

# DECEMBER

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Wednesday, December 1, 2021  
(Lec. 177)

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

WEDNESDAY  
OF ADVENT  
- FIRST WEEK

FOCUS: The Lord has been faithful and abundant in generosity.

As we journey through Advent, we prepare our hearts to celebrate the coming of the Lord, once as a child and once again in the future at a time unknown. Both of today's readings help us in this preparation, as we see how God's plan for salvation has unfolded over time. God has always been faithful to us and to his promises. And he cannot be outdone in generosity.

### LITURGY OF THE WORD

Isaiah prophesies a time when *the Lord for whom we looked ... has saved us*. In the Gospel, Jesus heals many people with different ailments. Afterward, he feeds the crowd with the *seven loaves and the fish ... They all ate and were satisfied*.

### UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Trusting in our merciful Father, we place our needs before him.

- 1) For Church leaders, may the Holy Spirit fortify them in their mission of spreading the Good News, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For elected officials at every level of government, may God bring them a new respect for the dignity and sanctity of life, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all who face daily suffering, may God bring healing to their pain, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community as we prepare our hearts for the Lord this Advent season, may God's grace be with us on our spiritual journey, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all who have died, may God bring them to his eternal feast, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, hear our prayers we offer in faith and hope. We ask this through your Son, Christ our Lord.

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Thursday, December 2, 2021  
(Lec. 178)

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

THURSDAY  
OF ADVENT  
- FIRST WEEK

FOCUS: *Seek the Lord while he may be found; call him while he is near.*

It is not enough to simply listen to Jesus' words. If we don't put his words into action, we will be like the fool who builds his house on sand, only to see it washed away when the flood comes. By loving God and our neighbor, we will be like the wise man who builds his house on rock.

### LITURGY OF THE WORD

Isaiah foretells a time when the land of Judah will sing a song: a song extolling the goodness of the Lord who has protected them; a song exhorting *trust in the Lord forever*. In the Gospel, Jesus tells his disciples that not everyone who calls him Lord will enter the Kingdom; only those who do the will of the Father will enter.

### UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: United as the Body of Christ, we turn to the Lord with our prayers and petitions.

- 1) For the Church, may the Lord guide and empower her in seeking the lost sheep and returning them to the fold, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For governments and world leaders, may God's wisdom inform and direct their decisions and actions, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all who are struggling with illness or personal afflictions, may the Lord in his compassion offer them strength and healing, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community, may the Lord make us constant in prayer during this Advent season, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For our beloved dead, may they find peace in the arms of Jesus, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Almighty God, we humbly pray that you grant these petitions according to your holy will. Through Christ our Lord.

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Friday, December 3, 2021

(Lec. 179)

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

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

FOCUS: God's saving action restores all things in Christ.

The first week of Advent is drawing to a close. Just as we anticipate Christmas, the prophet Isaiah anticipated that God would bring healing and justice to his people. Jesus demonstrates, in his healing of the blind men, the power of God's saving action.

### LITURGY OF THE WORD

Isaiah shares the Lord's message of how, in a little while, *the deaf shall hear ... the blind shall see, and the tyrant will be no more*. In the Gospel, Jesus grants sight to two blind men who believe in him. He warns them not to tell anyone, *but they went out and spread word of him through all that land*.

### UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us now present our needs to our compassionate and loving God.

- 1) That God may bless all members of his Holy Church with the strength to follow the stirrings of the Holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That the world may be united in Jesus Christ, the one bread come down from heaven to save us all, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those who have been falsely accused or deprived of their rights may find strength in Christ as they seek justice, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That the Lord may increase the gift of faith in all of us gathered here during this Advent season, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That all who have fallen asleep in Christ may rise with him to dwell in the Lord's house forever, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God our Father, look favorably on our petitions that we bring to you with trusting hearts. We ask through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

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Saturday, December 4, 2021  
(Lec. 180)

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

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

FOCUS: God's love is revealed through the compassion of his Son, Jesus.

Jesus, who is love, is moved at the sight of people who are *like sheep without a shepherd*. We see the compassion he has for his people as he cures illnesses and gives his disciples the authority to do the same. Because of God's great love for us, Jesus' mission has continued to this day through the Church and the work of the Holy Spirit.

### LITURGY OF THE WORD

Isaiah shares the Lord God's words, that there will come a day when his people will weep no more, and the Teacher will no longer hide himself but rather make himself seen and known. In the Gospel, Jesus goes *around to all the towns and villages* to teach and his heart is moved with pity because the people were *troubled and abandoned*. He tells the disciples to ask the master to send laborers for the harvest.

### UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: United in faith, let us bring our prayers before our gracious and loving God.

- 1) For Pope Francis and all the leaders of the Church, may the light of Christ continue to illuminate their every step, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For all who govern, may the Lord grant them strength, courage, and compassion, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For the sick and those who feel marginalized, may the compassion and consolation of God bring them healing and peace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this community of faith gathered here, 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 our beloved dead, may they rest in the eternal peace of Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving Father, thank you for your great love for us. We ask that you hear these prayers we bring to you through your Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ.

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**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2021**

**SECOND SUNDAY  
OF ADVENT**

(Lec. 6)

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

FOCUS: Make straight a path unto the Lord!

