

DECEMBER

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8 9 10 11 12

13 14 15 16 17

18 19 20 21 22

23 24(day)

CHRISTMAS 26

27 28 29 30 31

**YEAR A
WEEKDAYS II**

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2019

**FIRST SUNDAY
OF ADVENT**

(Lec. 1)

- 1) Isaiah 2:1-5
- 2) Romans 13:11-14
- 3) Matthew 24:37-44

FOCUS: Advent is a time to prepare for the Lord.

In this season of Advent, we remember our place in salvation history. We remember that we, who again and again break the covenant established with God, are offered salvation through that same God who came as a baby to live, suffer, die and rise so that we may live forever with him.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Isaiah prophesies that *the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established* and raised, and that instruction shall come out from Zion. Then God will judge between nations. Saint Paul warns the Romans that salvation is imminent, and that they should cast off sin and darkness and choose to live in the light of Jesus Christ. In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus speaks to his disciples about the people of Noah's time who were living carelessly when the flood came, and warns that as it was then, so it is for them. They must be watchful and ready, for God will come at an hour they do not expect.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us bring before the Father our prayers and petitions, trusting that he hears and answers us.

- 1) For the Church during this Advent season of holiness, penance and preparation, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For elected officials, may God increase in them a desire to serve the common good, taking particular care of the most vulnerable, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For the sick, marginalized and poor, may our Lord Jesus Christ enfold them with healing and grace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this community of faith, may the fruits of the Holy Spirit abound in our preparation for Christ's coming again, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may the mercy of God bring them into the fullness of his light and love for eternity, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: We thank and praise you, Father, for the opportunity to live with you forever. Hear and answer our prayers this day, as we strive for holiness this Advent season. We ask this through your Son, Christ our Lord.

Monday, December 2, 2019
(Lec. 175)

- 1) Isaiah 4:2-6
- 2) Matthew 8:5-11

MONDAY
OF ADVENT
- FIRST WEEK

FOCUS: God's transformative power is a merciful gift.

As we take the first steps in our Advent journey, our readings today invite us to consider how transformative God's power is. God's healing presence creates new life for all of creation, even when we don't expect it. May our Advent practices deepen our understanding of God's mercy so that we may live transformative lives for others.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading from Isaiah, an idyllic time of fulfilment is described. The Lord washes away all impurities, extending glory over all creation. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus encounters a centurion who asks him to help with his suffering servant. Jesus is impressed by his faith and proclaims how exceptional it is.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Opening our hearts, we prayerfully bring our needs before the Lord.

- 1) For the Church, may God guide us in renewal and healing during this Advent season, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For those in positions of power, may the Holy Spirit direct their hearts in lives of service, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who suffer from oppression, injustice or war, may God strengthen and sustain them in their time of need, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all of us as we seek new hope during this season, may God draw us ever closer to him in renewed faith, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all the faithful departed, may God have mercy on them and bring them to everlasting life, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God of hope and mercy, we look to you in a special way this Advent season to guide us. May your infinite wisdom be with us as we journey together to grow closer to you. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Tuesday, December 3, 2019
(Lec. 176)

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

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

FOCUS: We are destined for union with God.

As children of God, we are not just imbued with a share of his spirit, but we have the great privilege of knowing the Father through his Son, and knowing their desire that all should share in the divine life of the Trinity.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Isaiah speaks of that day when *a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse*, spiritual gifts will abound in him, and he will bring about justice and harmony among beasts. In the Gospel, Jesus praises the Father for revealing himself to the childlike. He speaks of God's *gracious will*, by which all may come to know the Father through the Son.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: As we prepare for the return of Christ, when justice and peace will flourish, we bring our prayers and concerns before the Lord.

- 1) For our Holy Father Pope Francis, and all who exercise authority in the Church, may the Lord continue to bless them and strengthen them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For our leaders, that the Holy Spirit may guide their hearts in enacting policies protecting all human life, from conception to natural death, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all who struggle to find meaning and direction in their lives, may God bless them with fortitude and hope, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all of us as we begin this season of Advent, may the Father draw us nearer to him through the life and love of his Son, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all who have died, may they come to share in God's life and know the fruits of his holy wisdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Gracious and loving God, teach us to be patient and to trust in your holy will. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

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Wednesday, December 4, 2019
(Lec. 177)

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

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

FOCUS: God is in our midst.

Mountains are sacred spaces of encounter between God and his people. Yet God's mountains are not always peaceful retreats. Rather, they can be busy with crowds and activity because God comes to meet us in our brokenness and need. God is not far off but in our midst through Jesus Christ, who heals, feeds and saves us.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, the prophet Isaiah envisions God's mountain as a blessed place of rejoicing for people of all nations. In the Gospel, Jesus cures and makes whole all who come to him on the mountain. With pity for the crowd, he feeds them with just a few loaves and fish.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Like the crowd gathered around Jesus on the mountain, we place before the Lord our deepest needs.

- 1) For the Church, in this holy season of Advent may God's faithfulness continue to help us grow in faith, hope and love, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For our world, that the Holy Spirit will manifest in all nations God's transforming peace and love, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who have strayed from God's covenant or rejected his promise of life eternal, may God in this Advent bring a new faith to birth in their lives, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community, may the Holy Spirit grant each of us a deeper awareness of God's loving and life-transforming presence in our lives, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they come to share in the fullness of Christ's glory, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving Father, look with favor on us as we strive to do your will. We ask that you hear our prayers through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Thursday, December 5, 2019
(Lec. 178)

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

THURSDAY
OF ADVENT
- FIRST WEEK

FOCUS: Jesus is the eternal rock on whom our lives are built.

