

DECEMBER

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9 10 11 12 13 14

15 16 17 18 19

20 21 22 23 24

25 VIGIL

25 NIGHT

25 DAY 26 27 28

29 30 31

Saturday, December 1, 2018
(Lec. 508)

- 1) Revelation 22:1-7
- 2) Luke 21:34-36

SATURDAY OF
34TH WEEK
IN ORDINARY TIME
(Saturday in honor of BVM)

FOCUS: Strive to live focused on what is in store for us in the kingdom of God.

Our readings today focus on both glory and turmoil. Who among us would not like to dwell on the good and ignore the bad? The truth is, our lives often experience joy and turmoil at the same time. Let us allow the joy to calm the turmoil.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the Book of Revelation, John describes the vision shown to him, which speaks to the glory of God and the gifts of the kingdom. In the Gospel, Jesus warns the disciples not to be unprepared for his return, by getting trapped with drowsy hearts and anxiety.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us bring our prayers to God, seeking what we need to be faithful to his ways.

- 1) For Pope Francis, may the gifts of the Holy Spirit inspire his ministry, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For government leaders, may their hearts be swayed by God's law to respect life and lead in truth and justice, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who serve, may the Lord grant safety to soldiers, first responders, missionaries and aid workers, let us pray to the Lord
- 4) For the people of our parish, may the grace of our baptism bear fruit in our lives as true disciples, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they see the face of God this day, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, great is your name. Help us to seek after those things that lead us closer to your kingdom. We ask this through your son, Christ our Lord.

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**YEAR C
WEEKDAYS I**

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2018

(Lec. 3)

- 1) Jeremiah 33:14-16
- 2) 1 Thessalonians 3:12-4:2
- 3) Luke 21:25-28, 34-36

**FIRST SUNDAY
OF ADVENT**

FOCUS: The Jesus who is born in time and history is also the Christ who will come in glory to judge all.

The season of Advent begins with a call to perseverance and vigilance as we prepare to celebrate not just the historical event of the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, but our central belief that Christ will come again in glory to judge all humanity. Our readings are chosen to help us reflect on this great truth and be prepared for the coming of Christ.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In a time of great upheaval and chaos for Israel, Jeremiah reassures the people of better days to come, when a descendent of David will rule them with integrity and honesty. Looking forward to the return of Christ in glory, Saint Paul reminds us that we must strive for true holiness now. In the Gospel, Jesus reminds us that no matter what befalls us in this life, we are to have confidence in him, the Son of Man.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: The Lord calls us to be vigilant at all times. With confidence in our hearts, we bring our prayers before him.

- 1) For Pope Francis, the bishops and all leaders in the Church, may the Spirit shield them and strengthen them for the building of God's kingdom, let us pray to the Lord
- 2) For civic leaders, may God, who is the source of true peace and justice, inspire them to respect the sanctity of life from conception through natural death, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all who struggle to find meaning and direction in their lives, may Christ shine forth to light the path of hope in their search, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all of us, as we begin this season of Advent, may it be a time of renewal and blessing as we prepare our hearts for the return of Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died marked with the sign of faith, may they enter into eternal life with the God who created them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Father, give us the courage to be vigilant in hope and prayer as we await Jesus' return in glory. We ask this through your son, Christ our Lord.

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Monday, December 3, 2018
(Lec. 175)

- 1) Isaiah 2:1-5
- 2) Matthew 8:5-11

MONDAY
OF ADVENT
- FIRST WEEK
(OBL MEM
Saint Francis Xavier, Priest)

FOCUS: Trust in our loving Father and be confident in his power to save us.

As we begin Advent, our readings express the invitation of the prophet Isaiah calling people to trust in God, and the faith of the centurion in Jesus' power to heal. Trusting in God and having faith in his power are two challenging elements of Christianity that, in practice, serve to increase our confidence in God's constant presence among us.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In today's first reading, the prophet Isaiah invites the people to the mountain of the Lord, to the great house of God. He is also speaking of a spiritual journey which all are invited to join. In the Gospel from Matthew, we hear about the faith of the centurion who proclaims his belief and trust in the power of promise of God.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us bring all of our petitions to God our Father, who loves each one of us and invites us to follow his ways.

- 1) For all missionaries in the Church who tirelessly strive to continue the work of Saint Francis Xavier, may their efforts be fruitful, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For those who work in positions that influence the economic conditions of the poor, may the Lord give them strength and wisdom in their striving for justice, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who face abuse or violence in their lives, may the loving mercy of God bring them healing, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For our faith community, may the gifts we share with one another increase in each other the virtues of faith, hope and love, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they feast with Christ, the bridegroom, at our Lord's heavenly banquet, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, our trust is in you. We ask that you hear and answer our prayers according to your will, through your son, Jesus Christ.

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Tuesday, December 4, 2018
(Lec. 176)

- 1) Isaiah 11:1-10
- 2) Luke 10:21-24

TUESDAY
OF ADVENT
- FIRST WEEK
(Opt. Mem.
Saint John Damascene,
Priest and Doctor of the Church)

FOCUS: Childlike faith opens us to experience the love of God's kingdom.

God shares his wisdom and grace with those who are humble enough to trust him, rather than their own limited resources. Childlike faith opens us to experience the love of God's kingdom, where enemies can live together in peace. Although this peaceable kingdom is beyond human understanding, God is not limited by what our human minds can comprehend.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Isaiah foretold a time when a descendent of King David would rule his people with wisdom and justice, and when natural adversaries would live together in peace. Jesus, filled with the Holy Spirit, praised his Father for revealing his kingdom – not to those with status or worldly wisdom – but to those open to receive it with childlike faith and trust.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us entrust our needs, and the needs of all people, to our wise and loving Father in heaven.

