

DECEMBER

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 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

Tuesday, December 1, 2020
(Lec. 176)

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

TUESDAY
OF ADVENT
- FIRST WEEK

FOCUS: How blessed are we who believe what we have not seen.

In this first week of Advent, we wait with confidence for the coming of the Messiah. His Spirit will guide us with peace and justice. Blessed are we who believe in what we do not see.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Isaiah foretells the coming of a shoot from the stump of Jesse upon whom the Spirit of the Lord will rest, and who will judge with justice. In the Gospel, Jesus rejoices in the Father and tells the disciples how blessed they are for having seen what they see.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: We now bring our needs to our loving Father, with confidence and trust.

- 1) For Pope Francis, may the Lord look graciously upon his every need and continue to prosper him in holiness, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For world leaders and local representatives, may the Spirit of the Lord lead them in their decision-making, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For the elderly and homebound, may the Lord fill them with his presence, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community, may Jesus strengthen us in building God's kingdom on earth, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died in the light of faith, may they soon be welcomed home by our loving God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, giver of every perfect gift, we ask that you would hear our prayers and answer them according to your will. Through your Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ.

* * * * *

Wednesday, December 2, 2020
(Lec. 177)

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

WEDNESDAY
OF ADVENT
- FIRST WEEK

FOCUS: The Creator of the Universe delights in using what we offer for the Kingdom.

Jesus feeds the crowd with seven loaves and two fish provided by the disciples. God delights to use us with our meager offerings. We offer what we have in our hands – always insufficient, but with his grace, it is enough. This Advent, what will you offer?

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In today's first reading, Isaiah foretells rich blessings for all peoples, a sumptuous banquet; the Lord wipes away their tears, destroying death forever. In the Gospel, Jesus' miraculous ministry continues; after healing many people he feeds a crowd of 4,000 people with seven loaves of bread and a few fish.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With confidence in God who delights to provide for our needs, let us offer our prayers this day.

- 1) For the Holy Father, may God protect his health, granting him wisdom and joy as he leads the Church, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For leaders of governments throughout the world, may the Lord assist them in their work in caring for the most vulnerable in their midst, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all who lack food or shelter, may Jesus who fed the crowds look with mercy upon their every need, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this community during Advent, may the Holy Spirit help us prepare our hearts to receive the newborn King, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died in faith, may they rejoice, beholding the face of God who destroys death forever, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Lord God, we thank you and praise you for your holy presence. Receive these prayers and grant them according to your holy will, through Christ our Lord.

* * * * *

Thursday, December 3, 2020
(Lec. 178)

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

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

FOCUS: The Lord is the eternal Rock who will bring down the mighty and lift up the lowly.

Today we remind ourselves that the Lord is the foundation upon which our lives are to be built, and he will provide for his people. All else in life – our riches, our worldly success, and our accomplishments – will fade or be destroyed.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Isaiah prophesies about the land of Judah: the strength of a city and people protected by the Lord. The Lord is an *eternal Rock* who *humbles those in high places* with the destruction of a city and a people who once held a place of esteem. In the Gospel, Jesus proclaims that not everyone who cries out *Lord, Lord* will necessarily enter the kingdom of heaven, but *only the one who does the will of [the] Father in heaven*.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With confidence and trust, we offer our prayers to our Father in heaven.

- 1) For all who hold leadership positions within the Church, may God strengthen and guide them as they witness lives of faith and service, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For our national and local leaders, may the Holy Spirit lead them to find peaceful solutions to conflict and division, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who are most vulnerable to the virus, may the Lord place them under his care and protection, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For our local community, may the Lord look graciously upon the needs of the most vulnerable among us, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all who have died, may the Lord grant them eternal rest, 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.

* * * * *

Friday, December 4, 2020
(Lec. 179)

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

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

FOCUS: Rest in the peace that only the Lord Jesus can provide.

Isaiah promises peace and prosperity through the coming of the Messiah. It is a peace and prosperity that abides even in the midst of endless need and persecution. But faith in who Jesus is and the healing he brings us empowers us to carry forth in proclaiming his goodness, and resting in the peace that only he can provide.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, the Lord speaks through Isaiah of the coming redemption of his people: *The deaf shall hear ... the eyes of the blind shall see*, and the lowly and poor will find joy and rejoice in the Lord. In the Gospel, Jesus is pursued by blind men who call him *Son of David*, and beg for his pity. Jesus questions their belief in him before touching their eyes to open them, and then warns them to tell no one.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: As servants, let us now bring our prayers before the Lord.

- 1) That the Church may continue to grow in holiness and unity, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and the good news of his coming may spread to all ends of the earth, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That the spirits of the lonely and discouraged may be uplifted by the assurance of God's love and compassion for them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That Christ may have a place in the hearts and homes of those gathered here, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That those who have died may, through the mercy of God, dwell in his house for eternity, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God and Father of Light, hear the prayers we offer as we wait in joy and hope for the coming of Emmanuel. We ask this through your Son, Christ our Lord.

* * * * *

Saturday, December 5, 2020
(Lec. 180)

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

SATURDAY
OF ADVENT
- FIRST WEEK

FOCUS: The Holy One of Israel dwells among us, inviting us to be healed and comforted, and sending us to share this good news generously.

The season of Advent is not only about the coming of the Messiah whom Isaiah foretold, and whom we celebrate at Christmas. It is also about the Second Coming, which we still await. In this time of already-but-not-yet, the Kingdom begun but not in fullness, we receive strength from the One who has already dwelt among us in human form, and who lives within and among us through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, the prophet Isaiah offers comfort, prophesying to his people that there will be a day when the Lord will bind up the wounds of his people. In the Gospel, Jesus heals every illness and sends his followers to cure the sick, raise the dead, and drive out demons.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Trusting in the power and care of our God whose heart is moved with pity for us, we confidently bring our prayers to him.