During this season of Advent, we are tempted to build our lives on shifting sands: holiday shopping, parties and festivities, and busy to-do lists as we prepare for Christmas. While all these can be swept away in an instant, Jesus is the rock who will be with us through eternity, and he offers himself as the firm foundation for our lives.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The prophet Isaiah proclaims the song of the Israelites, who built a city based on their trust in the Lord. In today's Gospel, Jesus similarly speaks of building a house. While the fool builds his house on sand, the wise man erects his house on rock, where it is protected from the rain, floods and wind. This wise man is he who listens to the words of Jesus and acts on them.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Placing our trust in God who understands our hearts, let us offer him our prayers for our needs and those of the world.

- 1) For all members of the Church as we await the coming of Jesus, may God help us to depend upon him first and foremost, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For our world, may the birth of Jesus pave the way for peaceful relations between nations, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who are under any kind of duress, may Jesus serve as a refuge and shelter amid all storms, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this community of faith, may God protect us from all evil and strengthen our will against temptation, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For the recently deceased, may theirs be the consolation of eternal life, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Lord God, we place these petitions into your loving care, asking that you give us the strength to bring them to fruition, according to your will. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

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Friday, December 6, 2019
(Lec. 179)

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

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

FOCUS: The Lord heals all.

The two blind men believe that Jesus can heal them, and they approach him in faith. Though blind, they see with the eyes of faith. The prophet Isaiah speaks of a time when the blind shall see, among other healing acts. Jesus' coming heals not only the blind men, but all creation by bridging the divide between God and humanity.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Isaiah prophesies a drastic change, in which health, joy, redemption and understanding will replace deafness, lowliness, shame and error. The chosen people will properly reverence God. In the Gospel, Jesus heals two blind men who address him as *Son of David*. Jesus warns them to tell no one, but they do not obey.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With the faith of the blind men crying out to Jesus, we bring God our prayers and petitions.

- 1) For those discerning a religious vocation, may the Holy Spirit grant them wisdom and faith in their journey, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For leaders of nations, may the Lord enkindle in them a love of justice, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For the sick and suffering, may God provide comfort and healing, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all of us gathered here, may God rid us of any spiritual blindness, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For our beloved dead, may they enjoy eternal life with Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Almighty Father, you are our light and our salvation. We ask you to look kindly upon our needs, through your Son, Jesus Christ.

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Saturday, December 7, 2019
(Lec. 180)

- 1) Isaiah 30:19-21, 23-26
- 2) Matthew 9:35–10:1,
5a, 6-8

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

FOCUS: Jesus is the fulfillment of all the promises God has given his people.

During these weeks of Advent, our focus is on Jesus as the fulfillment of the promises given to God's people. In Jesus we have the embodiment of God's love and care for us. He is the Shepherd for the lost sheep, the healer of our pain, the one who brings us the good news of salvation and everlasting life in God's kingdom.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The prophet Isaiah shares God's assurance that he answers his people's cries and that he will make himself visible, so that all can see the Teacher with their own eyes. In the Gospel, Jesus travels widely, teaching and curing people. He summons the Twelve and sends them out to do likewise.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: As lost sheep, we appeal to the Father to provide for our needs. Let us, therefore, bring to him our prayers for ourselves and for others.

- 1) For catechists and others in our Church who help make our divine Teacher, Jesus, visible for those who seek to know him, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For all peoples and nations torn by strife, that the Lord may grant his peace through the spread of the Gospel, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who feel lost, may the Holy Spirit work in them, showing them the way to God's loving arms, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all of us here, may the Holy Spirit give us the gifts necessary for speaking and acting in ways that make us laborers for God's harvest, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all who have died, especially remembering those who died on this date at Pearl Harbor, may they find eternal rest in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: All-loving and powerful God, hear our petitions and answer them according to your holy will. We bring these requests and our prayers to you through our Lord Jesus Christ.

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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2019

(Lec. 4)

- 1) Isaiah 11:1-10
- 2) Romans 15:4-9
- 3) Matthew 3:1-12

**SECOND SUNDAY
OF ADVENT**

FOCUS: A Savior is coming who will bring justice and peace to the faithful.

God is calling out to us – through his prophets and Apostles, through his holy Word, through his Son whom he sent to dwell among us – that he has come to save us. His kingdom is one of justice and peace. Will we listen to these holy voices crying out to us in the desert of worldly divisions and distractions?

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Isaiah tells of the justice and peace that shall reign in the kingdom of God. Saint Paul prays that God will give the community the ability to be in harmony and united with Christ. In the Gospel, John the Baptist exhorts his listeners to turn away from their sins and be baptized, for the one who is coming after him is even mightier.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: As we joyfully await the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ, we offer these prayers and petitions with enduring faith in God's power to provide for our every need.

- 1) For the Church throughout the world as she proclaims the Good News of the Lord, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For public authorities and political leaders, and for all who govern in every nation on earth, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who have turned away from God or do not know him, and for those who love them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all who are parents or guardians of others, and for all who desire to be so, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For the souls of the faithful departed, especially those who have no one else to pray for them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST Lord, in your justice and mercy we ask you to hear these prayers we offer for the salvation of the world. Through Christ our Lord.

Monday, December 9, 2019
(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

FOCUS: Mary said “yes” to God – let us do the same.