- 1) That Francis, our pope, and all bishops, clergy and lay ministers may be blessed with wisdom and understanding as they lead God's people, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That government leaders may be inspired with the wisdom to govern all those they serve with justice and integrity, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those in need and all who are vulnerable – especially the unborn – may be protected and cared for through the ministry of God's people, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That those gathered here today may be guided by the Spirit of wisdom and understanding in their interactions with all those they encounter, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That those who have died may experience the true peace of Christ in the heavenly kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, we ask you to hear the prayers we place before you with humble trust in your wisdom and love. Through your son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

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Wednesday, December 5, 2018
(Lec. 177)

- 1) Isaiah 25:6-10a
- 2) Matthew 15:29-37

WEDNESDAY
OF ADVENT
- FIRST WEEK

FOCUS: On God's holy mountain, God provides for all his people.

What was foretold by the prophet Isaiah came to pass in Jesus Christ. On the mountain, Jesus wiped away the tears from all who were suffering. On the mountain, Jesus set a feast for the hungry crowd from seven loaves and a few fish. On that mountain, Jesus stood as the promise of death overcome.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The prophet Isaiah foretells of the holy mountain on which the hand of the Lord will rest. On this mountain the Lord will provide for all peoples and destroy death forever. On a mountain by the Sea of Galilee, Jesus cures all who come to him and provides food for the crowd from seven loaves and a few fish.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Rejoicing in the saving power of God, we gather our needs and present them with courage and with hope.

- 1) That the Church may be blessed with wisdom and be a source of truth and love, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That legislators and lawmakers may be emboldened by God's divine providence in all they do, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That the freedom that comes through the sacraments of the Church may give relief to those who are oppressed by sin, let us pray to the Lord
- 4) That this community of faith may hear, in the quiet of this Advent season, the voice of the Lord, guiding us in right paths, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That all who have died baptized in Christ may rise again in new life with him for eternity, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Gracious God, you lead us beside restful waters and refresh our souls. We pray that you bring us to your holy mountain as we look to you to heal and feed us. We ask this through our Lord, Jesus Christ.

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Thursday, December 6, 2018
(Lec. 178)

- 1) Isaiah 26:1-6
- 2) Matthew 7:21, 24-27

THURSDAY
OF ADVENT
- FIRST WEEK
(Opt. Mem.
Saint Nicholas, Bishop)

FOCUS: The teachings of Jesus give us a firm foundation on which to continuously build our lives.

We have all seen the devastation that can result when a great storm hits an area where houses have been built with no sturdy foundation. People's lives can be similarly ruined if they do not have the firm foundation offered by the teachings of Jesus. With him, we can weather any storm.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The prophet Isaiah teaches that God is the *eternal Rock*, protecting his people and humbling those in high places. In the Gospel, Jesus instructs his disciples that all who act on his words *will be like a wise man who built his house on rock*, instead of sand, and are able to withstand any storm.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us humbly place our needs, and the needs of the world, at the feet of our loving God.

- 1) That the Church throughout the world may be blessed with a spirit of humility before the Lord, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That world leaders may seek wisdom and courage through the Holy Spirit as they formulate laws and policies, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those suffering because of poor health or chronic pain may feel the healing touch of God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That all of us here may have the gifts of the Spirit so as to proclaim our belief in Jesus, and also live by his words, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That our loved ones who have died may one day rest in peace in the heavenly kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Father, hear the cries of your children and provide for us what we need to live according to your holy will. We pray these things through your son, Jesus Christ.

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Friday, December 7, 2018
(Lec. 179)

- 1) Isaiah 29:17-24
- 2) Matthew 9:27-31

FRIDAY
OF ADVENT
- FIRST WEEK
(OBL MEM
Saint Ambrose,
Bishop and Doctor of the Church)

FOCUS: Let us look to the future with hope and faith.

All of Scripture is meant to encourage us to look forward with hopeful faith. The people of Israel were promised a time when evil would be replaced by good, and the downtrodden would see their fortunes reversed. In the person of Jesus Christ, we have the fulfillment of that promise. May we have the same confident faith and hope in Jesus as did those around him who needed comfort, healing and consolation.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Isaiah's prophecy tells of God's plan of redemption: the evils of injustice, arrogance and ignorance will be reversed, the lowly will rejoice in the Lord and the holy will worship the God of Israel. In the Gospel, Jesus heals two blind men after they plead for his help. He instructs them not to tell others, but they do anyway.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Trusting in the Lord's goodness, we bring together the prayers of our community of faith.

- 1) For Pope Francis, may the Holy Spirit continue to guide him as he leads the Church, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For those whose religious freedoms are oppressed, may God protect them and bring about change so they may worship him without fear, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For the seriously ill and the dying, may the hope found in Christ ease their suffering, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community, may we increase in the virtues of faith, hope and charity, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For the faithful departed, may they soon see the face of God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Eternal Father, hear the prayers of your faithful and look upon them with kindness. We ask this through your son, Christ our Lord.

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Saturday, December 8, 2018
(Lec. 689)

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

**THE IMMACULATE
CONCEPTION OF THE
BLESSED VIRGIN MARY**
(Patronal Feastday
of the
United States of America)
- SOLEMNITY
(Holyday of Obligation)

FOCUS: God the Father has been at work throughout salvation history to bring his sons and daughters home.

While the sin of Adam and Eve separates us from the Lord, in his providence and love, God offers to bring us back. In order to take on our flesh, God prepares a worthy vessel, Mary, the new Eve, who becomes our gentle Mother and always brings us closer to her Son.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading is the account of Adam and Eve and their choice to disobey God. After their sin, the two fear God, and hide. In Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, we hear that God chose us to be holy, and so adopts us through Jesus Christ. It is in Jesus that we are chosen. Luke's Gospel tells of the angel Gabriel's announcement to Mary that she had found favor with the Lord, and would conceive and bear a son, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With our hope firmly planted in God, let us bring our petitions before the Lord.

- 1) For Pope Francis and all who teach the faith, may God renew them in their "yes" to his will, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For government officials, that through God's grace they may seek first his will, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For the sick, the poor, the oppressed and the marginalized, may God bring forth upon them the greatness of his love and his peace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community, that through God's grace, we, like Mary, may respond to God's call with a "yes" to his will, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For our beloved dead, that God may bring them into the fullness of his love, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Father, we thank you for your love that, even in the midst of our sin, reaches out to bring us closer to you. Hear our prayers this day that we ask through your son, our Lord, Jesus Christ.

