey through life with all its uncertainties, let Mary lead us by the hand, and share with us her faith so that we can keep trusting in God. Let us once

again allow ourselves to have the faith to say “Yes” to do God’s will and walk the path that leads us to give ourselves for the sake of love.

**Question for reflection:**

As I read Luke 1:26-38, what is the message that God wants to tell me?

**Third Sunday of Advent, 13<sup>th</sup> December.**

**Isaiah 61: 1-2a, 10-11, First Thessalonians 5: 16-24, John 1: 6-8, 19-28**

Rejoice

*“Be happy at all times; pray constantly; and for all things give thanks to God”*: St Paul was writing these words while in prison. Yet, he did not allow his circumstances to take away his joy, faith and gratitude.

His words cause us to pause. Is it possible for us to be happy always even when we are suffering from an illness, a family crisis, a death of a loved one? *“God’s answer to our pain is a closeness, a presence that accompanies us, that doesn’t leave us alone. Jesus made himself the same as us and for this reason we have him near us, to cry with us in the most difficult moments of our lives. Let us look at him, entrust him with our questions, our sorrows, our anger”* (Pope Francis). As we draw closer to Christmas, let us not lose the joy even in the midst of suffering.

**Question for reflection:**

How do I want to live this 3<sup>rd</sup> week of Advent?

**Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> December. John of the Cross.  
Numbers 24: 2-7, 15-17a, Matthew 21: 23-27**True authority

Jewish religious leaders asked Jesus, “*What authority have you for acting like this and teaching in the temple?*” True authority is not to exercise power over others, rather it is to empower others so that they can realise their full potential. Jesus’ authority came from the power of love that He had for others. His words and actions led each person to become who they were meant to be and to live their lives to the fullest. True authority is rooted in love that seeks for the good of others.

Today, each of us exercise authority too- as parents, aunts/uncles, employers, friends, leaders in parishes. How do we exercise authority?

**Questions for reflection:**

Do I use my authority to control others so as to have power over them? Or do I use my authority to serve and not to be served, to love and not to be loved?

**Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> December.**

**Zephaniah 3: 1-2, 9-13, Matthew 21: 28-32**

Which son am I?

Jesus tells us about the parable of the two sons-one said “no” to the father’s invitation to go the vineyard, but later repented and went; the other son said “yes” but failed to keep his promise.

God calls us to go to be with Him and also to work for Him in the vineyard but He always respects our decision. The good news is that even if we choose to walk away from God, we always have the freedom to repent and walk back to Him. Another point for us to take away from this parable is that our words and our actions must be coherent. It is easy to say “Yes, Lord. *I will change, help, go, trust*” but we fail to put our words into action. Let us desire to be true children of God who live coherent life.

**Question for reflection:**

Which am I- The first son or the second son?

**Wednesday, 16<sup>th</sup> December.**

**Isaiah 45: 6c-8, 18, 21c-25, Luke 7: 19-23**

Are you the one whom I can trust?

John the Baptist, while in prison, sent his disciples to ask Jesus, “*Are you the one?*” John the Baptist, who was passionate in preparing the way for the Messiah and zealously calling people to repent. Here, he was kept in jail and not knowing what his future would be.



At his lowest point, he doubted- of all what he did, of his conviction that Jesus was the Messiah. Jesus did not belittled John for doubting. Instead, He patiently reminded John to look again at all his actions and words that brought healing, forgiveness, love.

It is alright to doubt. However, our doubts should not make us to walk away from Jesus. Like John the Baptist, we need to turn to Jesus and let Him lead us to remember all the past experiences of love and blessings we received from Him. Let Him patiently change our doubts into trust once again.

**Question for reflection:**

In this time of Advent, how can I allow Jesus to lead me to walk in faith and trust?

**Thursday, 17<sup>th</sup> December.**

**Genesis 49: 2, 8-10, Matthew 1: 1-17**

Imperfect people who are loved by God

Looking at Jesus' lineage, we can see that Jesus did not come from a perfect family, like us. His family consisted of saints and sinners. Each person had a place in the family tree of Jesus. We look at our own families and perhaps we recognise strained relationships, hurts, messy mistakes made, brokenness, etc. Yet, our family members, including ourselves, are imperfect people who are loved by God. Though it might be a challenge to look at each person with eyes of mercy and hope, we are called

to accept and give thanks for the gift of our family and each saint and sinner in it.

**Question for reflection:**

Is there a specific family member that I am called to reach out to in this Advent season? (To show appreciation, to reconcile, to spend time, etc.)