What a joy that God chooses to communicate with his people! The angel’s message to Mary brings life to the human race. God reaches out to us, ever inviting, ever communicating. Mary was favored – full of grace – from her very conception. We share in this grace and favor when we say “yes” to Jesus.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In Genesis, after the man and the woman admit eating fruit from the forbidden tree, God declares enmity between the snake and the woman. Paul writes of the salvation brought by Christ, and tells the Ephesians they are blessed in Christ to be God’s adopted sons and daughters. In Luke’s Gospel, an angel declares Mary favored, announcing she will bear the Son of God.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Trusting in the intercession of Mary, our Immaculate Mother, we present our needs to the Lord.

- 1) For an increase in vocations to the priesthood and consecrated religious life, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For the salvation of the world, through the prayers and witness of disciples may all come to know the blessing of being God’s adopted children, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For women facing unplanned or difficult pregnancies, may the Lord provide love and support through a community of Christian sisters and brothers, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For our family of faith during this season of Advent, may God prepare our hearts to receive Jesus more fully, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For our beloved dead and all who have died in faith, may they enjoy every spiritual blessing in the heavens, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Thank you, Father, for adopting us as your children. Please hear and answer our prayers this day, according to your holy will. We ask in the name of your Son, Jesus.

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Tuesday, December 10, 2019
(Lec. 182)

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

TUESDAY
OF ADVENT
- SECOND WEEK

FOCUS: We are called to prepare a path for God in the wilderness of our own souls.

Preparing for God can seem abstract, and Isaiah points out that the paths we make for God should be made in the desert and the wasteland. We can take this as a suggestion to prepare room for God in the desert of our souls. Sometimes we are tempted to let others see only the “put-together” aspects of our lives, but with God we can share all of who we are.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The prophet Isaiah proclaims, *Prepare the way of the Lord!* He says that all flesh is like grass that withers, but that God’s words will endure forever. We must proclaim the glory of God. In the Gospel, Jesus tells the short parable of the lost sheep. A man leaves the 99 sheep in order to find the one that is lost.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Our loving Father seeks us out and finds us when we are lost. We ask him to hear the prayers we bring before him.

- 1) For Pope Francis, our bishop, and all priests and deacons of our diocese, may God guide them as they help the faithful prepare a way for God this Advent, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For leaders of nations and those who work for peace among them, may God give them strength and courage in their efforts, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who are homeless, underemployed or unemployed, may God watch over them and provide for their needs this winter, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For the faithful gathered today, may God give us the courage to enter the wilderness of our own lives so that Jesus may enter our hearts, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all those who have died, may God grant them perpetual rest and peace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving God, we lift our hearts and prayers before you in thanksgiving. Grant these things, we pray, and guide us on the path to holiness. We ask all this through Christ our Lord.

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Wednesday, December 11, 2019
(Lec. 183)

- 1) Isaiah 40:25-31
- 2) Matthew 11:28-30

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

FOCUS: The Lord is God; let us come to him for our strength and our rest.

Today's readings speak to the inexhaustible strength of God – who never tires – and the weakness of people, who faint and grow weary. The Lord looks mercifully on his people and calls us to himself, where we will find the rest and strength we so greatly need.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Isaiah extols the great power of God who created all things, knows all things and never faints or grows weary. In the Gospel, Jesus invites all who labor and are burdened to come to him, take up his easy yoke and find rest.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: The Lord has called us to come to him with our needs. Let us turn to him now, knowing that he receives our prayers with mercy.

- 1) For Church leaders, may the Lord sustain them in their work of ministry, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For all elected and appointed officials, may God lead them in creating just laws for all whom they serve, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those fleeing their homes due to war and conflict, may God provide a spiritual and physical place of safety and refuge, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For our faith community, may the Lord encourage us to find rest in him and grant us strength to do the work he calls us to, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died this day, may the Lord welcome them into his eternal rest and peace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Good and gracious God, we hear your call to come unto you. Receive these prayers and grant them according to your holy will, through Christ our Lord.

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Thursday, December 12, 2019
(Lec. 690A)

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

- 1) Zechariah 2:14-17
or Revelation 11:19a;
12:1-6a, 10ab
- 2) Luke 1:26-38
or Luke 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: The promise of the coming of the anointed one.

Children sometimes start counting the days in anticipation of Christmas or a birthday. The Jews of the Old Testament were awaiting the coming of the Messiah with the same anticipation. Christ is the fulfillment of their desire.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Zechariah prophesies that the Lord will come to dwell among the people. In the Gospel, Mary visits Elizabeth and Elizabeth proclaims that Mary is the *mother of my Lord*.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Confident in the Lord's promises, we make our petitions to him.

- 1) That our Church leaders may be fortified by God's word working in them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That those who lead nations may be guided in all their duties by Christ who glorified God in all things, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those who feel weak mentally, physically or spiritually, may have the grace and consolation of the Lord and be strengthened by him, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That each of us here may grow in faith and love as we lead lives of discipleship, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That our beloved dead may experience the love of God and his saints in a heavenly home for eternity, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Merciful Father, we thank you for hearing our every prayer. Grant these and all the needs of your people, we ask through your Son, Christ our Lord.

Friday, December 13, 2019
(Lec. 185)

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

FRIDAY
OF ADVENT
- SECOND WEEK
(OBL MEM
Saint Lucy,
Virgin and martyr)

FOCUS: God invites us to the greatness of a life of deepening faith.

