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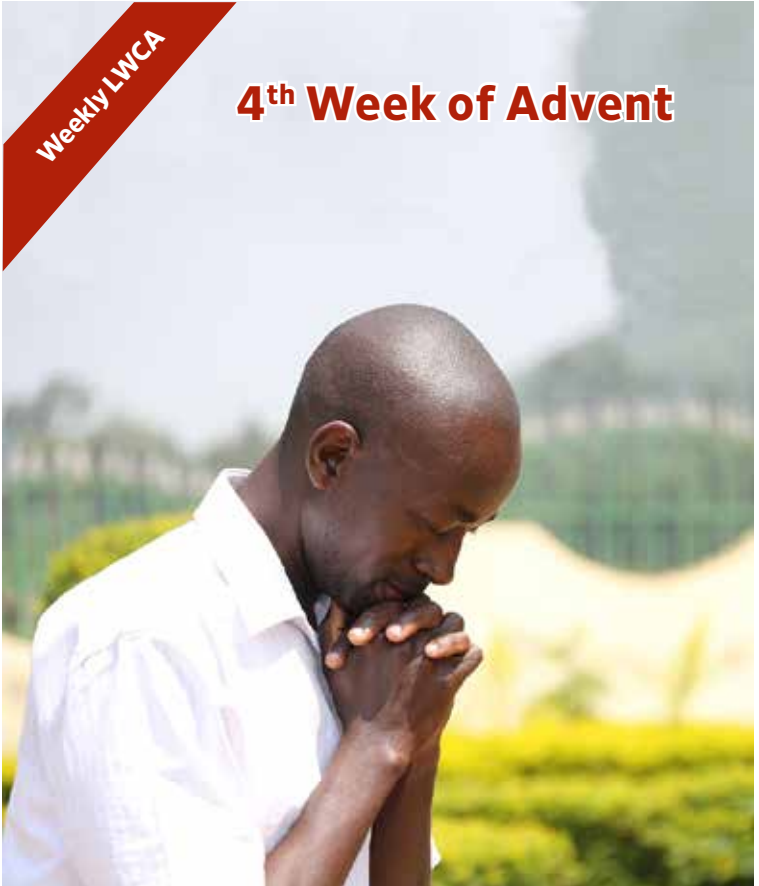
Living with Christ

GROWING UP DAILY WITH THE GOOD NEWS

Weekly LWCA

4th Week of Advent

bayard africque



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Contents

Living with Christ December 2022

I Editorial

Praying with the Church

2 Pope's Prayer Intention

3-5 Focus on the Sacraments

The Anointing of the Sick

Daily Readings and commentaries

6-14 December 18

4th Sunday of Advent

15-45 December 19-24

4th Week of Advent

Liturgical texts:

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On our cover: Faithful in prayer as he waits for the birth of Christ

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Editorial

December 2022



Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Salifu, Tema-Ghana

...He Dwelt among Men

“I say this because many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world...” (2 John 1:7). Why do we celebrate Christmas?

First, we celebrate “God among us”. God has always been with his people in the Old Testament, the presence of God was seen in signs and symbols: The ark of the covenant and the Shekinah (clouds). But in all these experiences, non is as real as the Son of God becoming man. With this extraordinary intervention, God reveals himself as sharing in all we go through (Hebrew 4:15)

Second, celebrating God made flesh only goes to buttress the insistence of St. James that we cannot develop a sound spirituality that does not touch on reality and impact physically the lives of men (James 2:16-18).

Finally, we celebrate our God who enters our history and story. God is not afraid to dirty himself because of us. God is not only outside of time, but he is in our time and that is why we give him this time called Christmas.



The Pope's Prayer Intention

For volunteer not-for-profit organizations: We pray that volunteer non-profit organizations committed to human development find people dedicated to the common good and ceaselessly seek out new paths to international cooperation.

Other papal intentions and videos can be found on: <http://apostleshipofprayer.org/>

The Anointing of the Sick

When we read the Holy Scriptures, we notice that Jesus Christ had a special concern for the sick during his life on earth. He himself says that He came for the sick, not for the healthy. The main biblical foundation of the anointing of the sick is the letter of Saint James 4, 14-15 which reads: *« Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the Church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven »*. Sickness can weaken both the body and the spirit. That is why the anointing of the sick is meant to give spiritual and physical strength to the person who receives it.