Today we hear that John the Baptist proclaims a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. While repentance is a sobering act of admission of guilt, being forgiven of sin is a hope-filled relief that lifts the soul. Let us seek to prepare a straight path unto the Lord by pondering the *lofty mountains* we may have in our lives that need to be made low; and *the age-old depths and gorges* in our own character or soul that must *be filled to level ground*.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The poem of consolation from Baruch urges Jerusalem to look ahead in hope to days of God's justice and glory. Saint Paul prays for an increase in virtue among the Philippians in preparation for Christ. In the Gospel, Luke places John the Baptist's ministry in historical context before describing his call for a baptism of repentance.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Seeking to answer the Lord's call in our lives, let us offer him our prayers.

- 1) For the Holy Father, Pope Francis, may Christ continue to guide his leadership of the Church throughout the whole world, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For elected officials, may the Spirit guide them in his ways of truth and goodness, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who are grieving, may the Lord bring them comfort and healing, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community, may God's Holy Spirit work in us and help us respond generously to the needs of one another this Advent season, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all the faithful departed, may they come to share in the fullness of Christ's glory forever, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving God, you have done great things for us. Hear us and answer the prayers we bring to you today. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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Monday, December 6, 2021

(Lec. 181)

1) Isaiah 35:1-10

2) Luke 5:17-26

MONDAY  
OF ADVENT  
- SECOND WEEK  
(Opt. Mem.  
Saint Nicholas,  
Bishop)

FOCUS: Jesus has the power to heal us and forgive our sins; we need only place our trust in him.

Just like the men who carried the paralyzed man to the roof so he could meet Jesus, we, too, must persevere in faith. By keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus and our hearts open to God's grace, we are able to set aside whatever is holding us back and glorify God with our lives.

### LITURGY OF THE WORD

Isaiah speaks of a time when *the glory of the Lord* and *the splendor of our God* will be seen; when all will be healed and the deserts will bring forth life. In the Gospel, Jesus forgives the sins of a paralyzed man and then says to him, *rise, pick up your stretcher, and go home.*

### UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us join our hearts and minds as we offer our petitions to God, our Father.

- 1) For leaders of the Church, may the Lord continue to strengthen them in their efforts to help the people of God grow in faith, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For elected officials, may God grant them fortitude in fighting for what is right and just in service to their constituents, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all who have suffered as a result of violence or abuse, may God's healing love comfort and support them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this community of worship, may the Lord renew and deepen our faith and lead us to greater joy, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all those who have died in God's grace, may they be welcomed into the heavenly banquet, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God of mercy, we bring these prayers before you. We ask that you answer them according to your holy will, through our Lord, Jesus Christ.

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Tuesday, December 7, 2021

(Lec. 182)

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

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

FOCUS: We are called to proclaim the Good News: God is with us forever!

*Give comfort to my people ... speak tenderly to Jerusalem and proclaim to her that her service is at an end.* These words from Isaiah are joyously beautiful. Our Savior has come! Whatever burdens we have carried, we no longer carry them alone, and we can rest in the arms of the one who sought us out.

### LITURGY OF THE WORD

Isaiah shares a word of comfort from the Lord, that Jerusalem's *service is at an end* and *her guilt is expiated*. The time is coming to *prepare the way of the Lord*. In the Gospel, Jesus tells the parable of the lost sheep, saying, *it is not the will of your heavenly Father that one of these little ones be lost*.

### UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Knowing our heavenly Father's great love for all of us, let us offer him our petitions.

- 1) For bishops and parish priests, may the Lord guide them as they shepherd their people, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For leaders at all levels of government, may the Holy Spirit lead them to have hearts of compassion, and to temper justice with mercy, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who suffer oppression at the hands of others, may God in his mercy give them the grace necessary to endure, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all of us gathered here, may the calling of Christ echo in our hearts and give clarity to our actions, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may God welcome them to the joy and peace of eternal life with him in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God of power and love, you care for us as a shepherd cares for his sheep. Hear our prayers and grant them according to your will, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

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Wednesday, December 8, 2021  
(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 Feast day  
of the  
United States of America)  
**- SOLEMNITY**  
[Holyday of Obligation]

FOCUS: Like Mary, we, too, have been chosen to bring Christ to others.

Today we celebrate that unique and singular grace given to Mary: She was preserved from all effects of original sin from the first moment of her conception. We believe that this gift was given in preparation for and through the merits of her only Son, whose return in glory we await with prayerful vigilance and firm hope.

### LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Adam and Eve admit they ate the forbidden fruit. Saint Paul tells the Ephesians that they have been chosen, blessed, and called to be holy. In the Gospel, the angel Gabriel comes to Mary and says *Hail, full of grace!* Mary replies that she is *the handmaid of the Lord*.

### UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: As we seek to imitate Mary's "yes" to God, let us place our petitions before him.

- 1) For the Church, may God's grace help us grow ever more faithful in our discipleship and loving in our everyday lives, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For the protection and safeguarding of all life from conception until natural death, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those experiencing division within their families or communities, may the God of peace help them reconcile their differences, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For the sick and the dying in this faith community, may the love of Christ bring them comfort and hope, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died marked with the sign of faith, may they come to share in the fullness of Christ's glory, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Merciful Father, hear the prayers we offer as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Savior. Through your Son, Christ our Lord.