We often are tempted to choose to stay in our apparent comfort rather than be moved by God's call. Today's readings invite us to set aside excuses so as to be drawn into the greatness God desires for us – the greatness of a life lived seeking the wisdom of God's will.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Isaiah tells the people of Israel that what the Lord teaches is for their good. In the Gospel, Jesus asks: *To what shall I compare this generation?* For they spoke ill of John the Baptist and the Son of Man.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: We are called to a deeper trust in God, so let us place our needs in his loving hands.

- 1) For the Church, may the Holy Spirit strengthen all those who proclaim the Gospel to a world in need, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For all those in positions of power, may they be guided by God's perfect wisdom in protecting the dignity of all, especially the weak and the vulnerable, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those struggling to respond to God's call, may he give them the grace to trust him and the courage to boldly follow him, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those gathered here, may the Holy Spirit fill us with faith and increase us in virtue as we respond to God's invitations in our lives, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they be welcomed into the presence of God's perfect love.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God of wisdom, teach us to trust in your love. Transform us with an ever-deepening faith as we place all our needs in your care. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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Saturday, December 14, 2019
(Lec. 186)

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

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

FOCUS: God has prepared his people for the coming of the Messiah.

Advent – our period of preparation for the coming of Jesus – is celebrated by revisiting our history, when God sent great prophets to prepare the hearts of the people for the coming of the Messiah. Elijah represented faithfulness to the one God, and John the Baptist directly pointed the way to Jesus.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Sirach sings the praises of the great prophet Elijah, who prophesied boldly, worked wonders, was taken to God in a fiery chariot and is destined to return at the time of the Lord. In the Gospel, Jesus equates Elijah, the forerunner of the Lord, to John the Baptist.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: As we prepare our hearts to receive Jesus, we turn to God, our Father, asking for the welfare of those who are most in need.

- 1) For the people of God, may the Holy Spirit inflame in us the same zeal as Elijah as we follow God's call, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For government officials, may God lead them to greater selflessness as they are called to serve, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For victims of human trafficking, may God have mercy on their plight, rescue them from their slavery and help them find healing, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those in our faith community who struggle with bitterness or sorrow, may God open their hearts to his blessings in their lives, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they enter into eternal rest, peace and joy, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God of life and of the living, hear our prayers for your children in need, and grant them what they need, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2019

(Lec. 7)

- 1) Isaiah 35:1-6a, 10
- 2) James 5:7-10
- 3) Matthew 11:2-11

**THIRD SUNDAY
OF ADVENT**

FOCUS: Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah.

Advent is a season of hopeful anticipation, a time of preparation – for celebrating the birth of our Savior, and of readying ourselves for his eventual return. In God’s goodness he gave us his own Son, who willingly took on our humanity to save us. Jesus forgives sins, heals the suffering and teaches the truth – he is the long-awaited Messiah.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Isaiah speaks of a day when the glory and splendor of God will be apparent to all. God will come to save. James encourages the community to be patient as they await Christ’s return. In the Gospel, Jesus tells the disciples of John the Baptist to go and tell John of miracles that have occurred. He then tells the crowd of John the Baptist’s greatness.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Our gracious Father sent his Son to heal and save us. Let us bring our prayers to him today, with the assurance of his everlasting mercy.

- 1) For Pope Francis and all who lead the Church, may the outpouring of the gifts of the Holy Spirit sanctify them for the good of the world, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For those who govern nations and communities, may they be blessed with the guidance of the Holy Spirit in making policies, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who are ill, mourning or suffering, may the healing presence of Jesus come upon them and give them peace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those gathered here, that in this season of Advent our merciful Father may help us grow in faith, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For our beloved dead, may they be welcomed into the fullness of God’s kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Father, we ask that you hear and answer these and all the prayers we hold in our hearts. Through your Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ.

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Monday, December 16, 2019
(Lec. 187)

- 1) Numbers 24:2-7, 15-17a
- 2) Matthew 21:23-27

MONDAY
OF ADVENT
- THIRD WEEK

FOCUS: Jesus is the One sent by God for the salvation of all people.

Throughout our history, holy men and women have acknowledged and made known to others the presence of God, even when it was difficult to do so. As holy people of God, we rejoice that the Lord is near, and attest that Jesus is the Son of the Father.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the Book of Numbers, the oracle Balaam acknowledges the goodness of the Most High God. In the Gospel, the chief priests and elders question Jesus about the source of his authority for doing *these things* that he is doing.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: As we wait in patience for the coming of the Lord, let us offer our prayers to our loving God.

- 1) For Church leaders, may the Holy Spirit grant them strength and humility for diligently and faithfully proclaiming the Gospel to the world, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For local leaders, may God give them the grace to see those they serve with the eyes of Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who are alone, may the Lord bring them good and kind souls to befriend and comfort them in their loneliness, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all of us gathered in this holy place, may the Prince of Peace draw us to himself that we may truly live as his disciples, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For our loved ones who have died, may they one day enjoy the heavenly banquet, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God of heaven and earth, fill us with patience as we await the One whose day draws near. We ask this and all things through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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Tuesday, December 17, 2019
(Lec. 193)

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

TUESDAY
OF ADVENT
- THIRD WEEK

FOCUS: The Good News is, there is salvation in Christ.

By outlining Jesus' lineage, Matthew shows that the Lord has fulfilled his promise to his people with the birth of Jesus, for Jesus' genealogy is that of the expected Messiah. This is the Good News he is announcing to the early Christian community, including the Gentiles: There is salvation in Christ.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Jacob assembles his sons so that he may tell them of their future, especially that of Judah. In the Gospel, Matthew details the genealogy of Jesus Christ: from Abraham, through David, to the Babylonian exile, and ending with Joseph and Mary.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us bring our prayers and those of the world before the Lord, the source of our hope.