Furthermore, Jesus instructed the Apostles to share in his mission: *«Jesus summoned the Twelve and began to send them out two by two, giving them authority over unclean spirits. With that they went off, preaching the need of repentance. They expelled many demons, anointed the sick with oil, and worked many cures»* (Mark 6:7,12). The

anointing of the sick is the continuation of what Jesus used to do when he was on earth.

Before Vatican II, this sacrament used to be referred to as the “Extreme Unction” as it was reserved to the dying. The Vatican II Council preferred the word Anointing of the sick to Extreme Unction. Nowadays, it is not only the dying people who receive this sacrament, but the elderly and the very sick people can receive it too. Therefore, the anointing of the sick can be received many times. Given that no sacrament is imposed, the anointing of the sick is administered to a reasonable baptized person who expresses the will of receiving it. This sacrament can be received any time and in any place.

The sick person is anointed on the forehead and on the hands. It is always important to take into account the context and to be aware of the bishop’s guidelines on the sacraments. In case the sick person has no hands, the minister will anoint another part of the human body. The minister of the anointing of the sick is the priest. A deacon cannot administer this sacrament.

The matter is the oil of the sick and the form is the following words that the minister pronounces when he administers the sacrament: *«Through this holy anointing, may the Lord in His love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit. May the Lord who frees you from sin save you and raise you up»*. The oil with which the anointing is to be done is blessed by the bishop at the Chrism Mass with the proper blessing. But in case of necessity, the priest may bless with ordinary oil during the celebration of the sacrament.

In some African cultures, the oil is used for various purposes. It is beyond doubt that the king is anointed. As far as healing is concerned, the oil is still used to heal wounds, animal bites and certain skin diseases. Therefore, Christians from Africa understand better that the anointing of the sick is a sacrament of healing.

***Rev. Fr. Jérôme K. M. Kombi,
Kinshasa, Congo.***



Sunday December 18

4th Sunday of Advent

*Isaiah 7:10-14 / Psalm (23) 24:1-2, 3-4ab. 5-6 / Roman 1:1-7 /
Matthew 1:18-24.*



“...you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people...” Matthew 1:21



Trust and Confidence in God

Today is the last Sunday of Advent and we are a few days away from Christmas. We still have few days to make our final spiritual preparations for the celebration of Christ's birth.

In biblical study, the term 'typology' means looking at the Old Testament through the lens of the New Testament and seeing types of what is to come, thus, establishing relationships between them. It is a beautiful way to come to a deeper understanding of the mysteries of Christ. The first reading and the Gospel of today are good examples of biblical typology. Isaiah in the first reading gave a prophecy of the circumstances that will characterize the birth of Christ which played out in the Gospel. The angel used the same expression that was prophesized by Isaiah. God's plan for our salvation was a long-term plan fostered by His love for us.

The Gospel pericope presents us with the person of Joseph, who wanted to divorce his betrothed wife, Mary, when he knew she was pregnant. Betrothment was as a serious



Sunday December 18

stage of relationship among the Jews and being pregnant at this stage was regarded a serious offence, and Joseph in his meekness and simplicity wanted to protect Mary from such embarrassment. He did this, not knowing the mind of God until the angel intimated him and he remained docile to God's will. Joseph trusted and believed in God even in something that he knows seemed impossible in human thinking. God writes straight in crooked lines and His ways are not our ways. We may face many challenges in life but God being omnipotent and omniscient, we need not fear because we are assured of His presence and guidance at all times. We must keep the faith and hope alive because no situation is hard for God to handle and no case is hopeless. God has an answer to every question and a solution to every challenging situation. Like Joseph, we are enjoined as children of God to have total trust and confidence in God who promised to be with us always till the end of time.

Rev. Sr. Mary Clare, Abuja-Nigeria



Entrance Antiphon (*Cf. Isaiah 45:8*)

Drop down dew from above, you heavens, and let the clouds rain down the Just One; let the earth be opened and bring forth a Saviour.

The Gloria is not said

Collect

Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord, your grace into our hearts, that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ your Son was made known by the message of an Angel, may by his Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of his Resurrection. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

First Reading (*Isaiah 7:10-14*)

A reading from the Book of Isaiah

In those days: The Lord spoke to Ahaz, “Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the Lo to the test.” And he said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? Therefore, the Lord himself will



Sunday December 18

give you a sign. Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Responsorial Psalm (Psalm ⁽²³⁾ 24:1-2, 3-4ab. 5-6) —



Let us go re - joic-ing to the house of the Lord.