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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2018

(Lec. 6)

- 1) Baruch 5:1-9
- 2) Philippians 1:4-6, 8-11
- 3) Luke 3:1-6

**SECOND SUNDAY
OF ADVENT**

FOCUS: As we await the coming of our Lord and Savior, joy and hope fill our hearts in anticipation of the Messiah.

Prepare the way of the Lord! Today marks the Second Sunday of Advent, and we are filled with hope, joy and anticipation. The Lord enters the world to save us. Our paths will be made straight. Our burdens will be eased. Our darkness will be lightened. Salvation is at hand.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading calls Israel to abandon mourning and misery and replace it with the glorious splendor of God. Paul's Letter to the Philippians is filled with hope and joy, embracing Christ's message and mission. Hope continues in the Gospel as John prepares the way of the Lord, baptizing in his name and proclaiming that salvation is near.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Baptized in Christ, we join together as one voice to place our needs before God.

- 1) For the pope, bishops and all priests during this Advent season, may Christ's love strengthen them as they lead us all in preparing for the coming of Jesus, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For all those who are in positions of leadership, may they be guided by truth as they work for the good of those they serve, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those experiencing despair and need, especially during this season of hope and giving, may they be blessed by the generosity of others, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For members of our own parish, and beyond, who are estranged from the Church, may God's call be louder than their own doubts, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they rejoice eternally in the presence of our heavenly Father, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Lord, we present these prayers with humble hearts, and ask that you answer our needs in your infinite wisdom. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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Monday, December 10, 2018
(Lec. 181)

- 1) Isaiah 35:1-10
- 2) Luke 5:17-26

MONDAY
OF ADVENT
- SECOND WEEK

FOCUS: Jesus fulfills God's promise of restoration through his ministry of healing.

Jesus came into the world as the fulfillment of God's promise, and he has God's power to heal and restore us. Our response should be to glorify the Lord and share this Good News with others.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, the prophet Isaiah offers a vision of hope to the Israelite people, where the least fortunate will be blessed and those whom the Lord has redeemed will be filled with joy. In the Gospel, Jesus forgives the sins of, and heals a paralytic.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: As those in the Gospel brought their friend before the Lord, let us together bring the needs of our brothers and sisters before him.

- 1) For all members of the Church, that we may be continuously transformed by the Lord's healing power, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For all those in medical and healing professions, that the Lord may bless their efforts to tend to those afflicted by illness, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who are sick, isolated or lonely, that the healing presence of the Lord may strengthen and comfort them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those in our community who have lost hope, that the Lord may lead them back to a place of joy and faith, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, that they may experience eternal joy in the glory of the Lord, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Lord of healing, hear these prayers we have offered to you in hope and faith, and fulfill them as you will. We make this prayer in the name of Christ, our Lord.

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Tuesday, December 11, 2018
(Lec. 182)

- 1) Isaiah 40:1-11
- 2) Matthew 18:12-14

TUESDAY
OF ADVENT
- SECOND WEEK
(Opt. Mem.
Saint Damasus I, Pope)

FOCUS: Our God desires the salvation of all.

Today's readings bring comfort in conveying God's boundless and omnipotent love. God's mercy and love can reach far beyond our imagination. It overcomes all things, including death, to save even those seemingly lost forever.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading conveys God's consolation to his people. A voice cries out that justice will reign, mountains and hills will be made low, and God's strong arms will gather his flock unto himself. In the Gospel, Jesus presents the image of the shepherd leaving the ninety-nine sheep to find the single lost one.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Taking comfort in God's boundless love for each of us, let us bring our concerns to the Lord.

- 1) For our Church, may she be led by the Spirit to grow in God's truth, love and joy for the world, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For our political representatives, may they be blessed with the virtues of charity and prudence to consider the least among us as they create legislation for our common good, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who feel alone or abandoned, may they soon know God's earnest and profound love for them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all members of this faith community, may God lead us to be living signs of his mercy to one another and to those in the wider community, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all those who have died, that they might be granted joyful passage into the verdant pastures of heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, accept these prayers like the shepherd who gathers the lambs in his arms. We ask this through your son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

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Wednesday, December 12, 2018
(Lec. 690A)

**OUR LADY
OF GUADALUPE
- FEAST: USA**

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

NOTE: Or any readings from the *Lectionary for Ritual Masses* (vol. IV), the Common of the Blessed Virgin Mary, nos. 707-712.

FOCUS: God's saving love is offered freely to all people.

Our Lady of Guadalupe came to Juan Diego in the sixteenth century. Mary's appearance to him is a reminder that Mary is the mother of all people, and that God's salvific love is offered freely to all people. The care of a mother and the love of God bring comfort to all who are oppressed.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The prophet Zechariah announces that the Lord dwells amongst the people of Judah, but that the Lord will also be present amongst many nations. In the Gospel, Mary goes out to her cousin Elizabeth, to share in the joy that God has brought to her through the baby in her womb.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Inspired by Our Lady of Guadalupe, let us bring our prayers before our God.

- 1) For Church leaders during this holy Advent season, may God's Spirit sustain them as they strengthen and give courage to those entrusted to their pastoral care, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For public authorities, that they may be inspired by the Holy Spirit to evoke changes necessary for the good of the world, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all those in need of protection, may they receive the support they need in the manner they require, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those in this faith community who struggle with life choices, may the truth of the Gospel give them guidance, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all those who have died, may they be welcomed into the eternal kingdom of God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: O God who brings light to all people, listen graciously to the prayers we have brought before you. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.

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Thursday, December 13, 2018
(Lec. 184)

- 1) Isaiah 41:13-20
- 2) Matthew 11:11-15

THURSDAY
OF ADVENT
- SECOND WEEK
(OBL MEM
Saint Lucy, Virgin and Martyr)

FOCUS: God has prepared the road to salvation through Jesus Christ.