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Thursday, December 9, 2021  
(Lec. 184)

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

THURSDAY  
OF ADVENT  
- SECOND WEEK  
(Opt. Mem.

Saint Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin)

FOCUS: Let us open our hearts to receive the gift of salvation that Jesus offers.

John the Baptist sought to prepare the way for Jesus, proclaiming each person's need for repentance. Yet, as exalted as John was as a prophet, Jesus tells the disciples: *The least in the Kingdom of heaven is greater than [John]*. While we are each called to our specific path in life, with distinctions here on earth, we are unified and made equal by our baptism into the kingdom.

### LITURGY OF THE WORD

Isaiah speaks the Lord's words to his people, telling them to fear not for he will care for them and bring all that is dead to new life. In the Gospel, Jesus says that among those born of women, none has been greater than John the Baptist.

### UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Gathered as a people united in baptism, let us bring our needs and prayers before our loving God.

- 1) For all who serve the Church, may God infuse them with joy and wisdom as they preach the word of God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For world leaders, may the Spirit inspire them in their decision-making to protect and preserve God's creation, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those experiencing physical illness or emotional distress, may God provide consolation and healing, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For the members of this community of faith, may the Holy Spirit inspire us in spreading hope amid darkness, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may God welcome them into his heavenly kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God our Father, knowing you are attentive to our needs, please answer our prayers according to your will. We ask through your Son, Christ our Lord.

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Friday, December 10, 2021  
(Lec. 185)

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

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

FOCUS: Hear and respond to the message of salvation.

Songs and dirges are meant to be shared with others, and listeners respond to them. Similarly, John the Baptist and Jesus proclaimed a message: the coming of the kingdom of God. Those who heard this message both then and now should truly listen and respond, participating as one would dance or sing along with a song.

### LITURGY OF THE WORD

Isaiah prophesies the Lord will teach and lead his children to prosperity. Their descendants will be numerous. In the Gospel, Jesus recounts that the people rejected John the Baptist for fasting and later chastised Jesus for eating with tax collectors and sinners.

### UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With confidence in the Lord who loves us, let us bring our needs to him.

- 1) For those discerning a vocation to the priesthood, may the Holy Spirit grant them courage and clarity, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For lawmakers, may the God of justice guide them in living out their duties with wisdom and a sense of service to all, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those facing hunger or food insecurity, may God send them relief and graciously provide for their every need, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those who minister in this faith community, may Christ enkindle in them an ever-deeper love for serving his people and his Church, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may our Father welcome them into the joy of the Kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Almighty and ever-living Father, we humbly ask you to hear the prayers we ask in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

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Saturday, December 11, 2021  
(Lec. 186)

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

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

FOCUS: The word of God brings truth.

A Jewish prophecy proclaimed Elijah would return before the day of the Lord. Jewish leaders awaited this sign, and so had trouble believing in Jesus as the Messiah. Although today we may not hear the fiery words of a prophet *as a flaming furnace*, we can study Scripture to hear the truth of the word of God and recognize our Savior, Jesus.

### LITURGY OF THE WORD

The first reading praises the prophet Elijah for his *wondrous deeds*. In the Gospel, the disciples question Jesus about the return of Elijah. Jesus explains that John the Baptist was the prophet to come before the Messiah.

### UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: As his faithful servants, we turn to God to present our prayers.

- 1) For all members of the Church, may the Lord strengthen and sustain our faith in all we do, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For all nations, may God lead those in power to a just governance and the gift to discern what is best for the common good, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all those who are sick or suffering on this day, may they experience comfort and healing through God's grace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community, may the Lord help us to understand his Word and speak his truth with fervor, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For our beloved dead, may they enjoy the fullness of eternal life with God in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving God, we ask that you hear and answer our prayers according to your will. Through Christ our Lord.

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**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2021**

(Lec. 9)

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

**THIRD SUNDAY  
OF ADVENT**

FOCUS: *Rejoice in the Lord always.*

As we celebrate the Third Sunday of Advent, our Liturgy of the Word emphasizes our call to rejoice. We rejoice because the Messiah is coming. We rejoice because God has fulfilled his promises. We rejoice because there is no more need for fear or anxiety. In Christ, we are fulfilled. Rejoice! One mightier is coming!

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, a joyful hymn praises God for his removal of judgment of his people. Saint Paul assures the Philippians that *the Lord is near*, and that they should *have no anxiety at all*. In the Gospel, John the Baptist tells the people about the Messiah to come who will be mightier than him.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Confident in God's care for us, we bring our prayers before him with one voice.

- 1) For the Church in her mission to announce the Good News, may God's light illuminate her path, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For those who hold public office, may the Holy Spirit create in them a heart that works to protect the dignity and sanctity of all life, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all who suffer from fear or anxiety, may the Lord comfort them with his healing presence, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community as we continue our Advent journey, may the Holy Spirit bring us to a renewed awareness of God's presence in our lives, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died in the light of faith, may they feast with the angels and saints in the presence of God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Almighty Father, hear and answer our needs this day. Through your Son, Christ our Lord.