- 1) For bishops and priests, may the Spirit continue to inspire them in their preaching of the Gospel, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For all those who govern and lead our communities and country, may the Lord guide them in all they do, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those experiencing depression or loss of hope, may the Lord lift up their spirits and heal their sorrow, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For our faith community, may the Spirit grant us courage and integrity in living in ways that announce salvation in Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all the faithful departed who have gone before us, may the Lord fulfill his promise of eternal rest in his presence, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Good and gracious God, we bring these prayers and petitions before you, trusting in your divine mercy to fulfill them according to your will. Through Christ our Lord.

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Wednesday, December 18, 2019
(Lec. 194)

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

WEDNESDAY
OF ADVENT
- THIRD WEEK

FOCUS: Let us respond in faith when God asks us to do something we see as difficult.

With Christmas now a week away, with God's help let us ask ourselves if we can say "yes" to the Lord as we know both Joseph and Mary did. They considered the requests God made of them with more than a, "what's-in-it-for-me" point of view. The faith with which they responded is a model for our own way of attending to what God asks of us.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Jeremiah prophesies that the Lord will bring forth a righteous king, who will reign with wisdom and justice, and save Judah and Israel. In the Gospel, Matthew writes about the events leading to Jesus' birth, including the angel's appearance and words to Joseph in a dream, and Joseph's obedience to the Lord's commands.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: We now bring our prayers and petitions to our heavenly Father.

- 1) For leaders of the Church, may they be guided by the Holy Spirit in spreading the message of peace this Christmas season, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For government leaders, may the Lord grant them a spirit of cooperation in their legislative duties in the New Year, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those facing a difficult Christmas season after the loss of a loved one, may God bring them comfort and compassionate friends and family, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those in our faith community who have fallen away from the Church, may the Lord grant them the courage to answer "yes" to an invitation to return, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all the faithful departed, may their lives of following Jesus be rewarded with the glory of heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Merciful Father, we humbly pray that you grant these petitions in the name of your Son, Jesus the Lord.

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Thursday, December 19, 2019
(Lec. 195)

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

THURSDAY
OF ADVENT
- THIRD WEEK

FOCUS: Our salvation is fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

There are many parallels in the Old Testament and the New Testament readings we hear today. They both have infancy narratives of men set apart, even before they were born, to give service to God and become part of the story of salvation. We become a part of this story by embracing God's plan and living in his grace.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, an angel appears to the barren wife of Manoah, and tells her she *will conceive and bear a son*. Thus, eventually Samson, who was consecrated to God, was born. In the Gospel, the angel Gabriel appears to Zechariah in the sanctuary and announces that Zechariah's wife, Elizabeth, would bear a son to be named John. Zechariah expresses doubt, so he is made speechless until the time the angel's words are fulfilled.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Assured that God is with us, let us join in prayer as we present our petitions to the Father.

- 1) For those who shepherd our Church, may Jesus the eternal priest keep them within the shelter of his love and protected from all evil, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For those in positions of authority, may the God of mercy and justice sow peace and goodness in their hearts, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who will be spending the upcoming holiday alone, may the Lord comfort them and bring them joy in his presence, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For families in our faith community who are in need financially, emotionally or spiritually, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they rejoice in the salvation earned for them by Jesus' sacrifice, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, we offer these prayers knowing that you have promised salvation to those who follow you. We pray through your Son, Jesus Christ.

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Friday, December 20, 2019
(Lec. 196)

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

FRIDAY
OF ADVENT
- THIRD WEEK

FOCUS: Keep our eyes fixed upon the birth of Jesus.

As we draw close to the end of Advent, we may feel the pressures of the impending holiday season. But today we are called to draw close to God as we prepare to celebrate the glorious birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ. We turn to him with joy and praise for the gift of salvation through Jesus.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Isaiah prophesies about a virgin who will bear a son who will be called Emmanuel. In the Gospel, Mary receives a visit from the angel Gabriel who informs her that she has *found favor with God* and will bear a son conceived by the Holy Spirit who will be the Son of God. Mary says, *May it be done to me according to your word.*

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us turn to our gracious God, who loves us beyond measure, with our prayers.

- 1) For all members of the Church, may the Holy Spirit continue to be our strength and foundation, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For policymakers, may God inspire them in respecting the sanctity of life from conception through natural death, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who are struggling with chronic illness, may Jesus, the Divine Physician, bring them comfort, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community, may God draw each of us closer to him each day, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they find joy in the presence of God in his 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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Saturday, December 21, 2019
(Lec. 197)

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

SATURDAY
OF ADVENT
- THIRD WEEK
(Opt. Mem.
Saint Peter Canisius,
Priest and Doctor of the Church)

FOCUS: Mary invites us to prepare for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Mary brings Elizabeth and us the good news of the coming birth of Christ. Children are good news, but they are also much work! This is another reason for Mary's visit – to help her cousin prepare for the birth of her own child. We, then, should ask Mary to help us prepare for and live the joy and challenges of following Christ.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the reading from Song of Songs, a lover calls to his beloved, inviting her to arise and come see the springtime of new life. In the Gospel, Mary travels to visit her cousin Elizabeth, who welcomes Mary with great joy while the infant in Elizabeth's womb leaps for joy at Mary's arrival.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With trust in our merciful Father, we offer him our prayers and petitions.