We can rejoice in God's plan for his Church. He will answer the prayers of his people, never forsaking them. He has promised a path for us to follow him, knowing that he will give us strength, no matter where that path leads.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the reading from Isaiah, we hear God tell us not to fear, that he is the Holy One of Israel who will always help us and never forsake us. In the Gospel, Jesus tells the crowds that there has been no greater prophet than John the Baptist.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Jesus encouraged us to trust God and to know he hears and answers our prayers. So let us present those prayers to him now.

- 1) For Pope Francis and all pastoral leaders of the Church, may God bless them with health and the prayers of all people as they guide us in drawing ever closer to God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For world leaders, may the Spirit grant them the means to work toward the alleviation of poverty, hunger and homelessness from the earth, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who are struggling emotionally during this Advent season, may God provide them with relief and solace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community, may the Spirit keep our hearts directed to Christ during this time, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all the faithful departed, that they will be in the presence of God with full joy and peace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, we ask you to look favorably upon the petitions we offer. Through Christ our Lord.

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Friday, December 14, 2018
(Lec. 185)

- 1) Isaiah 48:17-19
- 2) Matthew 11:16-19

FRIDAY
OF ADVENT
- SECOND WEEK
(OBL MEM
Saint John of the Cross,
Priest and Doctor of the Church)

FOCUS: Blessings and benefits come to those who follow God's ways.

All the details that go into getting ready for Christmas do not have to be in conflict with Advent. The use of prayer and reflection as we wrap presents for loved ones, light the tree or prepare a meal can ease the stress this season too often causes.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Isaiah speaks of the blessings and benefits that come to those who follow God's ways. In the Gospel, Jesus compares the crowds to children who don't seem to know what they want.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With confidence in our wise and loving God, let us offer our prayers to him.

- 1) For Pope Francis and all the clergy, may the Lord sustain them in their ministry in the midst of the world's busyness this season, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For nations throughout the world that are suffering from war and unrest, may God raise up wise leaders to bring peace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For family and friends who have wandered from having Jesus in their lives, may the Lord work through a kind word or gentle invitation in an opportunity to come home, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all of us gathered here, may God's Spirit work to bring forgiveness and reconciliation to any wounded relationships we may have, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For our beloved dead, may they receive the reward of a life well spent and come to share in the fullness of Christ's glory, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Almighty Father, the glory of your Son shines all around for us to see. May his love thrive in and through us. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

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Saturday, December 15, 2018
(Lec. 186)

- 1) Sirach 48:1-4, 9-11
- 2) Matthew 17:9a, 10-13

SATURDAY
OF ADVENT
- SECOND WEEK

FOCUS: Let us turn our hearts toward God as we prepare to celebrate the birth of the Messiah.

Advent is a season of hopeful preparation for celebrating the coming of Jesus, God's gift of love to us. Making time for prayerful and meaningful reflection on the significance of his birth can drop off our priority list as we become immersed in other activities. As the days grow shorter, let us take time to relight the fire of hope and love in our hearts by turning to the stories of those who anticipated and announced Christ's coming.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading from the Book of Sirach, the writer tells us about some of the wondrous deeds of Elijah and the purpose of his coming. In the Gospel, the disciples ask about Elijah, and Jesus answers by speaking about John the Baptist.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Confident that God knows our every challenge and concern, we ask him to hear our prayers today.

- 1) For our Church, may the Holy Spirit inspire each of us to live Jesus' message of love and forgiveness, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For our civic leaders, may the Lord open their hearts to hear the truth of the prophets of our time, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who experience doubts about their faith, may the Holy Spirit inspire them to trust in the hope and peace of God's love, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For our faith community, may the Spirit give us wisdom and grace to grow in his love, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they rest in the peace of God's kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God, we turn to you with our prayers, confident that you hear them and give us new life when we call upon your name. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2018

(Lec. 9)

- 1) Zephaniah 3:14-18a
- 2) Philippians 4:4-7
- 3) Luke 3:10-18

**THIRD SUNDAY
OF ADVENT**

FOCUS: The Lord is near, we rejoice and give thanks.

On this *Gaudete* Sunday, we rejoice as we look forward to the return of Christ. His coming in glory fills us with confidence and prayer – all fear is removed and our hearts sing for joy.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Zephaniah presents a vision of a great festival where God's love and forgiveness will be celebrated and his mercy shared with all. Saint Paul reminds the Philippians to be happy and prayerful as they await the return of Christ. John the Baptist proclaims the good news of the kingdom in the Gospel, and challenges his listeners to act with justice and generosity.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: As we await the fulfillment of God's kingdom, let us bring our prayers and concerns for the Church and the world before our God.

- 1) For the Church, may we grow in holiness, always rejoicing in the Lord and proclaiming the good news of salvation with joy, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For peace in our world, may the coming of the Prince of Peace turn the hearts of leaders from the paths of violence and injustice to the ways of justice and peace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all who are poor and lack the basics of life, may we be generous with our resources and work to remove poverty and inequality from our world, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community as we prepare for the return of Christ, may our preparation fill us with renewed reverence and awe this holy season, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all who have died, may they rejoice in the fullness of the kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Gracious and loving God, your patience with us is beyond our understanding. As we place these prayers before you, teach us to be patient and to rejoice in your holy will. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

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Monday, December 17, 2018
(Lec. 193)

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

MONDAY
OF ADVENT
- THIRD WEEK

FOCUS: The beginning of the Gospel of Matthew shows us the importance of the past.

To fully understand the “new,” we must have an appreciation for the “old.” From the first words of the first book of the New Testament, the genealogy of Jesus not only notes great leaders of Israel, but brings to mind key events in salvation history leading to the birth of the much-anticipated Messiah.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Today's first reading from Genesis has the Israelite patriarch Jacob giving a farewell address to his sons, for whom the Twelve Tribes of Israel shall later be named. In Matthew's Gospel, the importance of Jesus' link with King David and Abraham, father of Israel, is outlined in the genealogy of Jesus.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Trusting in the love of our merciful Father, let us lay our petitions before him.