- 1) For the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the Church's witness and commitment to ending racism, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For the world, may God's power bind up the wounds of all people and bring peace, especially in lands tormented by violence, let us pray to the Lord
- 3) For those who are grieving, may the tender compassion of our God carry them and strengthen them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those gathered here, may the gifts of the Holy Spirit empower us as we share with others the healing and hope found in Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they rest in the light of Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving God, we bring you these prayers filled with the hope we know in Christ Jesus. Hear and answer them, we pray through Christ our Lord.

* * * * *

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2020

(Lec. 5)

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

**SECOND SUNDAY
OF ADVENT**

FOCUS: Stay awake, for the day of the Lord is at hand.

The voice of God breaks into our world through sacred Scripture and the witness of modern-day disciples. Does it resound and echo in our thoughts, words, and actions, forming and shaping our lives? Or, is it dulled and dimmed by our worldly ways? Now is the time to listen, now is the time to act, for the kingdom of God is at hand.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The prophet Isaiah speaks for the Lord in giving comfort to his people, proclaiming the service of Jerusalem at an end – and that her guilt is expiated. They are to *prepare the way of the Lord, for the glory of the Lord shall be revealed*, and he will shepherd them with care. In the second reading, Peter writes to his community that *the day of the Lord will come like a thief*. Therefore, they ought to conduct themselves *in holiness and devotion ... eager to be found without spot or blemish before him*. In the Gospel, John the Baptist heralds the coming of Jesus as he exhorts his listeners to turn away from sin and be baptized.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Seeking the consolation of our heavenly Father, we present our needs before him and place our trust in his loving response.

- 1) For Pope Francis and all Church leaders, may the Lord continue to bless them with fortitude and growth in holiness, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For world leaders, may the Holy Spirit give them the graces necessary for governing with prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those oppressed by any evil in the world, may Christ bring justice and healing to their circumstances, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For each of us, may the Holy Spirit continue to prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For our beloved dead, may they be granted a share in the heavenly reward of Christ's eternal salvation, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God our Father, you gather us in and shepherd us with care. Hear the prayers we offer today through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

* * * * *

Monday, December 7, 2020
(Lec. 181)

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

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

FOCUS: God himself will come and save his people.

Our Advent journey is not meant simply to end at the crib in Bethlehem, as a commemoration of the birth of Jesus in time, but with the coming of Christ in glory. Like the desert that flourishes and blooms with the summer rains, Christ's return will bring with it renewal, healing, and rejoicing.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Isaiah prophesies the coming of the glory of the Lord and the flourishing of the earth. God will come with vindication to save his people. In the Gospel, Jesus confronts the scribes and Pharisees for their lack of faith and then heals a paralyzed man.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us bring our prayers and concerns for the world and the Church before God.

- 1) For the Church throughout the world, may she grow in faith, hope, and charity in her ministry, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For governments and world leaders, may the Advent message of hope in a new world inform and direct their decisions and actions, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all who struggle to find meaning and direction in their lives, may the peace of Christ be a light and hope for them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all of us as we journey through this season of Advent, may the Holy Spirit continue to transform our hearts to that of Christ's, 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 God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Gracious and loving God, we place these prayers before you with trust in your holy will. Through Christ our Lord.

* * * * *

Tuesday, December 8, 2020
(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: Today we celebrate the Blessed Mother being conceived without sin, preserved from the first moment of her existence as a part of God's plan for our salvation.

Mary, saved preemptively through the grace of her Son, is preserved from sin and is "full of grace" from the moment of her conception. With full freedom, Mary chooses to remain sinless and says yes to God's plan for her and the world, thus reversing the disobedience of Eve and becoming the "New Eve."

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Adam admits to eating from the forbidden tree, the fruit of which the woman gave him after being tricked by the serpent. God separates the serpent from all other animals and wild creatures, and puts enmity between it and the woman. Adam calls his wife Eve, *because she became the mother of all the living*. Saint Paul writes the Ephesians, telling them that all are adopted sons and daughters of God through Jesus Christ. In the Gospel, the angel Gabriel appears to Mary, telling her that through the power of the Holy Spirit and the Most High, she will conceive and bear a son. Mary replies that she is *the handmaid of the Lord*. *May it be done to me according to your word*.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: We come together as children of God, and turn to him with our needs and the needs of the world.

- 1) For all clergy and religious who have consecrated their lives to Christ, may God bless them and help them bear much fruit in their service to his Kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For those in positions of authority, may the Lord guide them in governing with humility and justice, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who suffer in mind, body, or spirit, may they experience God's healing touch today, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this community, may the grace of the Holy Spirit continue to help us say yes to God's plan for our lives, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they enter fully into God's loving and eternal presence, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Father, thank you for your great plan for our salvation. Hear and answer these and all of our prayers as we seek to follow you more closely. We ask this through your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Wednesday, December 9, 2020
(Lec. 183)

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

WEDNESDAY
OF ADVENT
- SECOND WEEK
(Opt. Mem.
Saint Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin)

FOCUS: God gives us the strength we need to carry out his work.