- 1) For leaders in the Church, may God give them a spirit of joyous hope as they prepare to celebrate the feast of Christmas, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For public authorities, may the Holy Spirit grant them wisdom in caring for the needs of all, especially the unborn and the most vulnerable, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all who are suffering from any physical or spiritual burdens, and for those who minister to them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those gathered here, may the Lord strengthen us in courage and fidelity as we prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they rest in the generosity of God's peace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving Father, we know you see our needs and respond with joy and abundance of life. Hear our prayers this day, we ask through your Son and our Lord, Jesus Christ.

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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2019

(Lec. 10)

- 1) Isaiah 7:10-14
- 2) Romans 1:1-7
- 3) Matthew 1:18-24

**FOURTH SUNDAY
OF ADVENT**

FOCUS: Jesus is the fulfillment of the promises God has made to the House of David.

Today's readings remind us that in Christ Jesus, God has been faithful to the promises he made to his Chosen People. Our salvation in Christ is how we are reconciled back to God, who created us and loves us.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Isaiah prophesies a sign for Israel: *The virgin shall conceive, and bear a son* who will embody God's redemptive presence with his people. Paul, recalling his own apostolic calling, writes that the Gentiles are also *called to belong to Jesus Christ*. In the Gospel, the Lord's angel comes to Joseph in a dream and reveals the circumstances of Mary's pregnancy, and what this means. Joseph obeys the angel's commands.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

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

- 1) For our Holy Father, our bishops and all who exercise authority in the Church as they continue inspiring us to walk in the ways of the Lord, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For governments and world leaders, may the Advent message of hope inform and direct their decisions and actions, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all who have turned away from the Church, may God renew their faith, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all of us as we journey through this season of Advent, may the Spirit open our hearts to an even greater relationship with 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: Gracious and loving God, as we place these prayers before you, teach us to hope and trust in your holy will. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

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Monday, December 23, 2019
(Lec. 199)

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

MONDAY
OF ADVENT
- FOURTH WEEK

FOCUS: We prepare our hearts to be united with Christ in celebration of his coming.

Miracles of God's grace surround the birth and naming of John; his mother and father rejoice and bless the Lord. John is the messenger, foretold by prophets, who prepares us for the coming of the Lord. The hearts of parents and children turn toward one another as families prepare now – as they did then – for Christ's coming.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, the prophet announces the Lord's sending of a messenger to prepare hearts for the coming of the Lord. In the Gospel, Elizabeth presents her newborn son and names him John. When Zechariah confirms this name, God restores his voice. All are amazed and realize the Lord's hand is with the child John.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: In preparation for Christ's coming, we offer these petitions before the Lord.

- 1) That the Church, as the family of God, may be made ever more holy in its preparation for the coming of Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That leaders of peoples and nations may be encouraged by the Spirit of God in their efforts toward peace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those who are lonely may be consoled by the presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and in those whom the Lord places in their path, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That all of us who worship here may, through the mercy of God, be conformed ever more to Christ in this season, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That those who have died may be united to Christ in his heavenly kingdom; let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, you showed mercy to Elizabeth and Zechariah. Show us your mercy that we, too, may rejoice and bless you, through your Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ.

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Tuesday, December 24, 2019
(Lec. 200)

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

TUESDAY
OF ADVENT
- FOURTH WEEK

FOCUS: Jesus Christ is the light that banishes the darkness of the world.

On this last day of Advent, we are in a time of heightened anticipation. Soon we will celebrate that God became human, like us. Our wait nears an end, and the acknowledgement that our God is Emmanuel – God with us – brings joy for our salvation.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, the Lord tells Nathan to tell King David that the Lord will protect him, and raise up an heir from him, such that his *Kingdom shall endure forever*. The Gospel quotes at length a prayer of Zechariah, in which he foretells the importance of his son and the Messiah for whom his son will prepare the way.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With open hearts and minds, we now turn to our heavenly Father with our prayers for the needs of all.

- 1) For all who shepherd our Church throughout the world, may God richly bless their call to prayer and service in helping others to walk the path of salvation, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For leaders around the world as they strive for lasting peace among nations and an end to war, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those living with anxiety and uncertainty because of events outside their control, may the power of Christ dwell in them and strengthen them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For our faith community in these final hours of Advent, may God open our ears to his Word so we may reflect his love through our actions, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For the faithful who have died, may the Lord grant them rest and peace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: O God, may the dawn of your light break upon us as you mercifully listen to our needs. We ask this 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 2019 – 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's plan for salvation is brought to fruition in Christ Jesus, born as a baby.

On Christmas we recognize and celebrate the love of God: Love incarnated in the Son who would save us. He came as a child who would become bread for the life of the world and would suffer and die as the final and perfect sacrifice uniting us to the Father, who created and loves us.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Isaiah prophesies that the nations will see Jerusalem's vindication and glory, and that the Israelites will no more be termed forsaken. In Acts, Paul preaches in the synagogue of the salvation history in which God raised up David who did his will. It is through David that God brings a Savior, Jesus. The Gospel outlines the genealogy of Jesus, son of Abraham, son of David. Fourteen generations *from Abraham to David; from David to the Babylonian exile*, and from the exile to Christ.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: In God the Father's goodness, he sent his only Son to heal and save us. Let us bring our prayers to him today.