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Monday, December 13, 2021

(Lec. 187)

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

MONDAY  
OF ADVENT  
- THIRD WEEK  
(OBL MEM  
Saint Lucy,  
Virgin and Martyr)

FOCUS: Jesus is the fulfillment of the Jewish prophecies and the light who helps us to see with eyes unveiled.

Jesus is the star advancing from Jacob, the staff rising from Israel. God prepared the way through John the Baptist, and Jesus' authority is the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Old Testament. Jesus shows us God at work. Our eyes, too, can be unveiled and we can hear what God says. We can behold him.

### LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Balaam prophesies a star advancing from Jacob. In the Gospel, the chief priests and elders question Jesus about his authority, and Jesus responds by asking about the origin of John's baptism, but the elders reply, *we do not know*.

### UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us turn to the God of light with hope, placing our prayers and needs before him.

- 1) For all who exercise authority in the Church, may they be filled with grace and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For world leaders, may Christ, the sower of truth and justice, dwell in their hearts, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who struggle with despair or grief, may God's healing love bring them hope, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community, may the Holy Spirit grant us the wisdom and courage to respond to God's will for us, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they enjoy eternal life and behold the face of God in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving God, we place our trust in you and ask you to hear our prayers. Through Christ our Lord.

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Tuesday, December 14, 2021  
(Lec. 188)

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

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

FOCUS: The kingdom of God belongs to the humble and lowly.

Today's readings show God judging the city of Jerusalem and its leaders, who accept no correction and will not change their minds even when a prophet comes in the way of righteousness. Yet God never forgets his promises. The humble and lowly will remain God's people. Sinners who repent will enter God's kingdom before the arrogant.

### LITURGY OF THE WORD

Zephaniah prophesies God's judgment of Jerusalem, with the removal of *proud braggarts* and his protection of the remnant of Israel. In the Gospel, Jesus tells a parable about two sons whose father asks them to work in his vineyard. One says he will not, but does; the other says he will, but does not. Jesus says that tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the Kingdom before the chief priests and elders.

### UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With humble hearts, we offer our prayers to our merciful God.

- 1) That the Church may be blessed with an increase in holy men answering the call to serve the people of God through priestly ordination, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That political authorities may receive the grace and blessing of our almighty God in working to bring hope and peace to their people, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those whose lives are darkened by the shadow of sin may be drawn into the light of forgiveness through the mercy of God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That all of us gathered here may grow in holiness and a spirit of gratitude, through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That all who have gone before us in faith may inherit the kingdom of heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, we take refuge in you. We ask that you hear our prayers, through your Son, Christ our Lord.

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Wednesday, December 15, 2021  
(Lec. 189)

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

WEDNESDAY  
OF ADVENT  
- THIRD WEEK

FOCUS: We know God's works by his healing grace.

John the Baptist's followers ask a question that comes straight from the human heart: Are you the one who is to come? Jesus tells these disciples that they will know him when he does the healing work of God.

### LITURGY OF THE WORD

Isaiah speaks for the Lord who reveals himself as the one Lord and creator of heaven and earth, calling all to himself. In the Gospel, John the Baptist's disciples ask Jesus if he is *the one who is to come*. Jesus responds by telling them to report to John what they *have seen and heard* Jesus do.

### UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Entrusting ourselves to the care of the Father, we offer these prayers to him.

- 1) For all members of the Church, may the Holy Spirit continue to help us grow in holiness as we proclaim the Good News, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For elected officials, may God strengthen them in their efforts to work for the common good and protect the most vulnerable, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all who are absent from the life of the Church, may the Lord encourage them in their faith and deliver them from doubt, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this community of faith, may we be guided by the Holy Spirit in our efforts to build up the kingdom of God on earth, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all who have died, may the Lord welcome them into his loving embrace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Almighty and ever-loving God, receive these prayers and answer them according to your holy will. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

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Thursday, December 16, 2021  
(Lec. 190)

- 1) Isaiah 54:1-10
- 2) Luke 7:24-30

THURSDAY  
OF ADVENT  
- THIRD WEEK

FOCUS: *Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.*

John the Baptist proclaimed that the kingdom of God was near, and that in order to prepare for it, people needed to repent and be baptized. His preaching is as relevant today as it was in Jesus' time. Let us examine our hearts, and return to the sacrament of reconciliation this Advent to prepare for Jesus' coming.

#### LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Isaiah assures the Israelites of God's steadfast love. In the Gospel, Jesus tells the crowds that there is no one greater than John among those born of women, *yet the least in the Kingdom of God is greater than he.*

#### UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Let us bring our intentions to God, asking him to have mercy on our needs and the needs of the world.

- 1) For Church leaders, may the Lord continue to fill them with joy in their mission to radiate his love, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For the peace and salvation of all the world, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all those experiencing loneliness during the holiday season, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those in our midst in need of material or spiritual help, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they see the face of God this day, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Father in heaven, we praise you and offer these prayers through your Son, Jesus Christ.

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Friday, December 17, 2021  
(Lec. 193)

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

FRIDAY  
OF ADVENT  
- THIRD WEEK

FOCUS: Christ is the royal descendant of King David, and his salvation is meant for all.

Matthew's Gospel begins with a genealogy that emphasizes Jesus' Jewish royal lineage, yet also shares the names of those outside the Jewish faith. Where many once thought the Messiah would be a king whose reign would entail grand military conquests, such as the one Jacob predicted of his son Judah, Christians from the beginning of time have celebrated the glory of a Child born for the salvation of all.