Being a follower of Jesus can demand much of us. We are called to love our neighbors and our enemies, to be witnesses of Jesus and of God's love throughout our lives, and to be faithful to Gospel values. But we are assured that we can rely on God's strength to help us carry out whatever he asks of us.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Isaiah assures the people of Israel that God will provide to those who hope in him the strength they need, even in situations in which *youths stagger and fall*. In the Gospel, Jesus tells the crowds to come to him, all *who labor and are burdened*. For his *yoke is easy* and his *burden light*.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With one voice, let us offer our prayers to the Lord, who is gracious and merciful.

- 1) For all members of the Church, may the grace of God continue to nourish and strengthen us, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For peace in our world and in our hearts, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all who struggle to provide food, shelter, education, or healthcare for their families, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those among us who suffer from physical ailments, may Jesus assure them of his presence and redeeming love in the midst of their trials, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all who have died, may the Lord Jesus lead them to a place of eternal rest and joy, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving God, we renew our strength in you and in your Word as we place these needs before you, through Christ our Lord.

* * * * *

Thursday, December 10, 2020
(Lec. 184)

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

THURSDAY
OF ADVENT
- SECOND WEEK
(Opt. Mem.
Our Lady of Loreto)

FOCUS: We prepare our hearts for the coming of the Messiah.

Making preparations for Christmas often consumes us at this time of year, but the season of Advent reminds us that the true preparation should be for the coming of our Lord, Jesus. Thus we are challenged to always be ready. Jesus assures us of his gift of salvation, but our hearts must be open to receive him.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Isaiah speaks for the Lord, who says, *Fear not, I will help you*. The God of Israel will not forsake his people as he provides for their needs. In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus speaks to the crowds, praising John the Baptist, and tells them they ought to listen to John's prophecy of *the one who is to come*.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

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

- 1) For Church leaders, may the Lord strengthen them in their mission of bringing the light of Christ to a weary world, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For those who are called to lead others, may the Lord guide them in being examples of peace, unselfish giving, and service to their people, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who are experiencing financial difficulties, loneliness, illness, or other challenges during this season of hope and giving, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those of us gathered here, may the grace of this sacrament transform us in the image of Christ's love and mercy, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all the faithful departed, may they soon rest in the loving arms of God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, hear the prayers of your faithful, we ask through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

* * * * *

Friday, December 11, 2020
(Lec. 185)

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

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

FOCUS: God calls each of us and leads us on the way we should go.

We are called to holiness, but in a way that is unique to us and to the needs that surround us. John the Baptist and Jesus live out the Father's will in vastly different ways, but both are led by the wisdom that is transforming the world – a wisdom that continues leading each one of us in a personal way today.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, the prophet Isaiah tells the people that the Holy One of Israel is their God. He teaches them in the way they should go, for their prosperity and vindication. In the Gospel, Jesus asks, *to what shall I compare this generation*, as he recognizes the hypocrisy of those who criticized John for fasting and Jesus for eating.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: As we seek to walk in God's ways, we bring these prayers and needs before him with confidence in his wisdom and care.

- 1) For leaders in the Church, may they be guided by God's wisdom in all they do, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For local, national, and world leaders, may God give them the grace to move away from any hypocrisy and be guided instead by truth, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those traveling the long road of grief, may they know Christ's presence, and rest in the confidence that nothing can separate us from the love of God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this community of faith, may we be empowered by the Holy Spirit in living our unique call to holiness, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all who have died in the light of faith, may they rest in the presence of God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Trusting in your goodness and loving care, we lift these prayers to you, Father, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

* * * * *

Saturday, December 12, 2020
(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 Mass* (vol. IV), the Common of the Blessed Virgin Mary, nos. 707-712.

FOCUS: God fulfills his promise of sending a Savior.

The prophets reveal that God's promise of a Messiah will be fulfilled, not just for the Hebrews, but in a Savior for all people.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Zechariah rejoices that the Lord is sending a Messiah who will come to dwell among his people. In the Gospel, the angel Gabriel reveals to Mary that she will bear a child, through the power of the Holy Spirit, who will be the Son of God.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Confident in the promises God has made, we turn to him with our prayers.

- 1) For our Holy Mother Church, may she continue to grow in the gifts given by the Holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For civic leaders who envision and work for communities that serve the common good, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For expectant mothers, may the love of God be present in those who surround them, providing support and encouragement, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community, may the Lord fill us with love and truth and guide us in the ways of wisdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all who have died, may they soon rejoice in the company of God's beloved in his heavenly kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, hear the prayers we bring before you, and grant them according to your will. We ask this through your Son, Christ our Lord.

* * * * *

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2020

**THIRD SUNDAY
OF ADVENT**

(Lec. 8)

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

FOCUS: Advent is a season of waiting in joyful hope for the coming of the Lord.

Gaudete Sunday affirms the value of rejoicing and gives reasons for our rejoicing: God has given hope to his people waiting for redemption. We wait with rejoicing for what God has already accomplished and will yet accomplish through Christ.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Isaiah rejoices as he brings glad tidings of God's vindication for his people. In the second reading, Paul encourages rejoicing as God prepares his people for the return of the Lord. In the Gospel, John testifies to the light and cries out in the desert to make straight the way of the Lord.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us present our petitions to the Lord, our God, who knows the needs of our hearts.

- 1) That the Spirit of the Lord may be upon the anointed priests and bishops of the Church, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That the Lord God may make justice and praise spring up before all nations, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That the God of love may give hope to hearts in need of redemption from sin or suffering, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That the Lord may make straight our way as we wait with joyful hope this Advent, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That the souls of the deceased may rejoice forever in God with Christ their Savior, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Almighty God, you always remember your promise of mercy and do great things for us. Hear the prayers we bring before you today, through Christ our Lord.