- 1) For the Church, that through its evangelization efforts, the lost sheep may hear the mercy in God's voice and return to the fold, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For our government leaders, may they be blessed with wisdom in developing legislation that shows respect for life, from conception to natural death, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all those struggling with illness and personal afflictions, may the healing powers of Jesus, who sacrificed his life so that we may have eternal life, give them strength, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all of us gathered here today, may God enliven our hearts to lives of service to others, no matter our chosen profession, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all the faithful departed, may they enjoy the rest and peace of heavenly life, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petitions)

PRIEST: Almighty and ever-loving God, we humbly pray that you bless these petitions, and those we hold in our hearts. We pray this in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Tuesday, December 18, 2018

(Lec. 194)

- 1) Jeremiah 23:5-8
- 2) Matthew 1:18-25

TUESDAY
OF ADVENT
THIRD WEEK

FOCUS: Jesus is the *righteous shoot* of David, the long-awaited Messiah.

There are several instances in the Old Testament where there is a foreshadowing of events in the New Testament. At these times in particular, we can see the wideness of God's plan. Today's reading from the prophet Jeremiah is one such instance. We understand that the *righteous shoot* of David is Jesus, our Savior.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The prophet Jeremiah speaks about the restoration of Israel. Today's Gospel tells the story of how the birth of Jesus Christ came about.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us now turn to our God in prayer as we bring to mind the needs of all God's people.

- 1) That the evangelization mission of the worldwide Church may increase, reaching those without faith, and creating more active disciples to spread God's word, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That judges and magistrates, through God's grace, may always temper justice with mercy, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That our brothers and sisters who struggle to make ends meet may find sustainable work, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That all of us gathered here may be more fully aware of the presence of Jesus in our daily lives, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That all the faithful who have died may live forever in the loving presence of our Creator, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, as we move closer to the Nativity of Jesus, we ask you to receive our petitions and answer them according to your will. Through your son, Jesus Christ.

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Wednesday, December 19, 2018
(Lec. 195)

- 1) Judges 13:2-7, 24-25a
- 2) Luke 1:5-25

WEDNESDAY
OF ADVENT
- THIRD WEEK

FOCUS: When we trust God's plan for us, our faith bears fruit in new life.

God's message came to people who remained faithful even though they hadn't been blessed with the children they longed for. Their patience and obedience bore fruit in God's time according to his plan – for their good and the good of others. When we trust God, his plans for us bear fruit in his time and in his way.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Manoah's wife was told she'd give birth to a son who would rescue his people from their oppressors, in accordance with God's plan. In the Gospel, the angel of the Lord told Zechariah that he and his wife, although childless and of advanced age, would have a son to be named John, who would lead many to repentance and prepare the way of the Lord.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: We now look to our Father in heaven, entrusting our needs and the needs of the world to his wisdom and love.

- 1) That Francis our pope, and all bishops, clergy, religious and lay ministers, may be strengthened in faith through their trust in God's loving providence, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That those in public office may be inspired by the Holy Spirit to serve and protect all life from conception to natural death, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those suffering in mind, body or spirit may receive help and comfort through the efforts of those using their God-given abilities, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That those gathered here today may be blessed with awareness of God's plan for them and the willingness to respond accordingly, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That those who have died may be resting in the peace of God's loving embrace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving God, hear the prayers we entrust to your wise and loving plan. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

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Thursday, December 20, 2018
(Lec. 196)

- 1) Isaiah 7:10-14
- 2) Luke 1:26-38

THURSDAY
OF ADVENT
- THIRD WEEK

FOCUS: The angel Gabriel reminded Mary, and reminds us today as well, that nothing will be impossible for God.

Nothing is impossible for God. That truth does not mean that every single thing we want to happen will happen – nor will every desire we have be fulfilled. But it does promise us that God will never withhold good from us, because that is all he desires for us.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Ahaz refuses to ask for a sign from God. Isaiah prophesies the sign – that the virgin shall conceive and bear a son. The angel Gabriel visits Mary, revealing that she will conceive and bear a son, even though she is a virgin, as the power of the Most High will overshadow her. She is to name him Jesus.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Believing with grateful hearts that nothing will be impossible for God, we approach and offer our needs and our desires.

- 1) For our Church, that through the power of the Holy Spirit she will be fruitful and multiply, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For all who bear the burden and privilege of leading nations, may they receive the gifts of wisdom, compassion and insight, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For expectant mothers, may they be blessed with health of mind and body as they await the birth of their babies, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all here today, may our hearts be quieted so we can take the time to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For our beloved dead, that the Key of David may open for them the gates of God's eternal kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Good and gracious God, you are the King of Glory. Hear our prayers, we implore you, and answer them according to your will. Through Christ our Lord.

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Friday, December 21, 2018

(Lec. 197)

- 1) Song of Songs 2:8-14 or
Zephaniah 3:14-18a
- 2) Luke 1:39-45

FRIDAY
OF ADVENT
- THIRD WEEK
(Opt. Mem.

Saint Peter Canisius,
Priest and Doctor of the Church)

FOCUS: We re-create the love of God and the love of the Blessed Virgin Mary through our love for others.

The fruit of your womb, what a striking description of a child – not only Jesus, but every child. The creative work of God passes through the parents, making all children holy. This was the case with the Blessed Virgin and her child, and with every woman who carries a child in her womb.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Symbolizing God's love for humankind, the first reading tells of two lovers joyfully reuniting in the spring. In today's Gospel, the Blessed Virgin visits her cousin Elizabeth. The baby in Elizabeth's womb leaps at the presence of the unborn Jesus. Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, praises Mary for her trust in God.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Together, let us offer our prayers to the Father, for our needs and those of the world.