R. Let the Lord enter; he is the King of glory.

The Lord's is the earth and its fullness,
the world, and all who dwell in it.

It is he who set it on the seas;
on the rivers, he made it firm. **R.**

Who shall climb the mountain of the Lord?

Who shall stand in his holy place?

The clean of hands and pure of heart,
whose soul is not set on vain things. **R.**



Blessings from the Lord shall he receive,
and the right reward from the God who saves him.
Such are the people who seek him,
who seek the face of the God of Jacob. R.

Second Reading (Romans 1:1-7)—————

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the Gospel of God which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, the Gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ; To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**



Sunday December 18

Acclamation (*Matthew 1:23*)

Alleluia. Alleluia. Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son; and his name shall be called Emmanuel: God is with us. **Alleluia.**

Gospel (*Matthew 1:18-24*)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

The birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to send her away quietly. But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: “Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel” (which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**



Prayer of the Faithful

The following intentions are suggestions only.

R. Lord, hear us!

For our Church in its mission to further the reign of God in the world, we pray to the Lord: R.

For charity, mercy and justice in our communities and societies, we pray to the Lord: R.

For strength and comfort for all who are suffering physically, spiritually or emotionally, we pray to the Lord: R.

For our parish community, challenged to see the face of Christ in everyone, we pray to the Lord: R.

Prayer over the Offerings

May the Holy Spirit, O Lord, sanctify these gifts laid upon your altar, just as he filled with his power the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



Sunday December 18

Communion Antiphon (*Isaiah 7:14*)

Behold a Virgin shall conceive, and shall bear a son; and his name will be called Emmanuel.

Prayer after Communion

Having received this pledge of eternal redemption, we pray, almighty God, that as the feast day of our salvation draws ever nearer, so we may press forward all the more eagerly to the worthy celebration of the mystery of your Son's Nativity. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

Amen.



Monday December 19

4th Week of Advent

Entrance Antiphon

(Hebrews 10:37) **He who is to come will come and will not delay, and now there will be no fear within our land, for he is our Saviour.**

Collect

O God, who through the child-bearing of the holy Virgin graciously revealed the radiance of your glory to the world, grant, we pray, that we may venerate with integrity of faith the mystery of so wondrous an Incarnation and always celebrate it with due reverence. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with

you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Reading _____
(Judges 13:2-7, 24-25a)

A reading from the Book of Judges

In those days: There was a certain man of Zorah, of the tribe of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren and had no children. And the angel of the Lord appeared to the woman and said to her, "Behold, you are barren and have no children; but you shall conceive and bear

a son. Therefore beware, and drink no wine or strong drink, and eat nothing unclean, for behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. No razor shall come upon his head, for the boy shall be a Nazirite to God from birth; and he shall begin to deliver Israel from the hand of the Philistines.” Then the woman came and told her husband, “A man of God came to me, and his countenance was like the countenance of the angel of God, very terrible; I did not ask him where he was from, and he did not tell me his name; but he said to me, ‘Behold, you shall conceive and bear a son; so then think no wine or strong drink, and eat nothing unclean, for the boy shall be a Nazirite to God from

birth to the day of his death.” And the woman bore a son, and called his name Samson; and the boy grew, and the Lord blessed him. And the Spirit of the Lord began to stir him. The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Responsorial Psalm—
(Psalm (70) 71;3-4a, 5-6ab, 16-17)

R. My mouth is filled with your praise, and I will sing your glory!

Be my rock, my constant refuge, a mighty stronghold to save me, for you are my rock, my stronghold. My God, free me from the hand of the wicked. R.