- 1) For the Church, may this Christmas season be a time of great conversion to the Lord and his will, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For elected officials, may God give them the courage to cooperate with his plan for the good of his people, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who suffer in mind, body or soul, may the great love of the Lord, who came that we might have abundant life, bring them healing and peace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this community of faith and for those we love, may our lives be transformed by an encounter with the love and mercy of Jesus who came to save us, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may the souls of the faithfully departed rest in the fullness of God's loving presence, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Father, as we celebrate the great feast of our salvation, we ask you to hear and answer these and all of our prayers, through your Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ.

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CHRISTMAS 2019 – 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: God comes to us a child, and invites us into a relationship based on love and generosity.

Tonight we celebrate the birth of Christ Jesus, born to a poor family without resources. God's magnificent presence occurs in the unlikeliest of places, and stirs us to awareness when we may not be able to recognize it. Moreover, his coming in such a gentle way, as a child, invites us to respond, not out of fear or obligation, but out of love and generosity.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Isaiah proclaims the light and joy arriving with the birth of a child *upon [whose] shoulder dominion rests*. Saint Paul writes to Titus of the grace of God present in Jesus Christ and *the blessed hope* for his second coming. In the Gospel, Luke tells the story of Mary and Joseph traveling to Bethlehem to enroll in the census. There, Mary gives birth and the angels appear to the shepherds, announcing the good news of Christ's birth.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: As we reflect on the gift of the Christ child, let us offer our petitions to our Father in heaven.

- 1) For the Church, may the light of Christ shine through her in reaching out to those who dwell in darkness, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For national leaders, may the Holy Spirit direct them in making wise and just decisions in service to their people, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For the sick, and those worried about the health of loved ones, may God protect them from anxiety and bring them health of mind and body, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community, may God increase us in charity and love, and awaken in us joy as we serve others, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all those who have died, may they experience the light and joy of heaven, 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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CHRISTMAS 2019 – 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: The *light of the human race*, Jesus the Word made flesh, dwells now among us.

We are called to give the gift of the Light of Christ to a world buried in darkness. With God's grace we have the power to disperse the darkness.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Isaiah calls the people to break out in song for their salvation is at hand. In the Letter to the Hebrews, the author speaks of the glory of God and what the Son has accomplished. The first chapter of John's Gospel tells us that Jesus as the Word of God was present in the beginning and he is *the light of the human race*.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With thanksgiving for the Son of God we celebrate today, let us bring our prayers and those of a fallen world to the Father who redeems us.

- 1) For Pope Francis and all pastoral leaders, may the glory of God light their way and guide their witness among us, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For leaders of governments, may the Holy Spirit grant them integrity and humility in being the voice for those who are marginalized in society, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For refugees and asylum seekers, may the Lord grant wisdom and prudence to those seeking compassionate and just solutions for their plight, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those gathered here today, for all our families and friends and the stranger among us, may the light of Christ shine brightly in our lives throughout the coming year, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died during this holy season, may they now be embraced by the eternal light of life with God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Father of the *light of the human race*, hear us as we place before you our needs. Grant what will assist us in being faithful to you. We ask this through your Son, Christ our Lord.

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Thursday, December 26, 2019
(Lec. 696)

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

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

FOCUS: The Holy Spirit is our help, always.

Stephen is *filled with grace and power* and *filled with the Holy Spirit*. Stephen saw the heavens opened, just as they opened at Christ's baptism. Our baptism offers this glorious call – filled with the Holy Spirit, our prayer offers full access to God, who has opened the possibility of heaven to us.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading recounts Stephen's power-filled ministry, and martyrdom. In the Gospel from Matthew, Jesus tells his followers not to be afraid, promising help from the Holy Spirit when they face persecution.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: As we celebrate this holy octave of Christmas, let us present our needs to God, who gave us his own Son.

- 1) For bishops, priests and deacons living in areas of religious persecution, may the strength and intercession of Stephen help them as they proclaim the Gospel, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For world leaders, may the power of Christ instill in them a desire for using their authority to uphold the dignity of all people, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all who are alone and those who have lost loved ones during this Christmas season, may the Lord bring them comfort through the fellowship of Christian brothers and sisters, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community, may Christ's encouraging words to all of his followers bring us to a greater trust in him and in the power of the Holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For our departed brothers and sisters, may they rejoice in seeing Jesus face to face, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, you delight in providing for your children. Please hear our prayers this day and grant them according to your will, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

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Friday, December 27, 2019
(Lec. 697)

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

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

FOCUS: Saint John is a model for all who follow Jesus.

John gave his all. Leaving his nets, his livelihood, he followed Jesus. Of the Twelve, only John stood at the foot of the cross. In today's reading Peter ran, John ran faster. Seeing the burial cloths he believed. Why? He was given grace. Let's ask for grace to leave our nets, give our all and follow Jesus.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In John's first Epistle, he writes that all they have seen, heard and touched testifies to the *Word of life* made visible to them. He does this so that all may have fellowship with God the Father and Jesus, his Son. In today's Gospel from John, hearing Mary of Magdalene's report, Peter and John run to the empty tomb and see the burial cloths, and John believes.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Rejoicing in this holy octave of Christmas, let us confidently present our needs to God.

- 1) For those in our Church who preach the Gospel, may the Lord protect them and continue to grant them wisdom and joy, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For elected officials, through the power of the Holy Spirit may they stand for justice, protecting the vulnerable among us from conception to natural death, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For the homeless and all who lack adequate shelter, may the Lord provide for their needs through the assistance of others, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For our faith community, as we enjoy fellowship with the Father and the Son, may we continue to grow in virtue, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For the dead, especially those dear to us, may their joy be complete as they enjoy eternal fellowship with Jesus, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving Father, John saw the burial cloths and believed. Please grant us grace to believe, and answer our prayers according to your wisdom, through Jesus Christ your Son.