**Friday, 18<sup>th</sup> December.**

**Jeremiah 23: 5-8, Matthew 1: 18-24**

Joseph, a person of faith and action

In today's gospel, we witness a man of faith and action. God spoke to Joseph in a dream and told him that the child in Mary's womb was conceived by the Holy Spirit and to take in Mary and her child into his life. He trusted in God and did what he understood in his dream: *"When Joseph woke up he did what the angel of the Lord had told him to do: he took his wife to his home"*. His unwavering faith in God led him to act even though he did not have any guarantee of the future.

Today, St. Joseph teaches us to be people of action. We do, we act because of our faith and trust in God. The little and big actions of love we do each day can continue to bring God's life and love into our world today.

**Question for reflection:**

As I pray with the story of St. Joseph, what is God's invitation to me in this time of prayer?

**Saturday, 19<sup>th</sup> December**  
**Judges 13: 2-7, 24-25, Luke 1:5-25**

Your prayer has been heard

Elizabeth and Zechariah were faithful Jews who kept their faith even though they prayed and prayed for a child but to no avail. At this point when Elizabeth and Zechariah were getting on in years and most likely given up hope in ever having a child, God entered into their story. Angel Gabriel told Zechariah, "*Your prayer has been heard*".

What is the message that God wants to share with us as we draw closer to Christmas? We might find ourselves to be like Elizabeth and Zechariah, as we find our prayers gone unanswered year after year. The invitation is to enter into deeper faith that keeps on trusting in God. He listens to our prayers and He will answer them in His own time and in His own ways.

**Question for reflection:**

How can I pray with faith that God is with me and wants the best for me?

**4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent, 20<sup>th</sup> December.**  
**2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8-12, 14,16, Romans 16:25-27,**  
**Luke 1, 26-38**

Rejoice and be glad!

*"With the angel's greeting to Mary —'kaire' in the Greek, which means 'be joyful'...We could say that*

*the first word of the New Testament is 'be joyful,' 'be happy,' in other words, 'joy.' This is the true meaning of Christmas: God is near us, so near that He became a child.*" (Pope Benedict XVI). As we enter into the 4<sup>th</sup> week of Advent, we are invited to be joyful even in the midst of uncertainty and fear because God is near to us, He is with us.

Christian joy is not the absence of pain and suffering. Instead it is the certainty of faith that God is with us. Today, let us listen to the greeting of the Angel to Mary and believe that these words too are meant for us: *"Rejoice, so highly favoured! The Lord is with you."*

**Question for reflection:**

What is preventing me to live today with joy?

**Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> December.**

**Song of Songs 2:8-14, Luke 1:39-45**

To live for others

After receiving the news that she would be pregnant with the Son of God, Mary immediately set out on a long and arduous journey to a town in the hill of Judah in order to help her elderly cousin Elizabeth who was also carrying a child. The action of Mary was to go out and help another who was in need.

*"The guarantee of an authentic openness to God, on the other hand, is a way of practising the faith that helps open our hearts to our brothers and sisters"*

(Pope Francis, Fratelli Tutti). To welcome the birth of Jesus is to open our hearts to our brothers and sisters, especially to those need our help, our time, our words of comfort, our smiles, our forgiveness. Like Mary, we are called to go out of our comfort zones and serve others with love. Let us ask for the grace to be less self-centred and more other-centred.

**Question for reflection:**

Is there a concrete person (a child at home, an elderly parent, a sick friend, a tired colleague, etc.) who needs me today?

**Tuesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> December.**

**1 Samuel 1:24-28, Luke 1:46-56**

God of the lowly

In today's gospel, Mary sang her song of praise to God because she, in her humility, perceived His actions of goodness in her own personal life. She also perceived that the God she proclaimed with gladness is One who is always on the side of the lowly, the hungry, the weak and the downtrodden. "... *The hungry he has filled with good things, the rich sent empty away*".

It is in the lives of the humble ones, like Mary and Elizabeth, that God works in unconceivable ways. To pray and recite the Magnificat of Mary implies that we too have the same desire to possess the humility and trust to allow God to work great things in us and

through us. In this Christmas season, let us look at the people around us, especially those who are least considered in society, and to treat them with dignity and respect.

**Question for reflection:**

What is God's personal invitation to me as I pray with Mary's song of praise?

**Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> December.**

**Malachi 3:1-4,23-24, Luke 1:57-66**

A vocation and a mission

Elizabeth and Zechariah recognised that their baby boy was a gift from God, and that they had the vocation as parents and mission as stewards to take care, protect and guide him until he was ready to live his own vocation and mission that God had prepared for him. Like his parents, John too faithfully carried out his mission and lived his life for God. John was not alone in his life because "*the hand of the Lord was with him*", i.e. God was with him, and so, he allowed God to orient his whole life.

We too have a personal vocation and a mission. God dreams also with our life because He counts on us to make the world a better place by being instruments of His love. We need to ask for the grace each day to carry out our mission faithfully and to know for certain that the hand of the Lord is with us too.

