

AFRICA

# Living with Christ

GROWING UP DAILY WITH THE GOOD NEWS

Weekly LWCA

**3<sup>rd</sup> Week of Advent**

bayard afrique



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#### **Liturgical texts:**

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**On our cover:** A lady smiling to express the joy of Advent

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# Editorial

December 2022



Rev. Fr. Walter C. Ihejirika, Nigeria

## Repentance and Fruitfulness

**I**n December, we celebrate two liturgical seasons of the Church. At the beginning of the month, we have the Advent Season, and towards the end, we have Christmas. Two themes permeate these seasons: repentance and fruitfulness.

Repentance, that is the conscious effort to turn towards God and con-forming our lives according to his commandments is made visible through discernable attitudes and concrete actions. As John the Baptist told the Pharisees and Sadducees, coming to him for baptism, “Produce good fruit as evidence of your repentance.” (Matthew 3:1-12). We can always produce good fruits when we are animated by the same spirit which was in Christ Jesus.

The incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ which we celebrate at Christmas is the greatest sign of fruitfulness. Through the Spirit of God, Mary conceived and bore the Saviour of the world. With the spir-it of Christ, we produce fruits of justice (Psalm 72) and brotherly love (Romans 15:4-9) When we live daily with Jesus Christ, we are nourished with the Word of God and the sacraments. Through these means, we can produce good fruits to the glory of God.



# 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**

**W**hen 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 11

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent

*Isaiah 35:1-6a. 10 / Psalm (145) 146:6c-7. 8-9. 9-10 / James 5:7-10 / Matthew 11:2-11*



"I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you" Matthew 11:10





## Who Is Jesus Christ for Me?

**T**oday, the Third Sunday of Advent, the Church repeats the question that was first put to Christ by the disciples of John the Baptist: *“Are you the one who is to come?”* John was a man whose entire mission was devoted to preparing for the coming of the Messiah; he truly *“loved and prepared the coming of the Lord”* even to prison and to death. Jesus answers by referring to his works and his words and, at the same time, to the messianic prophecy of Isaiah.

In our own day and time, man continues to pose the same question about Christ. Different people, from all corners of the world, from different countries and continents, from different cultures and civilisations, are still asking this question about Christ. We live in a world in which so much has been done and continues to be done to silence anything and everything about Christ with the aim of denying his existence and mission, or at least diminishing and deforming them; but even then the question of Christ still remains.

A man asked: Are you, Christ, the one who is to come? Are you the one who will explain to me the definitive



**Sunday** December 11

meaning of my humanity? The meaning of my existence? Are you the one who will help me to plan and build my human life from its foundations?

These are the questions people ask, and Christ has never shied from responding to them. He answers as he answered the disciples of John the Baptist. This question about Christ is the Advent question, and we need to ask it in our Christian community. Here it is: *Who is Jesus Christ for me?*

Who is he really in my life, in my thoughts, in my heart, in my actions? How do I, as a Christian believe in him, know him? Do I speak of him to others, do I bear witness to him, at least to those closest to me: at home, at work, at university, college or school, in my life and with my behaviour? This is the Advent question, and it is necessary that, based on it, we ask ourselves these further questions, so that they deepen our Christian conscience and thus prepare us for the coming of the Lord.

***Rev. Fr. Sylvano Ochuodho, Nairobi-Kenya***



**Entrance Antiphon** (*Philippians 4:4-5*)

**Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I say, rejoice. Indeed, the Lord is near.**

***The Gloria is said.***

**Collect**

O God, who see how your people faithfully await the feast of the Lord's Nativity, enable us, we pray, to attain the joys of so great a salvation and to celebrate them always with solemn worship and glad rejoicing. 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.**

***First Reading (Isaiah 35:1-6a, 10)*** —————

**A reading from the Book of Isaiah**

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the lily it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God. Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are of a