### LITURGY OF THE WORD

Jacob addresses his sons, promising Judah that he shall be the one *[his] brothers praise*; his hand shall be *on the neck of [his] enemies* and his descendants *shall bow down to [him]*. In the Gospel, Matthew presents Jesus' genealogy across 52 generations.

### UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Calling to mind the needs of our community and our world, let us join our prayers and lift them to the Lord.

- 1) For the Church, may the Holy Spirit give her strength in her efforts to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For world leaders, may the peace of Christ always inform their policy-making, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those suffering in mind or body, may God's healing and mercy provide relief, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For educators in this faith community, may the joy, wisdom, and creativity of the Holy Spirit infuse their teaching, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all who have died, may they be warmly welcomed into the Lord's presence by the Communion of Saints, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God of awe and wonder, hear our petitions and look upon them with your loving gaze. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

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Saturday, December 18, 2021  
(Lec. 194)

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

SATURDAY  
OF ADVENT  
- THIRD WEEK

FOCUS: Joseph shows us by example how to accept and follow God's will for our lives.

True greatness consists of following the will of God rather than seeking one's own comfort. Immediately, Joseph *did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him*. This would not have been a comfortable choice. Nonetheless, Joseph moves to act right away, quietly giving his own "yes," and answering God's call.

### LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, the Lord says that he will *raise up a righteous shoot to David* and bring the descendants of Israel back from the lands to which he had banished them. In the Gospel, Joseph responds to the message of an angel telling him to take Mary into his home.

### UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Looking to God the Father who knows our needs, we entrust these prayers to him.

- 1) For the Church, may God purify her through authentic, selfless leadership, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For civic leaders, may the Lord bless them in their service and grant them wisdom and strength, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For families who suffer discord, may God's mercy work in and through them to bring about healing, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those gathered here, may Christ continue to open our hearts to receive him more fully this Advent, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they rejoice in God's presence in heaven with all the angels and saints, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God of all hope, receive these prayers and answer them according to our need and your purpose. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

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**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2021**

(Lec. 12)

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

**FOURTH SUNDAY  
OF ADVENT**

FOCUS:

Christian communities are called to share in joy.

The interaction between Mary and Elizabeth can teach us about Christian community. The women share in the joy of being a part of God's plan. Likewise, Christians can draw together to celebrate with one another, as well as to support one another.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Micah prophesies that the ruler of Israel will come from Bethlehem-Ephrathah. The author of the Letter to the Hebrews writes that Christ said that he had come to do God's will and that all *have been consecrated through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all*. In the Gospel, Mary visits Elizabeth and the child in Elizabeth's womb leaps at the sound of Mary's voice.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Gathered before our loving God, we place our needs before him.

- 1) For God's Church on earth, may the Holy Spirit grant us strength and joy as we share the Gospel message, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For our elected leaders, may God grant them understanding and courage for sowing unity rather than division, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all expectant parents and their unborn children, may God grant health and wellness to mother and child, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this community of faith, may God help us to support and uplift one another in prayer, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For our beloved dead, may God grant them everlasting joy and peace in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Almighty God, you sent your Son to walk with us and redeem us. We lift these prayers up to you in the confidence that you always grant what we need, through Christ our Lord.

Monday, December 20, 2021

(Lec. 196)

1) Isaiah 7:10-14

2) Luke 1:26-38

MONDAY  
OF ADVENT  
- FOURTH WEEK

FOCUS: Like Mary, we are called to humbly obey the Lord.

We hear again the story of the Annunciation, that touchstone moment when Mary accepts God's will for her and for the salvation of the world. Her "yes" to God undoes Eve's "no," ushering in a new age. Her assent makes "God with us" possible. She is the Mother of God, the Mother of the Church, and a Mother to all.

### LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Isaiah says that the Lord will provide Ahaz a sign: the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel. In the Gospel, the angel Gabriel tells Mary that she will bear a son and name him Jesus and that he will be the Son of God. Mary replies, *may it be done to me according to your word.*

### UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With the same trust and confidence in God that Mary had, we offer these petitions to him.

- 1) For all members of the Church, may God instill us with courage to be a sign of Christ's presence on earth, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For people throughout the world, may they come to know lasting peace through faith in Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all those who are hungry or homeless, may they experience Christ's comfort and consolation, and have their needs met, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community, may we be blessed with the humble faith of Mary to know and follow God's will, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For our beloved dead, may they rest in eternal peace in God's heavenly kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Almighty and eternal God, we humbly ask you to hear and answer our prayers according to your will. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

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Tuesday, December 21, 2021

(Lec. 197)

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

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

FOCUS: We anticipate Christ's coming with love and joy.

Just as the infant in Elizabeth's womb *leaped for joy* in the presence of the expectant Mary, may we, too, await Christ's coming with joyful anticipation this season of Advent. Let us, like Mary, prepare our hearts for the coming of the Savior.

### LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, the author speaks of her lover calling out to her, *Arise, my beloved, my beautiful one, and come!* In the Gospel, an expectant Mary visits and greets Elizabeth, who calls Mary *blessed* and recognizes her as the mother of the Lord.

### UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: We place our trust in God as we offer our prayers to him for our needs and the needs of the world.

- 1) That the Holy Spirit may fill the Church with joy at the coming of Christ this Christmas, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That God's wisdom may lead policymakers in their work of defending the sanctity and dignity of all life, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That God's comfort and abiding presence may fill the hearts of those who are lonely or depressed during the holiday season, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That Christ may have a place in the hearts and homes of those of us gathered here, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That those who have died may be welcomed into God's loving embrace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God our Father, please hear and answer our prayers according to your holy will. We ask through your Son, Christ our Lord.

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Wednesday, December 22, 2021  
(Lec. 198)

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

WEDNESDAY  
OF ADVENT  
- FOURTH WEEK

FOCUS: Give thanks and praise to the Lord for his goodness and mercy.

In today's readings we find examples of women of faith and prayer: Hannah and Mary. They model trust, gratitude, praise, and confidence in the Lord. We can follow their example, remembering the many ways the Lord has lifted us up and giving him thanks and praise for his goodness and mercy.

### LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Hannah entrusts her son Samuel to Eli, dedicating him to the Lord. In the Gospel, Mary praises God for the mercy and care he has shown toward his people, especially the lowly.

### UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Trusting in God's love and mercy, we bring before him our petitions for our Church and the world.

- 1) For all who serve the Church, may God infuse them with joy and wisdom as they preach the word of God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For peace in all nations, that a spirit of reconciliation and goodwill may heal division and bring understanding among all peoples, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those suffering or burdened with difficulty, may the hope found in the Lord's faithfulness and promise bring them consolation and joy, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For young people in this faith community discerning a vocation to the priesthood or religious life, may the Holy Spirit fill them with wisdom and guide them in prayer, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all who have gone before us in faith, may the Lord have mercy on them and welcome them into his glory in his heavenly kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Almighty God, hear these prayers and answer them in accordance with your divine will. In Christ's name we pray.

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Thursday, December 23, 2021

(Lec. 199)

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

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

FOCUS: The time of the Lord is at hand.

John the Baptist, blessed from birth, spent his life preparing the world for the coming of the Messiah. Hopefully, we have spent Advent doing the same. As it draws to a close, we look forward to the joy and hope of Christmas, rejoicing and thanking God for the gift of his Son who comes to save us.

### LITURGY OF THE WORD

Malachi speaks for the Lord, saying that he is sending his messenger to prepare the way of the Lord: *He will sit refining and purifying silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi.* In the Gospel, Zechariah regains his speech after the birth of his son, and confirms Elizabeth's statement that the child's name is John.

### UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: As we look forward to celebrating the coming of the infant Jesus, we join our hearts in prayer and present our petitions to the Father.

- 1) For Pope Francis and all the clergy, may God give them the spiritual and physical strength to minister to God's people, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For our world, may Christ's peace touch the hearts of leaders and lead them to harmony, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who are alone during this time of rejoicing, may God show them his tender love and inspire others to reach out to them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community, may the grace of the sacraments nurture and strengthen the bonds of charity among us, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may God welcome them into their eternal home in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving Father, we present our prayers to you as we look forward with gratitude to celebrating the gift of your Son. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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Friday, December 24, 2021  
(Lec. 200)

FRIDAY  
OF ADVENT  
- FOURTH WEEK

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

FOCUS: God fulfills his promises.

God's promise to David to establish an everlasting kingdom from one of his descendants is fulfilled in Jesus. God worked many wonders caring for his children, the Israelites, and sending his beloved Son is the ultimate gift of his love and mercy. God fulfills his promises.

### LITURGY OF THE WORD

King David desires to build a house for God, but the Lord reveals that he will establish a house for David and all his descendants. In the Gospel, Zechariah recalls God's promises to David and Abraham and prophesies that his son John will prepare the way of the Lord.

### UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With confident hope in the God who came to save his people, we bring our needs to him.

- 1) For the Church, may God bless her efforts to build up his kingdom on earth, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For world leaders, may the Holy Spirit bless and strengthen them in their efforts to bring about peace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those who deal with chronic illnesses, may Christ the healer bring them relief and give them the strength they need to endure, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For each of us gathered here, may the Holy Spirit help make a place in our hearts to welcome the Christ Child, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all our beloved dead, may they be reunited in glory with Christ, our Savior and brother, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, you are king of all. Look with favor upon the prayers we bring before you today, we ask through your Son, Jesus Christ.

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

### CHRISTMAS 2021 – 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: *God is with us.*

The readings highlight Jesus as the fulfilment of God's promise to the Jews for a Messiah. Today we celebrate that Messiah's legacy and birth, as God reveals himself fully in the person of Jesus Christ, born of a woman into human time and history who then sends his disciples to share this Good News with all.

### LITURGY OF THE WORD

Isaiah prophesies Jerusalem's vindication and glorious transformation. Saint Paul preaches in the synagogue of Antioch, showing Jesus' lineage as arising from God's choosing of David as king and his promise of a savior. He also tells them that John the Baptist *heralded his coming*. In the Gospel, Matthew first tells *the genealogy of Jesus Christ*, from Abraham to Jesus, and then *how the birth of Jesus Christ came about*.

### UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: As we herald the coming of our Savior, let us bring to God our own needs and those of the Church and the world.