* * * * *

Monday, December 14, 2020
(Lec. 187)

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

MONDAY
OF ADVENT
(OBL MEM
Saint John of the Cross,
Priest and Doctor
of the Church)

FOCUS: Let us focus more on God.

We should strive to be more concerned about what God is trying to tell us than saying what we think the “acceptable” thing is. Balaam listens to God’s prompting in his heart and God uses him for good. In contrast, the religious leaders don’t answer Jesus’ question, because they are overly concerned with the potential consequences.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

After the Moabite king tells Balaam, a diviner, to curse the Israelites, Balaam instead pronounces a blessing and a messianic prophecy. When religious leaders question Jesus’ authority, Jesus asks them the origin of John’s baptism – human or heavenly. Feeling trapped, they are unable to answer. Jesus declines to discuss his authority.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Having been nourished by the word of God, let us now bring to him our needs.

- 1) For all who serve the Church, may God continue to pour out his graces upon them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For nations engaged in conflicts throughout the world, may Jesus, the Prince of Peace, bring them resolution, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who face economic uncertainty because of the pandemic, may God graciously look upon their needs and bring them relief and peace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all of us here, may the Lord kindle in us a joyful hope for his Second Coming, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For our beloved dead, may they be welcomed into the heavenly kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Eternal Father, you gave us the example of Saint John of the Cross to show us how to embrace our crosses while trusting you. With this in mind, we ask you to hear our prayers, through your Son, Christ our Lord.

* * * * *

Tuesday, December 15, 2020
(Lec. 188)

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

TUESDAY
OF ADVENT
- THIRD WEEK

FOCUS: We are called to hear God's word and carry it out in our lives.

Virtue is expressed in action, not intention. When the two sons in today's parable hear their father's command, one says "yes," but doesn't go to work – he's essentially a liar. The other says "no," but then he changes his mind and is obedient. Turning away from God, as represented by the first son above, is never a good. But there is mercy and love awaiting those who – even if they hesitate – repent and follow the will of the Father.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Zephaniah announces words of woe to the citizens of Jerusalem, *the city, rebellious and polluted*, since they did not heed God's word. On the coming Day of the Lord, there will be judgment but *a remnant ... a people humble and lowly* will remain. In the Gospel, Jesus tells a parable of two sons called to do their father's will.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: We now turn to our God and present our petitions.

- 1) That the Church may continue to be purified and sanctified through the grace and mercy of God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That nations in conflict in every corner of the earth may be led by the Holy Spirit to peace and unity, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those unjustly accused, imprisoned, or punished may be comforted by the peace of Christ and given courage for their ordeal, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That this Advent Season may be a time of growing in the gifts God has given us, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That those who have died may find a place in the heavenly Jerusalem, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Lord God, hear our petitions this day and answer them in your kindness. We ask through Christ our Lord.

* * * * *

Wednesday, December 16, 2020
(Lec. 189)

- 1) Isaiah 45:6b-8, 18, 21c-25
- 2) Luke 7:18b-23

WEDNESDAY
OF ADVENT
- THIRD WEEK

FOCUS: Blessed is the one who can see the Christ, bend a knee, and proclaim God's goodness.

Today's Scriptures point us to the divinity of Jesus, though we often fail to recognize Christ in our midst. Jesus cured the blind, the lame, the leper, the deaf; he even raised the dead. Regardless, John's disciples were unsure. We must be on the lookout for the hidden Christ – within and around us – ready to bow down in worship.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The prophet Isaiah in today's first reading proclaims the sovereignty of God, who has made the earth and the heavens, and is worthy of our praise. The Gospel from Luke recounts the uncertainty of John's disciples regarding whether Jesus is the Messiah. Jesus' miracles are one of many signs of his divinity.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us present our needs, and those of the world, to our most gracious God.

- 1) For all priests, religious, and lay servants of the Church, may the gifts of the Holy Spirit empower them in their ministry, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For the world, may the blessed Advent of Jesus bring peace among nations, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For the suffering and sick among us, may Christ's healing presence be upon them and bring them comfort, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all of us present in this assembly, may God fashion our hearts in this Advent season to see Jesus more readily around us, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For the souls of the faithful departed, may God's mercy bring them to eternal life, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving God, we thank you for hearing our prayers. We ask that you answer them according to your good and gracious will, through Christ our Lord.

* * * * *

Thursday, December 17, 2020
(Lec. 193)

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

THURSDAY
OF ADVENT
- THIRD WEEK

FOCUS: The birth of Christ fulfills God's promise to his people, Israel.

The royal lineage of Jesus is of utmost importance to the evangelist Matthew. He begins his Gospel in such a way as to show the work of God through human history, culminating in the fullness of revelation found in Jesus Christ. This context prepares us for the stories of the birth, life and ministry, and death of Jesus Christ as God's perfect plan for the salvation of the entire world.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In his farewell message to his sons, Jacob tells Judah that his brothers will praise him. He compares Judah to a lion and says he will receive the people's homage. Matthew's Gospel begins with a genealogy of Jesus Christ, tracing his lineage from Abraham through King David to the Babylonian exile to Joseph, the husband of Mary.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: As we prepare our hearts for Christ's coming, we present our petitions to the Father.

- 1) For all members of the Church, may the light of Christ remove all darkness and sin from our midst, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For world leaders, may the justice and mercy of the Holy Spirit guide them in their service to their people, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For families and communities whose members are estranged from one another, may Christ bring them healing and reconciliation, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community, may the grace we receive this Advent help us to bear good fruit during the Christmas season, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all who have gone before us in faith, may they receive their final inheritance in Christ's kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Father, we thank you for sending your Son into the world as one like us, so that we could become your adopted sons and daughters. Hear and answer our prayers, we ask, through Christ our Lord.