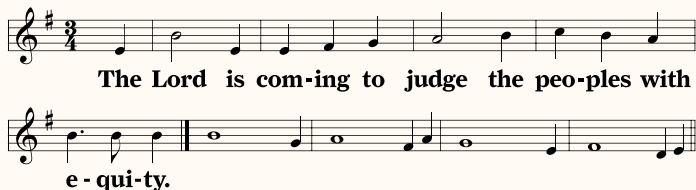


fearful heart, “Be strong, fear not! Behold your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you.” Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing;

everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

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

***Responsorial Psalm (Psalm 146:6c-7, 8-9a, 9bc-10)***



**R. Come, Lord, and save us.  
or: Alleluia.**

It is the Lord who preserves fidelity for ever,  
who does justice to those who are oppressed.



It is he who gives bread to the hungry,  
the Lord who sets prisoners free. R.

It is the Lord who opens the eyes of the blind,  
the Lord who raises up those who are bowed down.  
It is the Lord who loves the just,  
the Lord who protects the stranger. R.

The Lord upholds the orphan and the widow,  
but thwarts the path of the wicked.  
The Lord will reign for ever,  
the God of Sion from age to age. R.

### ***Second Reading (James 5:7-10)***

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#### **A reading from the Letter of Saint James**

Be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it until it receives the early and the late rain. You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. Do not grumble, brethren, against one another, that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the doors.



As an example of suffering and patience, brethren, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

### **Acclamation** (*Luke 4:18*)

**Alleluia. Alleluia.** The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; he has sent me to preach good news to the poor. **Alleluia.**

### **Gospel** (*Matthew 11:2-11*)

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

In those days: When John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, “Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?” And Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is he who takes no offence at me.” As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to behold? Had a reed shaken by the wind? Why then did you go out? To see a man dressed in soft robes? Behold, those who wear soft robes are in kings’ houses. Why then did you go out? To see a prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is he of whom



it is written, 'Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who shall prepare your way before you.' Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

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

***The Creed is said.***

### **Prayer of the Faithful**

*The following intentions are suggestions only.*

**R. Lord, listen to our prayer!**

For religious, political and traditional leaders in Africa and in other parts of the world, let us pray to the Lord our God. R.

For a closer relationship and personal experience with Christ, let us pray to the Lord our God. R.

For those who still do not believe in Christ, for our salvation and the salvation of the world, let us pray to the Lord our God. R.



**Sunday** December 11

## **Prayer over the Offerings**

May the sacrifice of our worship, Lord, we pray, be offered to you unceasingly, to complete what was begun in sacred mystery and powerfully accomplish for us your saving work. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **Communion Antiphon** (*Is 35:4*)

**Say to the faint of heart: Be strong and do not fear. Behold, our God will come, and he will save us.**

## **Prayer after Communion**

We implore your mercy, Lord, that this divine sustenance may cleanse us of our faults and prepare us for the coming feasts. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**





# Monday December 12

3<sup>rd</sup> Week of Advent

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## Entrance Antiphon

*(Jeremiah 31:10; Is 35:4)*

**Hear the word of the Lord,  
O nations; declare it to the  
distant lands: Behold, our  
Saviour will come; you  
need no longer fear.**

## Collect

Incline a merciful ear to our cry, we pray, O Lord, and, casting light on the darkness of our hearts, visit us with the grace of your Son. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

## Reading

***(Numbers 24:2-7, 15-17)***

**A reading from the Book  
of Numbers**

In those days: Balaam lifted up his eyes, and saw Israel encamping tribe by tribe. And the Spirit of God came upon him, and he took up his discourse, and said, “The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor, the oracle of the man whose eye is opened, the oracle of him who hears the words of God, who sees the vision of the Almighty, falling down, but having his eyes uncovered: How

fair are your tents, O Jacob, your encampments, O Israel! Like valleys that stretch afar, like gardens beside a river, like aloes that the Lord has planted, like cedar trees beside the waters. Water shall flow from his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters, his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted.” And he took up his discourse, and said, “The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor, the oracle of the man whose eye is opened, the oracle of him who hears the words of God, and knows the knowledge of the Most High, who sees the vision of the Almighty, falling down, but having his eyes uncovered: I see him, but not now; I behold

him, but not near: a star shall come forth out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel.”