It is you, O Lord, who are my hope, my trust, O Lord,

from my youth. On you I have leaned from my birth; from my mother's womb, you have been my help. *R.*

I will come with praise of your might, O Lord; I will call to mind your justice, yours, O Lord, alone. O God, you have taught me from my youth, and I proclaim your wonders still. *R.*

Acclamation

Alleluia. Alleluia. O Root of Jesse, who stand as a sign to the nations! Come and deliver us: delay no longer. **Alleluia.**

Gospel ————— **(Luke 1:5-25)**

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest

named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah; and he had a wife of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years. Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, according to the custom of the priesthood, it fell to him by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on

the right side of the altar of incense. And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer is heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth; for he will be great before the Lord, and he shall drink no wine nor strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb. And he will turn many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,

and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.” And Zechariah said to the angel, “How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years.” And the angel answered him, “I am Gabriel, who stand in the presence of God; and I was sent to speak to you, and to bring you this good news. And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things come to pass, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time.” And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they wondered about his delay in the temple. And when he came out, he could not speak to them, and they

perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple; and he made signs to them and remained mute. And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home. After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she hid herself, saying, "Thus the Lord has done to me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men."

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer over the Offerings

Look with favour, we pray, O Lord, on the offerings we lay upon your altars, that what we bring despite our weakness may be sanctified by your power. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon

(Luke 1:78-79) **The Dawn from on high will visit us, guiding our feet in the way of peace.**

Prayer after Communion

As we give thanks, almighty God, for these gifts you have bestowed, graciously

arouse in us, we pray, the desire for those yet to come, that we may welcome the Nativity of our Saviour and

honour it with minds made pure. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Believe without Doubting

Commentary

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

Doubt expresses a lack of faith that does not please God. In the Gospel, the annunciation of the birth of John the Baptist was difficult for Zechariah to believe which led to his dumbness. God is Almighty and the miracle of the incarnation of John the Baptist proves God's omnipotence. We are enjoined to trust and believe God in all things, to always remember that nothing is impossible for God, and therefore, in total reliance, deepen our faith in Him, without doubting any of His decrees.

Rev. Sr. Mary Clare, Abuja-Nigeria



Tuesday December 20

4th Week of Advent

Entrance Antiphon

(Isaiah 11:1; 40:5; Luke 3:6) **A branch shall sprout from the root of Jesse, and the glory of the Lord will fill the whole earth, and all flesh will see the salvation of God.**

Collect

O God, eternal majesty, whose ineffable Word the immaculate Virgin received through the message of an Angel, and so became the dwelling-place of divinity, filled with the light of the Holy Spirit; grant, we pray, that by her example, we may in humility hold fast to your will. Through our Lord

Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Reading

(Isaiah 7:10-14)

A reading from the Book of Isaiah

In those days: The Lord spoke to Ahaz, “Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test,” And he said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it

too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel [God is with us].” The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Responsorial Psalm —
(Psalm (23) 24:1-2. 3-4ab. 5-6)

℟. Let the Lord enter; he is the king of glory.

The Lord’s is the earth and its fullness, the world, and all who dwell in it. It is he who set it on the seas; on the rivers he made it firm. **℟.**

Who shall climb the mountain of the Lord? Who shall stand in his holy place? The clean of hands and pure of heart, whose soul is not set on vain things. **℟.**

Blessings from the Lord shall he receive, and right reward from the God who saves him. Such are the people who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob. **℟.**

Acclamation

Alleluia. Alleluia. O Key of David! You open the gates of the eternal Kingdom: come and lead us out of the prison where we sit in darkness.

Alleluia.

Gospel _____
(Luke 1:26-38)

**A reading from the holy
Gospel according to Luke**

In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb

and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end." And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I do not know man?" And the angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, your kinswoman Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren.

For with God nothing will be impossible.” And Mary said, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer over the Offerings

Look, O Lord, we pray, upon the one sacrifice of your Son, that by participating in this mystery, we may

possess at last the gifts we have awaited and for which our faith bids us hope. Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Communion Antiphon

(Luke 1:31) **The Angel said to Mary: Behold, you will conceive and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus.**

Prayer after Communion

Grant divine protection, O Lord, to those you renew

with this heavenly gift,
that to those who delight
in your mysteries, you may

give the joy of true peace.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Mary, Embodiment of all Virtues

Commentary

Isaiah 7:10-14 //
Luke 1: 26-38

God loves us so much that He had a plan for our salvation. In view of that, He prepared a woman, Mary, to be conceived spotlessly in order to bear the Son of God. Mary is presented as the embodiment of all virtues and our model. We are enjoined to imitate her excellence, imbibe her virtues and live a good life. To achieve this, we must trust in the efficacy of her intercession because her son cannot refuse her requests.