- 1) That the Church throughout the world may experience a deepened faith and the zeal to share this gift with others, let us pray to the Lord
- 2) That the gift of salvation that comes through the death of Jesus on the cross will stir the hearts of those who govern, and bring hope to those in need, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That all parents and guardians may receive the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Saint Elizabeth, helpmates who understand the challenges they face, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That the lives of those of us gathered here may reflect the glory of God dwelling within us as we walk with one another, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That those who have died may know eternal happiness in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God of power and might, nothing is impossible for you. Hear our prayers and grant what we need. We pray through Christ our Lord.

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Saturday, December 22, 2018
(Lec. 198)

- 1) 1 Samuel 1:24-28
- 2) Luke 1:46-56

SATURDAY
OF ADVENT
- THIRD WEEK

FOCUS: Giving thanks to God for his gifts includes sacrifice, praise and continued thanksgiving.

Hannah and Mary both give praise and thanksgiving to God, though in slightly different ways. Both women understand that the Lord is the giver of all good things, including their sons. In their humility, they will support both of their sons to do God's work – Samuel as a prophet, and Jesus through his public ministry, death and resurrection.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Hannah takes her newly weaned son, Samuel, to the Temple along with sacrificial offerings of a bull, flour and wine, and leaves him there to be dedicated to God. In the Gospel Mary, now carrying Jesus in her womb, proclaims her *Magnificat* (song of praise), glorifying God in humility.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Gathering together in one Spirit in Christ, we present our needs to our Almighty God who lifts up the lowly.

- 1) For those in the Church discerning a call to religious vocations, may they and their families have the grace to respond with humility and courage, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For leaders and lawmakers, may they have the integrity and strength to support freedom of religion so all might proclaim the glory of God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those suffering the cross of infertility, that God may show them his merciful love, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For our faith community, that we may be blessed with a spirit of gratitude, seeking opportunities to give thanks to God even amid uncertainty, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For the faithful departed, that they may find rest in the eternal presence of God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Gracious Father, hear the prayers of your servants gathered here, and remember your promise of mercy. We ask this through your son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2018

(Lec. 12)

- 1) Micah 5:1-4a
- 2) Hebrews 10:5-10
- 3) Luke 1:39-45

**FOURTH SUNDAY
OF ADVENT**

FOCUS: Jesus has come to us as our King and Shepherd.

In a few days, we will celebrate the great gift that God has given to humanity two thousand years ago: the gift of Jesus. Jesus comes as Savior of the world and as the majestic King – but also as a Shepherd who cares deeply and personally for each one of us on our journey. He is truly God’s gift to us.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Micah prophesies that tiny Bethlehem will be the birthplace of the Messiah, a great ruler for all time. Paul reflects on Jesus’ offering of himself and his obedience to God’s will, through which we are consecrated. The Gospel depicts Mary’s visit to Elizabeth, who recognizes Mary’s role as Mother of God.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: As we come nearer to the arrival of Jesus, we turn to our Father, entrusting to him our needs and those of our world.

- 1) For the pope and all bishops and priests, that God may guide them in their role as teachers and preachers of the Good News, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For leaders in the civic and business worlds, that they may have the gift of right reason to focus properly on the welfare of their people and of society, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For women in crisis pregnancies, that they may have the support and encouragement they need to care for their babies, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all in our faith community who serve in leadership roles, may they be graced with wisdom and courage, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For our faithful departed loved ones, that Jesus may shepherd them to his eternal kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving God, everything we have is a gift from you. Grant us trust in your providence as we pray for the needs of those around us. We ask this in the name of your son, Jesus.

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Monday, December 24, 2018
(Lec. 200)

- 1) 2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16
- 2) Luke 1:67-79

MONDAY
OF ADVENT
- FOURTH WEEK

FOCUS: Jesus is a promise kept.

God promised Abraham heirs as numerous as the stars; he promised Noah to never flood the earth again; he promised Moses a land of milk and honey for his chosen people. His promise to David is the gift of salvation for all of us. God's ultimate promise, revealing his unconditional love and compassion for us, comes in the birth of his son, Jesus, whose light shines in the darkness to guide our feet to peace in his kingdom forever.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the book of Samuel, Nathan the prophet tells King David that an heir will come from his family and establish a kingdom that will endure forever. In the Gospel, Zechariah prophesies about the promised child Jesus, who has come to bring knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of sins.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Knowing we can trust in the Lord's promises, we offer him our petitions.

- 1) For the entire Church, may the Spirit inspire each of us to grow in the wisdom and knowledge of God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For civic leaders, may God grant them courage to lead with integrity, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who live in darkness of any kind, may the Lord's promises provide them hope and strength in their struggles, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For our faith community, may Christ's tender compassion serve as a model for our growth in holiness, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may God guide their feet into the way of peace to rest in his kingdom forever, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God our Father, in your love for us, you sent your Son to save us. As we await the joyful celebration of his birth, we ask that you hear and answer our prayers, through Christ our Lord.

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Three Commentaries are given for the Solemnity of Christmas: Vigil, Night, and Day ~ Holy Day of Obligation.

CHRISTMAS, 2018 - VIGIL

(Lec. 13)

- 1) Isaiah 62:1-5
- 2) Acts 13:16-17, 22-25
- 3) Matthew 1:1-25 or
1:18-25

**THE NATIVITY
OF THE LORD
- SOLEMNITY
(Vigil Mass)**

FOCUS: God has a plan – a plan to offer us salvation and fill us with his love.

God's plan for our salvation is accomplished in Jesus. Through all the ups and downs of human history, represented by the genealogy of Jesus, God has never given up on us. He seeks to offer us salvation and to fill us with his love.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The prophet Isaiah tells us of the love God has for his people, and that God will reconcile them to himself for their sake. In Acts, Paul reminds those in Antioch of their salvation history, whose fulfillment was found in Jesus. The Gospel presents the genealogy of Jesus Christ.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With generous and loving hearts, we bring our prayers to the Father.