* * * * *

Friday, December 18, 2020
(Lec. 194)

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

FRIDAY
OF ADVENT
- THIRD WEEK

FOCUS: *Emmanuel*, God is with us.

Because we hear the term “Emmanuel” in only two books of the Bible (Isaiah and Matthew) in relation to the birth of Jesus, it’s easy to miss its overall meaning: “God is with us.” That means “Emmanuel” is not just a baby in a manger, but our Savior who is with us always – in times of joy, times of sadness, and everywhere in-between. Every day, all day.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In today’s first reading from Jeremiah, the Lord promises Judah will be saved as he raises up a just and righteous king. In the Gospel, Matthew tells *how the birth of Jesus Christ came about*, leading to Isaiah’s prophecy that *the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel*.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

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

- 1) For our Holy Father and all Church leaders, may the blessing of almighty God be upon them, especially during this Advent season, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For public authorities across the world, may the Lord bless them with wisdom in policy-making and governing, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all those who are lonely, may they be blessed by the love of family and neighbors and know that God is always with them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all who grieve for loved ones lost in the past year, may God give them strength, peace, and consolation in the midst of their mourning, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all who have died in the light of Christ, may they find comfort and eternal joy with God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, trusting in your great love and mercy, we pray that you hear and answer these prayers, through your Son, Christ our Lord.

* * * * *

Saturday, December 19, 2020
(Lec. 195)

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

SATURDAY
OF ADVENT
- THIRD WEEK

FOCUS: Trusting in God's plan gives us great blessings, and in turn blesses the world around us.

Manoah's wife and Elizabeth both trusted in the providence of God, and they were rewarded with sons who would bear great influence on their worlds. Zechariah struggled with understanding, but never ceased his faith in or ministry to God in the Temple. He was richly blessed (later) in the birth of his son. Trusting in God allows him to shower us with blessings, which bear fruit for us and the world.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, an angel visits the wife of Manoah and tells her she *will conceive and bear a son*. Her son, Samson, was blessed by the Lord. In the Gospel, the angel Gabriel tells Zechariah that his wife Elizabeth will bear a son. Zechariah questions how this could happen, so he is made mute for his doubt.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us approach the throne of our loving Father, and offer our petitions to him.

- 1) For the Church, may the Lord look graciously upon her needs as she prepares for the coming of Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For the world, may the promise of this Advent season be a guiding light for all, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For couples dealing with infertility, may the Lord fill them with love and strength, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For the educators in our community, may truth, goodness, and beauty be their guide in teaching their students, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For the deceased members of our families, may the love of Christ welcome them to eternal life, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God in heaven, we ask that you hear our prayers that we make through Christ our Lord.

* * * * *

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2020

(Lec. 11)

- 1) 2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12,
14a, 16
- 2) Romans 16:25-27
- 3) Luke 1:26-38

**FOURTH SUNDAY
OF ADVENT**

FOCUS: The Lord dwells among us.

David worries that the ark of God dwells in a tent; Mary doesn't hesitate to allow the ark of God to dwell within her. God is not bound by human constraints, and yet he asks us to participate with him, and cooperate with his grace, that the ark of the covenant – and the arc of salvation history – may be made available to all.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The Lord reminds David that he, the Lord, chose David. He tells David that a kingdom will be established in David's name and endure forever. Saint Paul gives glory *to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ*. In the Gospel, the angel Gabriel tells Mary that she will conceive and bear a son, and – hearing that the Holy Spirit and *the power of the Most High* will be with her – she responds, *may it be done to me according to your word*.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With reliance on our good and gracious God, we bring our prayers to him.

- 1) For Pope Francis, may the Lord bless him in his zeal and joy for the Gospel, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For our elected officials, may the Holy Spirit conform their hearts to charity and justice as they make their governing decisions, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who suffer the harshness of winter, may the Lord in his infinite mercy ensure they have adequate shelter and food for their tables, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all gathered here today, may the grace of discernment help us fulfill God's plan for each of us, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they soon come face to face with Jesus their Savior, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving God, hear our prayers as we strive to know your will and follow the plan you have carved out for us. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

* * * * *

Monday, December 21, 2020
(Lec. 197)

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

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

FOCUS: Let us celebrate Christmas with the joyful faith of Mary.

In his first encounter with the Word Incarnate, John the Baptist leaps for joy. Mary facilitates this first meeting, bearing Jesus in her womb. Let us finish Advent eagerly, with anticipation of the arrival of the infant Jesus. Do we receive him with joy? Let us ask Mary to help us love and rejoice in her son, Jesus Christ.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, a woman speaks of her lover arriving, and calling to her, *Arise, my beloved ... my beautiful one, and come!* In the Gospel, Mary sets out to visit Elizabeth, and when Elizabeth hears her voice, the infant in her womb leaps for joy.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: As we prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ, let us offer our prayers to God this day.

- 1) For the Church on earth as we celebrate the coming of our newborn King, may the light and splendor of his presence draw many to salvation, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For the world during these Advent and Christmas seasons, may the Spirit of Christ help to unite people across cultures, races, and religions, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who have suffered loss this Advent season and for people for whom celebrating holidays can be difficult, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this Eucharistic assembly, may God's grace help us to keep the Eucharist at the center of our lives and prayer, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For our beloved dead, may they rejoice forever with the angels and saints, enjoying the riches of heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: We thank you, Father, for hearing our prayers this day. Please bless us and answer them in your infinite wisdom, through Jesus Christ, your Son.