Rev. Sr. Mary Clare, Abuja-Nigeria



Wednesday December 21

4th Week of Advent

Entrance Antiphon

(Isaiah 7:14; 8:10) **The Lord and Ruler will be coming soon, and his name will be called Emmanuel because he will be God-with-us.**

Collect

Hear in kindness, O Lord, the prayers of your people, that those who rejoice at the coming of your Only Begotten Son in our flesh, may, when at last he comes in glory, gain the reward of eternal life. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Reading ---

(Song of Solomon 2:8-14)

A reading from the Song of Solomon

The voice of my beloved!
Behold, he comes, leaping
upon the mountains,
bounding over the hills.
My beloved is like a
gazelle, or a young stag.
Behold, there he stands
behind our wall, gazing in
at the windows, looking
through the lattice. My
beloved speaks and says
to me: "Arise, my love,
my dove, my fair one, and
come away; for behold,
the winter is past, the



rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth, the lime of pruning has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. The fig tree puts forth its figs, and the vines are in blossom; they give forth fragrance. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the covert of the cliff, let me see your face, let me hear your voice, for your voice is sweet, and your face is comely.”

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

or the following:

Reading _____
(Zephaniah 3:14-18)

**A reading from the Book
of the Prophet Zephaniah**

Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! The Lord has taken away the judgements against you, he has cast out your enemies. The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall fear evil no more. On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: “Do not fear, O Zion; let not your hands grow weak. The Lord your God is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will

renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing as on a day of festival.”

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm —
(Psalm (32) 33:2-3. 11-12. 20-21)

R. Ring out your joy to the Lord, O you just; O sing him a song that is new.

Give thanks to the Lord upon the harp; with a ten-stringed lute sing him songs. O sing him a song that is new; play skillfully, with shouts of joy. **R.**

The designs of the Lord stand for ever, the plans of his heart from age to age. Blessed the nation whose God is the Lord, the people

he has chosen as his heritage. **R.**

Our soul is waiting for the Lord. He is our help and our shield. In him do our hearts find joy. We trust in his holy name. **R.**

Acclamation

Alleluia. Alleluia. O Emmanuel, our King and Lawgiver! Come and save us, O Lord our God. **Alleluia.**

Gospel —————
(Luke 1:39-45)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a city of Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And

when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the child leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and she exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.”

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer over the Offerings

Be pleased, O Lord, to accept the offerings of your Church, for in your mercy you have given them to be offered and by your power you transform them into the mystery of our salvation. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon

(Luke 1:45) **Blessed are you who have believed, that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled.**

Prayer after Communion

Lord, may participation in this divine mystery provide enduring protection for your people, so that, being subject to your glorious

majesty in dedicated service, they may know abundant health in mind and body. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Mary's Selflessness
and Concern****Commentary**

**Song of Solomon 2:8-14 /
Luke 1:39-45**

Mary is the mother of God and is blessed among all women. The child in Elizabeth's womb recognized Mary's unique nature and rejoiced. Mary's visit to Elizabeth is a journey of love, faith and service. Mary was selfless, without thinking of her condition, she was sensitive to the need of her cousin. This shows us how Mary is concerned with our needs and is always ready to intercede for us. We are privileged to have Mary as our mother. May we always run to her to obtain our requests from her son.

Rev. Sr. Mary Clare, Abuja-Nigeria



Thursday December 22

4th Week of Advent

Entrance Antiphon

(Psalm (23) 24:7) **O gates, lift high your heads; grow higher, ancient doors. Let him enter, the king of glory!**

Collect

O God, who, seeing the human race fallen into death, willed to redeem it by the coming of your Only Begotten Son, grant, we pray, that those who confess his Incarnation with humble fervour may merit his company as their Redeemer. Who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit One God for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Reading ---

(1 Samuel 1:24-28)

A reading from the first Book of Samuel

In those days: Hannah took Samuel up with her, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour, and a skin of wine; and she brought him to the house of the Lord at Shiloh; and the child was young. Then they slew the bull, and they brought the child to Eli. And she said, "Oh, my lord! As you live, my lord, I am the woman who was standing here in your presence, praying to the Lord. For this child I

prayed; and the Lord has granted me my petition which I made to him. Therefore I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he lives, he is lent to the Lord.” And they worshipped the Lord there.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