- 1) For the Church, may God bless her efforts to boldly announce the coming of the Prince of Peace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For world leaders, may God give them grace to govern with humility and concern for the most vulnerable, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all who are grieving this holiday season, may the Lord bring them consolation, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all gathered here today, may the Lord strengthen and sustain our faith in all we do, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may they celebrate this blessed Christmas feast face to face with Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Eternal Father, you give the light that dispels all darkness. We ask you to hear and answer our prayers through your Son, Christ Jesus, the Lord.

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## CHRISTMAS 2021– 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: *Let the heavens be glad and the earth rejoice.*

Jesus, the Light of the World, comes to us when nights are longest and the days are short. He comes to a burdened world, smashing the yoke of sin. As our Redeemer, he breaks through the darkness in our hearts, bringing freedom and light. *Today is born our Savior, Christ the Lord. Let the heavens be glad and the earth rejoice.*

### LITURGY OF THE WORD

Isaiah prophesies the time when *the people who walked in darkness [will] have seen a great light ... for a child is born to us, a son is given us*. Saint Paul exhorts Christians to live holy lives as they await the coming of Christ. In the Gospel, Joseph and Mary travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem to enroll in the census, and there she gives *birth to her firstborn son*. An angel shares this *news of great joy* with shepherds in the surrounding fields.

### UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With great rejoicing in our King, who has appeared in glory, let us offer our prayers this day.

- 1) For the Holy Father, may God grant him joy and strength as he leads the Church in the ways of peace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For elected officials, may the Holy Spirit give them grace in governing with prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all who lack stable housing, may they find strength in God and the loving support of others, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all gathered here this holy night, may Christ be born in our hearts and guide us with his light, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For the faithful departed, may their joy be full as they join the angels and saints singing “Glory to God in the highest,” let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Father in heaven, in your wisdom, please hear and answer our prayers through your Son, Jesus Christ.

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## CHRISTMAS 2021 – 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: The birth of Jesus brings the light of God's love into our world.

Today is a day of great rejoicing for all humanity. God has fulfilled the promises of old and the light of his love has appeared among us as a newborn Child. God has made his dwelling among us and given us power to become his children and to receive from him the fullness of grace.

### LITURGY OF THE WORD

Isaiah prophesies the one who *brings glad tidings*, announcing the good news of salvation. In the Letter to the Hebrews, the author writes that over time *God spoke in partial and various ways*, but *in these last days he has spoken to us through the Son*. In the Gospel, John proclaims Jesus as the Incarnate Word of God: the fullness of God's Revelation to us. He also writes of John who came before Jesus *to testify to the light*.

### UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: As we celebrate the newborn King, let us place our prayers before our loving Father.

- 1) For the Church, the body of Christ in the world, may God bless her efforts to share the Good News with others, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For leaders of nations, may the Gospel message of peace inform their work for justice in the world, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all the sick and the dying, may God comfort them and bless their caregivers, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those in our parish discerning a call to the priesthood or consecrated life, may the Lord bless them and keep them on their spiritual journey, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all who have died, may they find eternal rest and joy in the presence of God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Eternal Father, in the birth of your only Son we glimpse the glory of your kingdom and the promise of a share in your eternal life. On this holy day, hear our prayers and answer them according to our need. We ask this through your Son, Christ our Lord.

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**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2021**

(Lec. 17)

- 1) Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14
- 2) 1 Colossians 3:12-21  
or 3:12-17
- 3) Luke 2:41-52

Or, in Year C

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

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

FOCUS: *Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?*

Jesus is the Son of God, sent out of love to do the Father's will. Out of love, he obeys. Through the life and sacrifice of Jesus, we become children of God and heirs to the Kingdom, which in turn requires of us – in love – to *keep his commandments and do what pleases him*. As Christ was meant to be in his Father's house, so, too, are we meant to join him: in worship here in this life and for eternity in the next. We do this through love of God and one another, with the help of the Spirit he gave us.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, Hannah bears a son and offers him to the Lord. John writes that the Father's love *bestowed on us* has allowed us to be *called the children of God*, and we should ... *love one another just as he commanded us*. In the Gospel, Mary and Joseph search for Jesus *with great anxiety*. After they find him in the temple, Jesus explains that he had to be in his Father's house.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: We turn to our loving Father with humble and trusting hearts, placing our prayers before him.

- 1) That all members of the Church, through God's grace, may be faithful to the mission entrusted to us by Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That those in authority may be guided by the Holy Spirit in seeking justice for their people, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That those who suffer from chronic illness may be relieved and healed through the gracious mercy of God, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That this faith community may grow in faith, hope, and love – transformed by grace to a life of Gospel fidelity, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That those who have died may experience perfect union with the Father in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Father, we ask that in your love, you hear and answer the prayers we bring to you today, through your Son, Christ our Lord.

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Monday, December 27, 2021

(Lec. 697)

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

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

FOCUS: *Our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.*

The disciples were the first to recognize Jesus as the Son of God. The joy of their witness is conveyed to us in the Scriptures for us to see and feel as well. We are united in fellowship to one another and to the Father and Son [and also the Holy Spirit] because of their witness.

### LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, John writes that what the Apostles heard, saw, and touched – Jesus, the *Word of life* – they now testify to so that others may have fellowship with them. In the Gospel, Mary Magdalene tells Peter and the other disciple that Jesus has been taken from the tomb. Peter and the other disciple run to and enter the empty tomb; *the other disciple ... saw and believed.*

### UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Gathered as one voice, we lift our prayers to our loving Father.

- 1) For the Church, may the Lord continue to bless her and protect her from all evil, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For world leaders, may the Gospel of Jesus guide them in the ways of peace and reconciliation, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those persecuted for righteousness' sake, may God bless them with courage and perseverance, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community, may the Holy Spirit help us to bear good fruit in our daily lives of discipleship, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died, may our Lord lead them to their eternal rest in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Heavenly Father, please hear and answer our prayers according to your will. We ask this through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Tuesday, December 28, 2021  
(Lec. 698)

**THE HOLY INNOCENTS,  
- FEAST**

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

FOCUS: *God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all.*

Herod was motivated by pride and narcissism, and his behavior was a crime against humanity and wrought great suffering. Nothing good comes from pride. It is a darkness that envelops the one who holds onto it, and falsely promises good where there is no true good to be found. Jesus, the Light of the World, was made flesh and came into our world at Christmas. He is light; there is no darkness in him. His promises are true and good.

### LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, John encourages followers of Jesus to *walk in the light* and acknowledge their sins. In the Gospel, an angel warned Joseph of Herod's plan to destroy his newborn son and so Joseph flees with his family to Egypt. An angered Herod orders the massacre of boys, in Bethlehem and surrounding areas, who are of the ages two and under.

### UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Brothers and sisters, confident in the Lord's mercy, we now offer our prayers to the Father.

- 1) For the Church, may God continue to purify and sanctify her in her mission and ministry, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For policymakers, may God instill in them a renewed commitment for respecting the dignity of all life, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those mourning the loss of a loved one, may they be filled with God's consolation and peace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For teachers and catechists in this faith community, may God be their guide as they share the Gospel message, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died in faith, may Jesus, the Lamb of God, welcome them into the eternal kingdom of the Father, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving Father, we ask you to hear and answer the prayers that we offer for ourselves and for our world. Through your Son, Christ our Lord.

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Wednesday, December 29, 2021  
(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: To know Jesus is to love Jesus and others.

John tells us that we can be sure that we know Jesus if we keep his commandments. This is the test, so to speak, because to know Jesus is to love Jesus, and authentic love implies a desire to obey and follow. Obedience, in this respect, amounts to love for God and for all those whom God places in our path.

### LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, John writes that the way to know Jesus is to keep his commandments. In the Gospel, Simeon recognizes the child Jesus as the Messiah who will bring salvation.

### UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: We bring our needs before the Lord, confident in his abundant love and compassion.

- 1) For our Church, may the Lord raise up holy men and women to humbly labor on the Church's behalf, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For national and world leaders, may the example of Jesus inspire them in governing with compassion and justice, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For the imprisoned, may God's mercy and forgiveness give them hope, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this faith community, may God's word continue to guide us in truth and love, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all who have died, may they enjoy a life in communion with the Trinity and all the saints in heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving Father, we thank you for being the giver of every good gift. We entrust these prayers into your providence, through your Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ.

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Thursday, December 30, 2021  
(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: *Whoever does the will of God remains forever.*

During this Octave of Christmas, we take special care to focus and refocus on the miraculous Christmas event and all that it changed for the world. Ultimately, this world will pass away, but in the meantime we are called to be faithful, ever mindful of the divine plan God has for each one of us.

### LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the first reading, John reminds his followers that the things of the world are fleeting, but *whoever does the will of God remains forever*. In the Gospel from Luke, the prophetess Anna gives thanks to God for the long-awaited arrival of the Christ Child.

### UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: Mindful of God's enduring care and concern for each of us, we place our prayers before him.

- 1) For Christ's Church on earth, may the Lord guard and strengthen each one of us, his servants, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For civic leaders, may the Lord grant them wisdom in protecting all in their care, especially children, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For all those who struggle in faith, may the Lord console them with his promises and help them in any unbelief, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For all who worship in this place, may God's grace transform us in the image of Christ's love and mercy, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who have died in the light of faith, may God bring them to eternal rest in him, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Loving Father, we ask that you hear our prayers through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

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Friday, December 31, 2021  
(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 became flesh and made his dwelling among us.*

The Gospel of John uses metaphorical language and rhetorical devices to teach about the truth of Jesus. While the language of the Gospel is not direct, the prologue invites us to reflect more deeply on the mystery of the Incarnation as the Word made flesh.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

John writes that it is the last hour, because many antichrists have appeared, and also deserted them. He assures those anointed by the Holy One that they know the truth. In the Gospel, John proclaims Jesus as the Word who was with God at the beginning of time.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: With reliance on our good and gracious God, let us bring him our petitions.

- 1) For Pope Francis and all the clergy, may God help them proclaim the truth in love, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For elected officials, may God embolden them in their work to protect the dignity and sanctity of human life from conception through natural death, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those experiencing homelessness or hunger, may God in his gracious mercy provide for them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For this community of worship, may the Lord increase our faith and commitment to the Gospel, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all who have died, may they enjoy eternal peace in God's embrace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: God of truth, we lift these prayers to you through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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