* * * * *

Tuesday, December 22, 2020
(Lec. 198)

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

TUESDAY
OF ADVENT
- FOURTH WEEK

FOCUS: God does great things in all of us; let us always remember to give him thanks for his goodness.

Hannah and Mary give praise and thanks to God for the good things he has done for them. They have been witness to the power of God, and the mercy he has *on those who fear him*. Their example of unflinching faith in the face of hardship and fear is one for us to follow. For God does great things in all of us.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Hannah dedicates Samuel to the Lord in thanksgiving of her answered prayers for a child. In the Gospel, Mary greets Elizabeth, her cousin, and gives praise to God: proclaiming the greatness of the Lord and that she will be called blessed for all ages.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: We come with confidence before God, knowing he will do great things for us.

- 1) For the Church, may the Lord continue to guide her in carrying out his saving work this Advent season, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For all those who govern, may the Holy Spirit bless them with an abundance of understanding and prudence, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who are unemployed, alone, or without hope, especially in these darkest days of the year, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all of us gathered here today, may the Lord bless us and make us holy in his sight, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they see the glory of our heavenly father and enjoy eternal rest, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, as we await the birth of your Son, please hear and answer our prayers, we ask through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

* * * * *

Wednesday, December 23, 2020
(Lec. 199)

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

WEDNESDAY
OF ADVENT
- FOURTH WEEK
(Opt. Mem.
Saint John of Kanty,
Priest)

FOCUS: The Lord prepares a way for us to receive the gift of himself.

Today's readings focus on the preparations necessary to receive the Lord. In Malachi, the Lord says he will send his messenger to turn people's hearts. This Advent, how have our hearts been turned to the Lord? What final graces can we request to receive him this Christmas?

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, the prophet Malachi speaks of the Lord sending a messenger who will prepare the way for him. In the Gospel, Elizabeth gives birth to a son, the mute Zechariah begins to speak again, and people wonder at the works of the Lord.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: We lift our hearts to the Lord and bring him our petitions.

- 1) For Church leaders, may the Lord bless them as they proclaim the Good News of Christmas to all who come to celebrate the feast, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For all those who govern, may God direct their hearts toward the poor among us, and help them work tirelessly for justice, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all those for whom this time of year is a burden, may the Lord draw near to them in their sorrow, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community, may the Lord give us the graces we need to finish our Advent preparations well and be truly ready to receive him this Christmas, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all those who have died, may God bring them into his everlasting peace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God of all creation, thank you for every goodness you have given us. Hear now our prayers, and answer them according to your holy will, we ask through Christ our Lord.

* * * * *

Thursday, December 24, 2020
(Lec. 200)

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

THURSDAY
OF ADVENT
- FOURTH WEEK

FOCUS: God's promises are a source of hope and rejoicing.

As Advent comes to a close, the readings reflect the exuberant joy that comes with God's promises. God answers David's desire to build the temple with a promise to grant him an everlasting dynasty. He answers Zechariah's prayers by granting him a son, who will go before the Messiah. We, too, can rejoice in the fulfillment of God's promises to us.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, David desires to build a house for the ark of God. God responds by promising permanent security for Israel and a permanent dynasty for David. In the Gospel, Zechariah rejoices in God's fidelity to his covenant, and speaks words to his new son of the time when he *will go before the Lord to prepare his way*.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With hearts full of joyful hope in God's steadfast love, let us present our petitions to him.

- 1) That the Church may continue to grow in holiness and rejoice without ceasing in the Incarnation of the Son of God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That world leaders may have the protection of Christ in seeking lasting peace among nations, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those whose hearts are experiencing despair may be blessed with the consolation of God's peace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That all of us here, awaiting in hope for the coming of Christ, may abide in his truth forever, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That all who have died in the light of faith may experience the fulfillment of all God's promises, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God our Father, your unbroken fidelity to your promises gives us confidence to make these prayers. We ask that you answer them according to your will, through your Son, Christ our Lord.

* * * * *

Three Commentaries are given for the Solemnity of The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas): Vigil, Night and Day – Holyday of Obligation

CHRISTMAS 2020 – VIGIL

(Lec. 13)

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

**THE NATIVITY
OF THE LORD
- SOLEMNITY**

FOCUS Born in time yet eternally begotten, Christ fulfills the promises once made to Israel and all the world.

Christmas – the birth of Christ – heralds the beginning of our salvation. In the darkness of the night, God’s purest light appears in time, offering us a share in his eternal life through this newborn Child who is *Emmanuel*: God is with us.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The prophet Isaiah proclaims God’s promise of vindication for Israel. In the light of its fulfillment, Israel will shine and rejoice once more. Saint Paul preaches to the early Church at Antioch, telling how Jesus is the fulfillment of the Davidic promises. In the Gospel, Matthew recites the genealogy of Jesus Christ, placing him in direct succession to David and Abraham.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Reminded of God’s steadfast love and fidelity revealed through this newborn Child, we bring our prayers before the Lord.

- 1) For the Church, the Body of Christ in the world, and for her prophetic witness to all, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For peace in the world, and for the salvation of souls, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all who are sick, suffering, and dying, and for those who love and care for them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For continued blessing upon this community, and for the grace to follow where God leads each one of us, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For the souls of all the faithful departed, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Almighty and eternal God, in Christ Jesus you fulfill your promises to Israel and make real your desire to be with the sons and daughters of humanity. Hear the prayers we offer today, through Christ our Lord.