***Responsorial Psalm —
(1 Samuel 2:1.4-5.6-
7.8abcd)***

***R. My heart exults in the
Lord, my Saviour.***

My heart exults in the Lord; my strength is exalted in the Lord. My mouth derides my enemies, because I rejoice in your salvation. *R.*

The bows of the mighty are broken, but the feeble gird on strength. Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, but those who were hungry have ceased to hunger. The barren has borne seven, but she who has many children is forlorn. *R.*

The Lord kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up. The Lord makes poor and makes rich; he brings low, he also exalts. *R.*

He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the dung heap, to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honour. *R.*



Acclamation

Alleluia. Alleluia. Come,
O King of the nations and
cornerstone of the Church!
Come and save man, whom
you formed from the clay of
the earth. **Alleluia.**

Gospel

(Luke 1:46-56)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

At that time: Mary said,
“My soul magnifies the
Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in
God my Saviour,
for he has regarded the low
estate of his handmaiden.
For behold, henceforth all
generations will call me
blessed;
for he who is mighty has
done great things for me,
and holy is his name.

And his mercy is on those
who fear him
from generation to
generation.

He has shown strength
with his arm,
he has scattered the proud
in the imagination of their
hearts,
he has put down the
mighty from their thrones,
and exalted those of low
degree;
he has filled the hungry
with good things,
and the rich he has sent
empty away.

He has helped his servant
Israel,
in remembrance of his
mercy,
as he spoke to our fathers,
to Abraham and to his
posterity for ever.”

And Mary remained with
Elizabeth about three

months, and returned to her home.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer over the Offerings

Trusting in your compassion, O Lord, we come eagerly with our offerings to your sacred altar, that, through the purifying action of your grace, we may be cleansed

by the very mysteries we serve. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon

(Luke 1:46.49) **My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, for the Almighty has done great things for me.**

Prayer after Communion

May reception of your Sacrament strengthen us,



O Lord, so that we may go out to meet our Saviour with worthy deeds when he comes and merit the rewards of the blessed. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Humility and Gratitude

Commentary

1 Samuel 1:24-28 /

Luke 1: 46-56

In Mary's great status, she remained humble, trustful, obedient, and faithful to God. The Magnificat is a prayer of praise and thanksgiving to God for the marvelous work in her life. In life situations, when we find ourselves in elevated positions, are we humble or proud? Do we respect or treat people with contempt because we are bigger than them? Humility is a virtue that produces all other virtues. We pray for the grace to be humble and to be always grateful for God's goodness in our lives.

Rev. Sr. Mary Clare, Abuja-Nigeria



Friday December 23

4th Week Of Advent

Ferial

or **Saint John of Kanty, priest**

Entrance Antiphon

(Isaiah 9:5; Psalm (71) 72:17)

A child shall be born for us, and he will be called God, the Almighty; every tribe of the earth shall be blest in him.

Collect

Almighty ever-living God, as we see how the Nativity of your Son according to the flesh draws near, we pray that to us, your unworthy servants, mercy may flow from your Word, who chose to become flesh of the Virgin Mary

and establish among us his dwelling, Jesus Christ our Lord. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Reading _____ **(Malachi 3:1-4; 4:5-6)**

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Malachi

Thus says the Lord God: "Behold, I send my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek

will suddenly come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? “For he is like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, till they present right offerings to the Lord. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years. “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and

the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a curse.” The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

***Responsorial Psalm —
(Psalm ⁽²⁴⁾ 25:4-5. 8-9. 10
and 14)***

R. Look up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.

O Lord, make me know your ways. Teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth, and teach me; for you are the God of my salvation. *R.*

Good and upright is the Lord; he shows the way to sinners. He guides the humble in right judgement; to the humble he teaches his way. *R.*

All the Lord's paths are mercy and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and commands. The Lord's secret is for those who fear him; to them he reveals his covenant. R.