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

***Responsorial Psalm —  
(Psalm 25:4-5, 6, 7, 8-9)***

***R. Teach me your paths, O Lord.***

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.*

Remember your compassion, O Lord, and your merciful love, for they are from of old. In your merciful love remember

me, because of your goodness, O Lord. 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

### Acclamation

*(Psalm 85:8)*

**Alleluia. Alleluia.** Let us see, O Lord, your mercy, and grant us your salvation.  
**Alleluia.**

### Gospel

*(Matthew 21:23-27)*

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

At that time: When Jesus entered the temple, the

chief priests and the elders of the people came up to him as he was teaching, and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” Jesus answered them, “I also will ask you a question; and if you tell me the answer, then I also will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, where was it from? From heaven or from men?” And they argued with one another, “if we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ But if we say, ‘From men: we are afraid of the multitude; for all hold that John was a prophet.’” So they answered Jesus, “We

do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.”

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

### **Prayer over the Offerings**

Accept, we pray, O Lord, these offerings we make, gathered from among your gifts to us, and may what you grant us to celebrate devoutly here below, gain

for us the prize of eternal redemption. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **Communion Antiphon**

*(Psalm 106:4-5; Is 38:3)*

**Come, O Lord, visit us in peace, that we may rejoice before you with a blameless heart.**

### **Prayer after Communion**

May these mysteries, O Lord, in which we have participated, profit us, we

pray, for even now, as we walk amid passing things, you teach us by them to love the things of heaven

and hold fast to what endures. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## Help Me to Be Honest with Myself

## Commentary

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

Jesus, how you know people! You know they won't answer your question, and not out of ignorance, but because of "*what will they say*", for fear of looking bad.

Lord, when I look for myself, I immediately fall into these kinds of lying thoughts: that they see me, that they don't see me, that they think I think this way, that they don't notice that I've done this...

Help me to be honest with myself, never fooling myself. If I do something wrong, may I always admit it? Only then can I ask for forgiveness and help, to improve.

**Rev. Fr. Sylvano Ochuodho, Nairobi-Kenya**



# *Tuesday December 13*

**3<sup>rd</sup> Week of Advent**

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## ***Memorial***

**Saint Lucy, virgin and martyr**

### **Entrance Antiphon**

**Here is a wise virgin, from among the number of the prudent, who went forth with lighted lamp to meet Christ.**

*Or:*

**How beautiful you are, O virgin of Christ, who were worthy to receive the Lord's crown, the crown of perpetual virginity.**

give us new heart, we pray, O Lord, so that we may celebrate her heavenly birthday in this present age and so behold things eternal. 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.**

### **Collect**

May the glorious intercession of the Virgin and Martyr Saint Lucy



**Reading** \_\_\_\_\_  
**(Zephaniah 3:1-2,9-13)**

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

Thus says the Lord:  
“Woe to her that is rebellious and defiled, the oppressing city! She listens to no voice; she accepts no correction. She does not trust in the Lord; she does not draw near to her God. “Yes, at that time I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure speech, that all of them may call on the name of the Lord and serve him with one accord. From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my suplicants, the daughter of my dispersed ones, shall bring my offering.

“On that day you shall not be put to shame because of the deeds by which you have rebelled against me; for then I will remove from your midst your proudly exultant ones, and you shall no longer be haughty in my holy mountain. For I will leave in the midst of you a people humble and lowly. They shall seek refuge in the name of the Lord, those who are left in Israel; they shall do no wrong and utter no lies, nor shall there be found in their mouth a deceitful tongue. For they shall pasture and lie down, and none shall make them afraid.”

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

***Responsorial Psalm —  
(Psalm <sup>(33)</sup> 34:2-3.6-7.17-  
18.19 and 23)***

**R. The lowly one called,  
and the Lord heard him.**

I will bless the Lord at all times, praise of him is always in my mouth. In the Lord my soul shall make its boat; the humble shall hear and be glad. R.