- 1) For the Church, may the Lord bless and improve upon our efforts as we proclaim the Good News of Christ's birth, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For government officials, in this season of celebration, may they be moved by God's Spirit of peace in carrying out their duties, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who do not recognize God's love for them, may the Lord in this Christmas season bless them with perfect knowledge, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For our local community, may the gift of Emmanuel be manifest in all that we say and do for one another, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they experience the salvation of Christ in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Father, we ask that you hear our prayers and petitions, for we ask them through your son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

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CHRISTMAS, 2018 - NIGHT

(Lec. 14)

- 1) Isaiah 9:1-6
- 2) Titus 2:11-14
- 3) Luke 2:1-14

**THE NATIVITY
OF THE LORD
- SOLEMNITY
(Mass at Night)**

FOCUS: There is good news and rejoicing as light has entered the world with the birth of the Savior.

The wait is over. The promise is fulfilled. Light has entered the world. Abundant joy and great rejoicing abound. *For a child is born to us, a son is given us.* The Messiah has come to save us and lead us all to the Father. The message of Christmas fills us with peace. *Glory to God in the highest.*

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The words of Isaiah relay God's promise of a Savior. The prophecy is filled with light, joy, hope and optimism. Paul's Letter to Titus reminds us to reject sin and be eager to do good. In the Gospel, the Messiah is born at last, and the shepherds are told the good news of his birth.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: As Light enters the world, let us raise our voices in prayer, filled with joy and trust in the promises of our Lord.

- 1) That the Church may grow in number and love as she rejoices in celebrating the coming of Jesus on Christmas, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That during this season of giving and joy, those in positions of authority may be led by the Spirit to do good for those in the most need of their intervention, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That God may bring comfort especially to those who will spend Christmas alone or homeless, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That all of us here in this faith community will grow in gratitude during this joyous season, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That those who have died may celebrate salvation with the Lord in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Dear Lord our God, in hope and faith we join together as believers to offer these petitions to you and ask that you look favorably upon them. We ask this in the name of Jesus, your son.

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CHRISTMAS, 2018 - DAY

(Lec. 16)

- 1) Isaiah 52:7-10
- 2) Hebrews 1:1-6
- 3) John 1:1-18 or 1:1-5, 9-14

**THE NATIVITY
OF THE LORD
- SOLEMNITY
(Mass During
the day)**

FOCUS: On this Christmas day, we rejoice in the birth of our Savior.

Hark, the *sentinels raise a cry* and the angels sing: the Lord is restoring Zion and salvation is at hand. With this celebration of the Incarnation of our God in the person of Jesus, we rejoice in the salvation that has been given to us. We rejoice in our redemption.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The prophet Isaiah foretells of the time when Jerusalem will be redeemed, and salvation will be at hand for all. The Letter to the Hebrews reminds us that God always spoke to his people through the prophets, but only in partial ways. In today's Gospel, we hear of the union between Father and Son from all time, and through which the fullness of God is revealed.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: We give humble thanks for the Son who allows us to see and believe. And we offer these prayers to the Father who is the giver of all good things.

- 1) For our Holy Father, Pope Francis, and all who lead and teach the faith, may God bless them with joy in their discipleship, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For government officials, that God's wisdom may guide them in all their duties, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For the sick, that God may hear their cries for healing and peace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For our community gathered here, and for those whom we love, that the Lord may grant us a spirit of joy, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, that they may see God's face this day, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Father in heaven, all good things come from you. We implore you to hear these and all of our prayers this day, for we ask them through your son, Christ our Lord.

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Wednesday, December 26, 2018
(Lec. 696)

- 1) Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59
- 2) Matthew 10:17-22

**SAINT STEPHEN,
THE FIRST MARTYR
- FEAST**

FOCUS: We can choose to be attentive, or deaf, to the promptings of the Holy Spirit,

Today we consider the witness of Saint Stephen, whose *attentiveness* to the Holy Spirit, and whose persecutors' *deafness* to the Holy Spirit, led to his martyrdom. We, too, have the choice to hear, and to listen – or not.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading from Acts describes the events leading to the martyrdom of Stephen. He was filled with the Holy Spirit, and the listeners cannot stand the wisdom he shares and so shut their ears to his message. In the Gospel, Jesus warns his disciples of coming persecution, while exhorting them not to worry about what they will say, for at the proper time, it will be the Spirit of the Father who speaks through them.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: As we seek to be attentive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, let us offer our petitions to our Father in heaven.

- 1) For the leaders of the Church, that God may inspire and encourage them in their witness to the love of Christ for his people, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For our national and local leaders, that they may be open to the wisdom of the Holy Spirit as they make decisions that impact our communities and country, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For the sick and for those who care for them, that God may give them consolation and healing, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all who gather here, may the love of God guide us in all we do, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they be welcomed into heavenly joy by Saint Stephen and all the saints who have gone before us, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Father, we entrust our prayers to you in the holy name of your son, Jesus Christ.

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Thursday, December 27, 2018
(Lec. 697)

- 1) 1 John 1:1-4
- 2) John 20:1a, 2-8

**SAINT JOHN,
APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST
- FEAST**

FOCUS: We are called to have faith in Jesus and his resurrection, and to a personal relationship with him.

On this feast of Saint John, Apostle and Evangelist, we read of John's fervor in relating his love for and personal relationship with Jesus. The call of today's readings is to enjoy that same fellowship with Jesus that John and the other Apostles had.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In today's first reading from Saint John, he testifies to his personal experiences in seeing and hearing the words of the resurrected Jesus. In the Gospel, Mary Magdalene tells Peter and John about the empty tomb, and they both run to the tomb. John arrives first but waits and lets Peter enter first, and they both believe in the Resurrection.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Relying on the promises of Jesus, we make our prayer requests to our heavenly Father.

- 1) That the Church throughout the world may be blessed with a spirit of humility before the Lord, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That elected officials everywhere may be blessed with the gifts of righteousness and integrity, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those who live in poverty may receive the food they need to nourish their bodies and revitalize their souls, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That the earth, our common home, may prosper under our stewardship and care, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That all of our beloved dead may rise with Christ to eternal life in the glory of heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: We make these prayer requests to you, our heavenly Father, in the name of your son, Jesus.