Acclamation

Alleluia. Alleluia. Come, O King of the nations and cornerstone of the Church! Come and save man, whom you formed from the clay of the earth. **Alleluia.**

Gospel ————— *(Luke 1:57-66)*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

The time came for Elizabeth to be delivered, and she gave birth to a son. And her neighbours

and kinsfolk heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they would have named him Zechariah after his father, but his mother said, "Not so; he shall be called John." And they said to her, "None of your kindred is called by this name." And they made signs to his father, inquiring what he would have him called. And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, "His name is John." And they all marvelled. And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God. And fear came on all their neighbours. And all

these things were talked about through all the hill country of Judea; and all who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, “What then will this child be?” For the hand of the Lord was with him.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer over the Offerings

May this oblation, by which divine worship in its fullness has been inaugurated for us, be our perfect reconciliation with you, O Lord, that we may celebrate

with minds made pure the Nativity of our Redeemer. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon

(Rv 3:20) **Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if anyone hears my voice, and opens the door to me, I will enter his house and dine with him, and he with me.**

Prayer after Communion

Grant your peace, O Lord, to those you have nourished with these heavenly gifts, that we may be ready, with

lighted lamps, to meet your dearly beloved Son at his coming. Who lives and

reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

God is Omniscient

Commentary

Malachi 3:1-4, 4:5-6 /
Luke 1:57-66

The first reading specified the prophecy about John the Baptist and his preparation for the coming of the Messiah. In the Gospel, the birth of John the Baptist brought about the miracle of the restoration of his father's speech. We should always remember that God is all wisdom and all-knowing, His ways are different from ours. We, therefore, need not to worry or be afraid because the omniscient God, will put all things right in His own time. We ask for the grace to accept God's will at all times.

Rev. Sr. Mary Clare, Abuja-Nigeria



Saturday December 24

4th Week of Advent

Entrance Antiphon

(Cf. Galatians 4:4) **Behold, when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son into the world.**

Collect

Come quickly, we pray, Lord Jesus, and do not delay, that those who trust in your compassion may find solace and relief in your coming. Who live and reign with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Reading

(2 Samuel 7: 1-5. 8b-12. 14a. 16)

A reading from the second Book of Samuel

Now when King David dwelt in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies round about, the king said to Nathan the prophet, “See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent.” And Nathan said to the king, “Go, do all that is in your heart; for the Lord is with you.” But that same night

the word of the Lord came to Nathan, “Go and tell my servant David, ‘Thus says the Lord: Would you build me a house to dwell in? “Thus says the Lord of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel; and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges

over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. “I will be his Father and he shall be my son. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever.”

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.



Responsorial Psalm —
(Psalm (88) 89: 2-3. 4-5. 27. 29)

**R. I will sing for ever of
your mercies, O Lord.**

I will sing for ever of your mercies, O Lord; through all ages, my mouth will proclaim your fidelity. I have declared your mercy is established for ever; your fidelity stands firm as the heavens. R.

“With my chosen one I have made a covenant; I have sworn to David my servant: I will establish your descendants for ever, and set up your throne through all ages.” R.

“He will call out to me, ‘You are my father, my God, the rock of my salvation.’ I will keep my faithful love

for him always; with him my covenant shall last.” R.

Acclamation

Alleluia. Alleluia. O Daystar, splendour of the eternal light and son of justice! Come and enlighten those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death. **Alleluia.**

Gospel —
(Luke 1: 67-79)

**A reading from the holy
Gospel according to Luke**

At that time: Zechariah, the father of John, was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying, “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us

in the house of his servant David, as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all who hate us; to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant, the oath which he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life. And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God, when the day shall

dawn upon us from on high to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer over the Offerings

Graciously make your own, O Lord, the offerings which we bring, that, partaking of them, we may be cleansed of our sins and merit to stand ready with pure hearts for the coming in glory of your Son. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon

(Luke 1:68) **Blest be the Lord God of Israel! He has visited his people and redeemed them.**



Prayer after Communion

Grant to us who find new vigour, O Lord, in these your wondrous gifts, that, as we prepare to celebrate in adoration the festivities of

your Son's Nativity, so may we possess in gladness his everlasting rewards. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Deep Faith in God

Commentary

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

The Gospel of today is the prophecy of Zechariah which he made under the influence of the Holy Spirit. It is usually called 'the Benedictus' prayed at Lauds of the Liturgy of the Hours. It is also a prayer of praise and thanksgiving to God for what He has done. Our life's sorrows and joys could take us either closer to or farther from God. Whatever path we trod will depend on the foundation and depth of our faith. May God keep us always close to Him and may nothing ever separate us from Him.

Rev. Sr. Mary Clare, Abuja-Nigeria



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