* * * * *

CHRISTMAS – NIGHT

(Lec. 14)

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

THE NATIVITY
OF THE LORD
- SOLEMNITY

FOCUS: Jesus' birth brings *abundant joy and great rejoicing*.

Tonight, what we have awaited for so long is finally here as we celebrate the birth of Jesus. At the time of his birth 2,000 years ago, the world had been waiting in hope for a Messiah. Jesus, the Son of God, came in the dead of night to redeem us and show us the reason for this hope: God's love.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Isaiah prophesies a time of salvation for Israel, when a *great light* will come to the *people who walked in darkness*. A child will be born, and called *Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero*. Saint Paul writes that *the grace of God has appeared, saving all*. In the Gospel, Joseph and Mary went from Nazareth to Bethlehem in order to enroll in the census. It is there that Mary gave birth to her son, and the angel of the Lord appears to the shepherds to announce that *a savior has been born*.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Tonight, we celebrate God's great love for us, and in gratitude we bring him these prayers for ourselves and for the world.

- 1) For our Holy Father, bishops, and priests, may the Lord continue to bless them in their ministry of heralding the birth of Jesus, the Son of God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For all who hold political power, may the grace of the Holy Spirit help them use their position for the sake of the common good, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For migrant families who travel in search of a home, may they, through the mercy of God, find welcome, support, and help to start a new life, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all who share in this worship tonight, may the Christ-child bring great light into any darkness of our lives, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all who have died, may our gracious God welcome them into their eternal home to praise him forever, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, you showed your love for us by sending your Son. We trust in that love as we present to you these needs of your people, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

* * * * *

CHRISTMAS – DAY

(Lec. 16)

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

**THE NATIVITY
OF THE LORD
- SOLEMNITY**

FOCUS: God himself chose to dwell among us.

God did not create a new being in Jesus Christ. Rather, his only begotten Son – the second person of the Trinity – came to dwell among us. Through him we have the fullness of revelation of who God is, and we are reunited and reconciled to God in his glory.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Isaiah prophesies the exiled Israelites' return to Zion, glorifying the Lord and his strength. The author of Hebrews writes that God's revelation is complete in the person of his Son. In the Gospel, John writes, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* The Father's only Son became flesh and dwelled among us, and John [the Baptist] gave witness to him and said this man was the one he said was coming.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With joy and hope, let us bring our prayers and petitions to our God, who is King.

- 1) For Pope Francis, may God continue to bless him with vitality as he shepherds his flock, the Church, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For legislators and policy-makers, may the Lord guide their decision-making in order to protect the lives of the unborn, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all those who feel lonely this Christmas season, may Jesus bring them comfort, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all families gathered today, as we seek to emulate the model of the Holy Family of Nazareth, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all the faithful departed, may they rejoice in heaven with the risen Christ and all the angels and saints, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Father of Love and Mercy, in your goodness you sent us your Son, whose birth we celebrate today. We ask that you hear and answer these prayers, through Christ our Lord.

* * * * *

Saturday, December 26, 2020
(Lec. 696)

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

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

FOCUS: Those who follow Jesus have nothing to fear.

Jesus, after commissioning the disciples, warns them of coming persecutions. Like Jesus, his followers are subject to criticism and persecution. On today's feast of Saint Stephen, the first martyr, we recognize the cost of following Jesus is high, and the reward is everything. Yet God, in love, saved his people, and in the end we have nothing to fear.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Stephen is stoned to death for *working great wonders and signs among the people*, such that the people *could not withstand the wisdom and the spirit with which he spoke*. In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus warns his disciples of coming persecutions. He instructs his followers to not worry about their defense, saying, *for it will not be you who speak but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you*.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Our Father is one of grace and mercy. Let us bring to him the prayers of this community and the world.

- 1) For the Holy Father and for the Church, through the intercession of Saint Stephen may we be firm witnesses to the Gospel, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For government leaders, may the Lord help them lead with justice, mercy, and love, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who are sick, may God grant them the power of redemptive suffering and the fullness of his healing power, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those gathered here and for all those we love, may Christ help us live as his courageous disciples, speaking the truth and loving as he loves, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may God's mercy be upon them this day, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God of mercy and compassion, we ask you to hear and answer these prayers today, through Christ our Lord.

* * * * *

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2020

(Lec. 17)

- 1) Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14
- 2) Colossians 3:12-21 of 3:12-17
- 3) Luke 2:22-40 or 2:22, 39-40

Or in Year B

- 1) Genesis 15:1-6; 21:1-3
- 2) Hebrews 11:8, 11-12, 17-19
- 3) Luke 2:22-40 or 2:22, 39-40

FOCUS: *Blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways.*

On this Feast of the Holy Family, we celebrate God's Incarnation into a human family who loved, protected and taught him. They were holy because they were perfect in obedience and virtue; blessed because they feared the Lord and walked in his ways. We, too, may strive to attain this holiness, in our imitation of the Holy Family's example and through the grace of Christ.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In today's first reading, God promises Abram an heir, even though Abram is very old. Before too long Sarah, his wife, bears him a son. In the second reading, the author of Hebrews tells the story of Abraham (Abram) as an example of true faith in God. In the Gospel, Joseph and Mary take Jesus *to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord*. The devout and righteous Simeon beheld the child Jesus, and prayed to the Lord that he as the Lord's servant might now be dismissed for he had seen the salvation that had been promised. Simeon also foretold the destiny of Jesus and the suffering Mary would undergo.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Together, let us offer our petitions to the Father, knowing that he loves us and is always there to guide us.