**Question for reflection:**

What is my personal vocation and mission that God has entrusted to me?

**Thursday, 24<sup>th</sup> December.**

**(Readings for Morning mass of the weekday)**

**2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8-12,14, 16, Luke 1: 67-79**

A song of praise to God

As we stand at the threshold of Christmas, we listen to Zechariah's song of praise and prophecy as he sang with joy for witnessing the faithfulness and goodness of God. With eyes of faith, Zechariah saw that the Lord from on high has come to visit His people in order to make Himself intimately known and present to them. His presence would give light to those who lived in darkness and guide them to the way of peace.

What about us? Are we aware of God's loving actions in our personal history? When we are aware of God's presence in our lives, we are able to draw joy from this reality and begin to live each new day with renewed confidence.

**Question for reflection:**

Looking back at my life, have I experienced the faithfulness and goodness of God?

**Friday, 25<sup>th</sup> December. Christmas Day.**

**Isaiah 52:7-10, Hebrews 1:1-6, John 1:1-18**

### Christmas: A time to celebrate

Why do we celebrate Christmas? With all the restrictions and the new norms of Covid 19, why do we still celebrate Christmas? Christmas is not a time for parties and exchanging presents. As Christians, Christmas is a time to celebrate, as St John states in the gospel, "*the Word of God was made flesh, he lived among us*". Jesus is the Word of God. He is the "*light that shines in the dark*". No darkness of despair, fear, failure and uncertainty can ever overcome this true light. This is because Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us.

Why then do we celebrate Christmas? We celebrate Christmas because we believe that Jesus is God who is with us and lives among us. He is not a God who is indifferent to our suffering. Instead, He comes each day to shine His light of peace upon us. Thus, we celebrate with quiet joy of being so much loved by Him.

### **Questions for reflection:**

Why do I celebrate Christmas? This year, how can I celebrate Christmas with more awareness of this reality of Jesus' presence?

**Saturday, 26<sup>th</sup> December. St. Stephen.  
Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59, Matthew 10:17-22**

### Following Jesus to the end

*"As they were stoning him, Stephen said in invocation, 'Lord, receive my spirit.'"*



From celebrating the birth of a child, we move today to celebrate the death of the first martyr. As we read the account of the death of St. Stephen in the first reading, we see his commitment to give his everything, including his very life, to that infant born in Bethlehem. At his death, St. Stephen was able to say “*Lord, receive my spirit*” because he precisely lived his daily life for Jesus.

Today, as we contemplate on baby Jesus in the manger, let us, desire to imitate St. Stephen by recommitting ourselves to love and serve Him above all else. At the end of our life, may we too be able to say with trust, “*Lord, receive my spirit*”.

**Question for reflection:**

Reflecting on the story of St. Stephen, how do I want to live my discipleship?

**Sunday, 27<sup>th</sup> December. The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.**

**Genesis 15:1-6, 21:1-3, Hebrews 11:8,11-12,17-19, Luke 2:22-40**

Trust

In today’s gospel reading, Mary and Joseph consecrated their baby to God because they wholeheartedly trusted in Him. Like all families, they too suffered sorrows and troubles. In fact, the Prophet Simeon told Mary that she would experience the sword of sorrow. In the midst of challenges, Mary, Joseph and Jesus continued to

have faith and trust in God. In the 1<sup>st</sup> reading and 2<sup>nd</sup> reading, we see the steadfast trust of Abraham who was called by God to leave his country for an unknown land. He and his wife, Sarah, grew old and remained childless even though God promised him that he would have descendants. Despite the many challenges, Abraham “*put his faith in the Lord*”.

The invitation today on this Feast of the Holy Family is to trust in God amidst the difficulties that confront our family life as well as our personal life. Let us ask for the grace to place our trust in Him alone.

**Question for reflection:**

As I pray with the passages, what is God’s message to me?

**Monday, 28<sup>th</sup> December, Feast of the Holy Innocents, Martyrs**  
**1 John 1:5-2:2, Matthew 2:13-18**

Herod and Joseph

Today, we celebrate the Feast of the Holy Innocents, who were the victims of the cruelty of Herod. “*Herod was furious when he realised that he had been outwitted by the wise men, and in Bethlehem and its surrounding district he had all the male children killed who were two years old or under...*”. Yet, in the darkness of hatred, life prevailed. The gospel also speaks of Joseph, the protector of life, who got up and took Mary and the baby to be away from Herod.

Today, many people continue to be victims of the cruelty of Herod who takes the form of racial hatred, wars, famine, etc. Herod also continues to live in us when we “slaughter” the dignity and reputation of others with our words and actions. The invitation is to walk the path of St. Joseph, not Herod’s.