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Friday, December 28, 2018
(Lec. 698)

- 1) 1 John 1:5-2:2
- 2) Matthew 2:13-18

**THE HOLY INNOCENTS,
MARTYRS
- FEAST**

FOCUS: Our world has always faced darkness, but we are called to bring God's light.

Christmas is so often seen as a holiday of light as Jesus, the Light of the World, came into our world. Yet the arrival of this long-awaited Messiah, Jesus, did not stop the powers of darkness and evil, as we see in Herod's jealous murder of innocent children. We are reminded that God, who is all light, overpowers the darkness.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, John reminds us that God is light and that we, as disciples of Jesus, are called to walk in the light and the truth of Jesus. In the Gospel, Herod brings more darkness into the world as, out of frenzied jealousy, he calls for the slaughter of innocent children – in an attempt to rid the world of Jesus.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us turn to God, the source of all grace, and present these prayers for our needs and the needs of the world.

- 1) For Pope Francis, bishops, priests, catechists and all others who teach the light of faith, may God bless their work, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For leaders of nations, may the salvation and power of our God prevail upon them to work for peace and unity in their lands, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all who face darkness in their daily lives because of war or persecution, may God's peace reign in their hearts and bring them comfort, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For each of us, may God give us the grace to recognize the gifts he has given us and use them to build his kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all who have died, that they might live in the eternal light of God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God of Light and Goodness, we bring these needs to you with trust in your merciful love, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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Saturday, December 29, 2018
(Lec. 202)

- 1) 1 John 2:3-11
- 2) Luke 2:22-35

THE FIFTH DAY
WITHIN THE OCTAVE
OF THE NATIVITY
OF THE LORD

(Opt. Mem.
Saint Thomas Becket, Bishop and Martyr)

FOCUS: Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah, whose birth brings about a new kingdom.

The prophetic words of Simeon in the Temple, at the presentation of Jesus, serve as both a confirmation that Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah, and a foretelling of the challenge he will bring to those who were anticipating a great military warrior and a different kind of kingship. Simeon also reveals the suffering the Blessed Virgin will undergo because of it.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the First Letter of John, the author reminds the troubled community that adherence to God's commands is reflected in how one lives, in how they treat one another. In today's Gospel, Mary and Joseph present Jesus in the Temple. Simeon, a holy man, who had been awaiting the Messiah, acknowledges Jesus as the long-awaited one.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With joyful hope, let us turn now to God with all of our needs.

- 1) For the Church throughout the world, through the power of the Holy Spirit may the kingdom of God in Jesus be received and accepted by all, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For government leaders, may their hearts be swayed by God's law to respect life and to lead in truth and justice, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For the sick, may God grant them the grace to see in their suffering a sharing in the suffering of Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those among us who experience loneliness or feel alienated, may they find comfort through the kindness of others, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, especially those with no one to pray for them, may they be at peace in the glory of heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving God, we have placed our petitions before you. Relying on your promises, we trust that you hear and answer them. Through Christ our Lord.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2018

(Lec. 17)

- 1) 1 Samuel 1:20-22, 24-28
- 2) 1 John 3:1-2, 21, 24
- 3) Luke 2:41-52

**THE HOLY FAMILY
OF JESUS, MARY
AND JOSEPH
- FEAST**

FOCUS: Let us strive to imitate the Holy Family's mutual love and concern for one another.

By being born into a human family, the eternal Son of God has blessed every family, and so made marriage and family a pathway to holiness and eternal life. In the face of God's ever-flowing generosity, highlighted for us today in the blessing of family life, we become aware of our human shortcomings and our need for God's mercy and love.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Today we hear about the birth of Samuel and how his mother gives thanks in the Temple and dedicates her son to the Lord. John, in his letter, highlights our dignity and destiny – we are God's children now and are commanded to love one another. The Gospel from Luke relates the story of Jesus at the age of twelve remaining in the Temple after his family had departed, and the subsequent worry and searching for him that his parents experienced.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us humbly come before our heavenly Father and present our needs, trusting always in his love for us.

- 1) For Pope Francis and all the clergy, may the Lord inspire them in their ministry of love and mercy, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For government leaders, may the Lord grant them courage to uphold the dignity and sanctity of life from conception through natural death, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all of our homes and families, that the love of God may dwell in each, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community, may we prayerfully support those who are discerning a call to ministry in the Church as priests, deacons or religious, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died marked with the sign of faith, may they enter into eternal life with the God who created them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Father, we give thanks for the gift of marriage and family, and we ask you to continue to pour out your many blessings upon us. We ask this in the name of your son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

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Monday, December 31, 2018
(Lec. 204)

- 1) 1 John 2:18-21
- 2) John 1:1-18

THE SEVENTH DAY
WITHIN THE OCTAVE
OF THE NATIVITY
OF THE LORD
(Opt. Mem.
Saint Sylvester I, Pope)

FOCUS: Jesus dwells among us.

Jesus is the true light of the world. He enlightens our lives with a power that the darkness cannot overcome. He continues to dwell with us, to share in our suffering and comfort us when we are troubled. As the Son of God, he has revealed the Father to us, so that we, too, might become children of God.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In our first reading, John warns that the antichrist is coming, causing many to desert. But those who know the truth will stay faithful. The Gospel tells us that the Word was with God from the beginning, and the Word was God. He became flesh and dwelled among us. John the Baptist testified to him, saying, *this was he of whom I said.*

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us offer our petitions to God, on behalf of the needs of the Church and the world.

- 1) For all members of the Church, may God give us courage and the wisdom to help build his kingdom here on earth, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For those responsible for law enforcement, may God instill in them a spirit of service, fairness and justice, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For refugees from war, persecution and violence, may God provide them safety and security, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For the elderly in our faith community who are lonely, may God comfort them and inspire others to attend to their needs, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they be rewarded for their faithfulness and live forever in the presence of God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, we ask that you hear these prayers which we bring to you in the name of your son, Jesus our Lord.