- 1) For the Church, may God's guidance be upon every member in living out the Gospel message, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For the salvation of the world, and for the conversion away from sin and toward the Gospel, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those undergoing trials, may the Lord bless them with strength and courage, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all of us here, may the Holy Spirit help us grow in faith, hope, and love, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they be welcomed into the heavenly community and rest in eternal peace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, hear our prayers and grant us every good thing according to your will. We ask through your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

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

Monday, December 28, 2020
(Lec. 698)

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

**THE HOLY INNOCENTS,
MARTYRS
- FEAST**

FOCUS: No darkness or evil can overcome the light of God.

From the very beginning of his life, the world did not welcome Jesus. As an infant, Herod considered him a threat to his worldly power, and in trying to eliminate him, ordered the children of Bethlehem slaughtered. Today, we remember these Holy Innocents, and are reminded that the darkness and evil cannot overcome Christ. For Christ came to save the whole world.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

John writes to his community that *God is light*, and that Jesus, *the righteous one*, is an Advocate with the Father. In the Gospel, Joseph follows instructions he received in a dream and takes Mary and Jesus to Egypt, so as to avoid Herod's destruction of the Child. Herod was enraged by this, and *ordered the massacre of all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity two years old and under*.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: The Lord has promised to hear the prayers of the faithful. Let us lift our hearts and intentions to him.

- 1) That God's gracious mercy may be upon every member of his holy Church in living out the Gospel message, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That civic leaders may have the guidance of the Holy Spirit in serving with humility, compassion, and justice, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That all those oppressed or persecuted may know God's blessing of courage, perseverance, and justice, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That this community of worship may grow in the love and fellowship of Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That those who have died may know the comfort and peace of God's loving embrace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God of light, hear our prayers on behalf of the whole world in need of your love and mercy. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

* * * * *

Tuesday, December 29, 2020
(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: The light of Christ shines through our obedience to God's commands.

Obedying God's law might sometimes be challenging, and we might be tempted to find justified reasons why it's acceptable in our particular situation not to obey it. When we are tempted to put ourselves above God's commands, let us be guided by the example of the Holy Family, who humbly obeyed God's law, that the light of Christ might shine.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

John writes to his community that keeping the Lord's commandments – living as Christ, loving one's brothers and sisters – is the sign of one who abides in the Lord. In the Gospel, Mary and Joseph bring the child, Jesus, to the temple to be consecrated to the Lord in obedience to the law. There, Simeon is moved by the Spirit to proclaim the child's role in the salvation of the world.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Trusting in the Lord's goodness, let us turn to him with our prayers and petitions.

- 1) For the Church throughout the world, may the love of Christ continue to transform us into his likeness, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For those who govern nations, may the Spirit bless them with wisdom and right judgment in their efforts to protect the sanctity of life, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all who are lonely, may the Lord console and lift their spirits, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For our faith community, may the grace of the sacraments transform us and deepen our commitment to the Lord, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all who have died, may they soon be welcomed into the eternal banquet by our Lord and all the angels and saints, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving and eternal God, the light of all nations, hear these prayers which we bring before you with trusting hearts, and answer them in accordance with your divine will. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Wednesday, December 30, 2020
(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: The Messiah brings true light to our lives.

Christmas invites us to ponder how the mystery of the Incarnation touches every aspect of our life, including our deepest needs. Our readings today invite us to focus on what our true desires are, not the things of this world that will pass, but rather those parts of our life that need the light and love of the Messiah.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, John addresses the community as a family, encouraging them to not grow attached to the things of the world. Rather, he exhorts them to value the love of the Father, which endures forever. In Luke's Gospel, the prophetess Anna, who resided in the temple, *gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem.*

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: God, in his infinite love for us, sends his Son to deliver us. We bring before him our needs and the needs of the world.

- 1) For our Holy Church, may Christ strengthen her and protect her from all evil as she brings the Gospel to all the ends of the earth, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For health care workers throughout this pandemic, may God grant them fortitude and deliver them safely at the end of each day, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all who have suffered, and continue to suffer, from the violence to human dignity inherent in racism, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all among us who have lost a loved one and are struggling during this Christmas season, may the Christ-child's presence console them in their heartache, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all who have died, may Christ's light shine upon them, and may they soon be at rest in his loving arms, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving Father, you sent your only Son to bring us redemption. Through the mystery of this Incarnation we grow closer to you, and ask that you hear the prayers we offer. Through Christ our Lord.

* * * * *

Thursday, December 31, 2020
(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: The Word made flesh gives light to the world.

By becoming human, Jesus enters into the darkness of the world's sin, and into our lives to show us the Father's love and give us his grace. He is a light shining for us, and through him, we now know the truth about the Father. We who *believe in his name* are now children of God.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, John speaks of the antichrists who have appeared, and that they were never really of their number. He writes to the community because they have the anointing from *the Holy One* and they have knowledge of the truth. In the Gospel, John writes that the eternal Word of God entered the world by taking on human flesh, revealing the Father to us so we can become his children.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Having been made children of God in Christ Jesus, let us turn to our loving Father with our needs.

- 1) For the Church, may the Holy Spirit empower each one of us as steadfast witnesses to her truth, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For all leaders and public officials, may God enlighten them and guide their decisions by the truth of his Gospel, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all those in the darkness of physical, spiritual, or mental illness, may the healing power of Christ fill them with his peace and relieve their suffering, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community, may the Lord increase in us our love for him and for one another, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may God bring them to the fullness of life in his glory, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving Father, the birth of your Son fills the world with hope, and in that hope we entrust our prayers to you, through Christ our Lord.