**Question for reflection:**

Today, how can I protect and not destroy?

**Tuesday, 29<sup>th</sup> December.**

**1 John 2: 3-11, Luke 2: 22-35**

Living in the light of love

St. John in the 1<sup>st</sup> reading states: *“Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the dark. But anyone who loves his brother is living in the light and need not be afraid of stumbling; unlike the man who hates his brother and is in the darkness, not knowing where he is going, because it is too dark to see”*

Who is our brother/sister? A brother/a sister is any individual we encounter each day. He/she can be a spouse, a colleague, a neighbour, a stranger in the street, a sick friend, an elderly in need, an enemy. In this Christmas season, we, as people living in the light of Christ, are called to love each person. How? We can be creative in the way we express love. One of the best ways is to pray for people, especially those whom we struggle to like. Let us not live in the

darkness of hatred or indifference, but walk close to Jesus and stay in the light of His love and peace.

**Question for reflection:**

Who is my brother/sister whom I can offer my love today?

**Wednesday, 30<sup>th</sup> December**

**1 John 2:12-17, Luke 2: 36-40**

A life of prayer

Today, the gospel introduces us to a prophetess, Anna, who was a woman of deep faith in God and served Him night and day with fasting and prayer.

We often associate serving God with being busy and active with parish activities and doing various charitable works. There is nothing wrong with serving God by serving others. However, there is another form of service which is prayer. We need to develop a life of prayer by spending time with God, listening to Him and speaking to Him. Anna's active prayer life led her to recognise the presence of God in the child of Mary and Joseph in the Temple.

As we draw close to a New Year, let us desire to take our prayer life seriously by spending quiet time with God in loving dialogue. From here, we go out and serve others with genuine love.

**Question for reflection:**

How is my prayer life?

**Thursday, 31<sup>st</sup> December**  
**1 John 2:18-21, John 1:1-18**

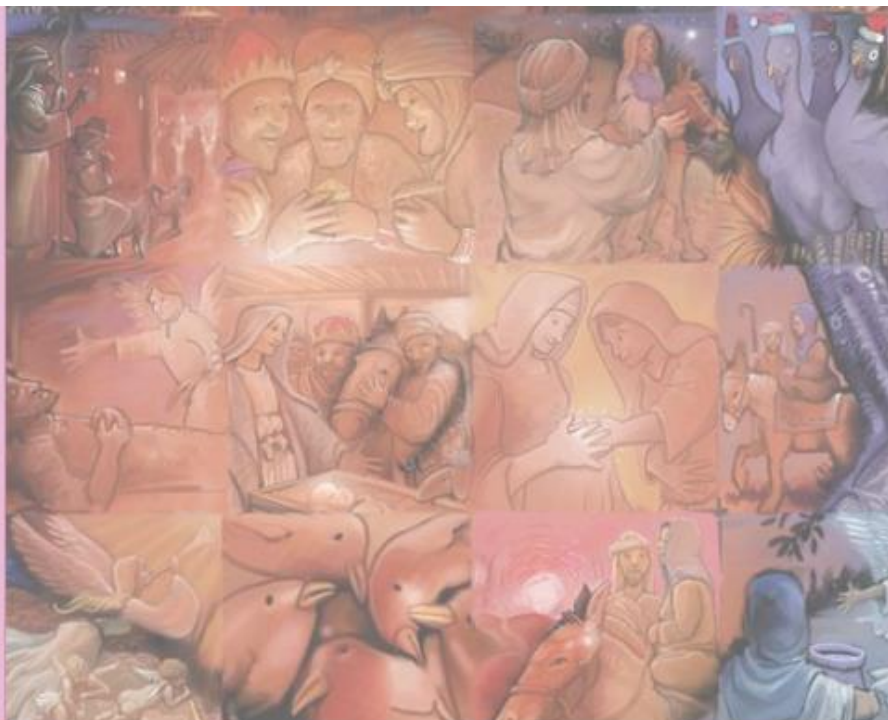
To be grateful to God

For many of us, this year has truly been an unforgettable one due to the Covid-19 pandemic. As we end 2020, let us count our blessings and give thanks to God with a grateful heart. To be grateful is not about having a nice sentiment, rather it is to open our eyes of faith and recognise the moments during this year when God has actively tried to reach out to us, especially in the difficult and challenging situations.

In the gospel, St. John reminds us again: “*The Word was made flesh, he lived among us*”. With eyes of faith, we know that Jesus has been actively living with us in those months of lockdown, in the worries that overburden us, in joys of daily life, in the people who extended their help to us, etc. Therefore, today we can and should give thanks with grateful hearts to God for this year 2020.

**Question for reflection:**

Do I allow myself to see the actions of God in 2020 and to give thanks to Him for His actions of love in my life?



verbum dei