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Saturday, December 28, 2019
(Lec. 698)

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

**THE HOLY INNOCENTS,
MARTYRS
- FEAST**

FOCUS: The world was powerless over Christ.

Herod wanted to kill the Christ child because he represented a threat to his power and to his singular place as king. His fear, pride and arrogance led him to massacre many innocent children in the attempt to destroy the one child. The death of these children shows that from the beginning of his life, the world did not welcome Christ. And yet the world was powerless over Christ, whose own life, death and resurrection redeemed the world, and gave glory to these first holy innocents the Church honors today.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, John writes to his community of the message he and the other disciples have received from Christ, that, *If we acknowledge our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from every wrongdoing.* In the Gospel, Joseph flees with Mary and Jesus to Egypt. Herod – searching to destroy the Christ child – orders *the massacre of all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity two years old and under.*

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: We approach the Father, who has formed and shaped us to help us bear good fruit, and ask him to hear and answer the prayers we offer

- 1) For our Holy Father Pope Francis and for all the members of God's holy Church, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For those who hold positions of leadership, may the Lord's gracious mercy bear great fruit in their lives of service, let us pray to the Lord
- 3) For the poor, the homeless, the sick and the lonely, may they receive the healing comfort of the Father, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all of us in this Christmas season, may the Lord strengthen our faith and help us to grow in understanding, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For our beloved dead, may they rest in paradise with all the saints, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, please accept these petitions which we offer in trust and deep love, knowing you will give us all we need. We offer this in the name of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2019

(Lec. 17)

- 1) Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14
- 2) Colossians 3:12-21
or 3:12-17
- 3) Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

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

FOCUS: God is at the heart of all Christian families.

Today we celebrate and recognize the Holy Family – Jesus, Mary and Joseph – as the model of all Christian families. Saint Joseph set a good example for all of us as his family faced the crisis of Herod's plot to kill Jesus: He listened to God's voice and cared for his family according to the word of God.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Sirach writes about family relationships and duties, especially that of honoring one's parents all the days of their lives. Paul instructs the Colossians on how to love one another and live for Christ. In the Gospel, Joseph follows the instructions of the angels who led him safely into, and out of, Egypt.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: We call upon the name of the Lord in praise and thanksgiving. In complete trust, we bring him these petitions.

- 1) For the Church in the service of the kingdom of God, may the Lord raise up many vocations for her mission and bless her with fruitfulness, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For those in public office, may God give them fortitude in searching for nonviolent solutions to age-old conflicts, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all who are marginalized, may God bless them with assurance that Jesus knows them and calls them by name, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all gathered here today, may we be empowered by the spiritual gifts we have received from the Lord and grow in holiness and generosity, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For the beloved dead of all present here, may the Lord bring them to rest at his side for all eternity, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God and Father of all, hear our prayers, spoken and unspoken. We ask through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

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Monday, December 30, 2019
(Lec. 203)

- 1) 1 John 2:12-17
- 2) Luke 2:36-40

THE SIXTH DAY
WITHIN THE OCTAVE
OF THE NATIVITY
OF THE LORD

FOCUS: Christ, the eternal one, is worthy of our lives, whereas the things of this world will pass away.

As we continue our Christmas celebration, we consider the wisdom of following the child Jesus versus being enticed by the allurements of the world. As Anna's example demonstrates, Jesus is worth waiting for and giving up the things of this world – things that will pass away in the end.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, John writes to his community encouraging them to refrain from loving *the world or the things of the world*, and to do the will of God. In the Gospel, the prophetess Anna, who has spent her life in fasting and prayer in the Temple, gives *thanks to God* for the child [Jesus].

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Like the prophetess Anna, we come before the Lord today with hopeful hearts, offering these prayers with confidence in the Lord's goodness.

- 1) For Pope Francis and all Church leaders, may the vulnerability of the Christ child inspire them in leading the Church with humility, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For all governments around the world, may the peace of this Christmas season lead to greater cooperation, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who wait – for justice, companionship or health – may the Lord grant patience and continued hope, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community, may the Gospel resound in every heart so that it overflows into our every thought and action, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all those who passed from this world today, may the Lord welcome them into their eternal home, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, hear our prayers and strengthen us that we may lead lives which glorify you. We ask through your Son, Christ our Lord.

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Tuesday, December 31, 2019
(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: In the person of Jesus Christ, God not only saves us, but also gives us the opportunity to be one of his children.

As we commemorate the promise of salvation that God fulfilled through Jesus Christ, we give thanks for the gift of redemption, and the opportunity to be called a child of God.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Saint John writes that through the Holy One, we have been given knowledge of the truth. Likewise in the Gospel, Saint John explains the eternal divinity of Jesus Christ and the promises God delivers to us through him.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us bring before God our needs and our prayers.

- 1) For all who serve the people of God throughout the world, may the Lord look graciously upon them and bless their efforts, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For all national and international leaders, may God's grace empower them in being a light in the darkness for all whom they serve, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who are troubled by doubt, grief, anxiety or any other difficulty, may the peace of Christ bring them consolation, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community, may the light of Christ shine upon us and be gracious to us, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all who have died during this past year, may they be welcomed into God's presence, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: O Holy One, the earth rejoices in your Son's birth. We ask that you might hear the prayers we ask of you today, through Christ our Lord.