Look towards him and be radiant; let your faces not be abashed. This lowly one called; the Lord heard, and rescued him from all his distress. R.

The Lord turns his face against the wicked to destroy their remembrance from the earth. When the just cry out, the Lord hears, and rescues them in all their distress. R.

The Lord is close to the broken-hearted; those whose spirit is crushed he will save. The Lord ransoms the souls of his servants. All who trust in him shall not be condemned. R.

**Acclamation**

**Alleluia. Alleluia.** Come, O Lord, do not delay; release your people's burdens. **Alleluia.**

***Gospel —  
(Matthew 21:28-32)***

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

At that time: Jesus said to the chief priests and the elders of the people, "What do you think? A man had two sons; and he went to the first and said,





‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ And he answered, ‘I will not’; but afterward he repented and went. And he went to the second and said the same; and he answered, ‘I go, sir,’ but did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the harlots believed him; and even when you saw it, you did not afterward repent and believe him.”

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

### **Prayer over the Offerings**

As we proclaim your wonders, O Lord, in the Virgin blessed Lucy, we humbly implore your majesty that, as her merits are pleasing to you, so, too, our dutiful service may find favour in your sight. Through Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

### **Communion Antiphon**

*(Mt 25:6)* **Behold, the Bridegroom is coming; Come out to meet Christ the Lord.**

*Or: (Ps 27:4)*

**There is one thing I ask of the Lord, only this do I seek: to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.**

### Prayer after Communion

Renewed by partaking of this divine gift, we pray, O Lord our God, that by the example of the blessed

Lucy, bearing in our body the Death of Jesus, we may strive to hold fast to you alone. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### Penance and Conversion

#### Commentary

**Zephaniah 3:1-2. 9-13 /  
Matthew 21:28-32**

This path we are called to travel begins with conversion and penance. The Jews did not follow John's advice: *"they were not moved to penance that they might believe"*; and without penance and mortification, it is impossible to fully believe.

The colour of the liturgical vestments is - during Advent - purple, which signifies penance, conversion, and sacrifice, reminds us of John's announcement. Lord, help us to grow in this spirit of penance: sacrifice in meals, in living order, at work or details of service at home.

**Rev. Fr. Sylvano Ochuodho, Nairobi-Kenya**



# Wednesday December 14

3<sup>rd</sup> Week of Advent

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## **Memorial**

**Saint John of the Cross, priest and doctor.**

## **Entrance Antiphon**

*(Galatians 6:14)* **May I never boast, except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.**

## **Collect**

O God, who gave the Priest Saint John an outstanding dedication to perfect self-denial and love of the Cross, grant that, by imitating him closely at all times, we may come to contemplate eternally your glory. 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 45:6b-8.18.21b-25)***

**A reading from the Book of Isaiah**

“I am the Lord, and there is no other. I form light and create darkness, I make well-being and create woe, I am the Lord, who does all these things. Shower, O

heavens, from above, and let the skies rain down righteousness; let the earth open, that salvation may sprout forth, and let it cause righteousness to spring up also; I the Lord have created it.” For thus says the Lord, who created the heavens (he is God!), who formed the earth and made it (he established it; he did not create it a chaos, he formed it to be inhabited!): “I am the Lord, and there is no other. Was it not I, the Lord? And there is none besides me. “Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. By myself I have sworn, from my mouth has gone forth in righteousness a word that shall not return: ‘To me, every knee shall bow, every

tongue shall swear.’ “Only in the Lord, it shall be said of me, are righteousness and strength; to him shall come and he ashamed, all who were incensed against him. In the Lord all the offspring of Israel shall triumph and glory.”

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

***Responsorial Psalm —  
(Psalm <sup>(84)</sup> 85:9ab and  
10.11-12.13-14)***

***R. Shower, O heavens, from  
above,***

***and let the skies rain down  
the just one.***

I will hear what the Lord God speaks; he speaks of peace for his people and



his faithful. His salvation is near for those who fear him, and his glory will dwell in our land. *R.*

Merciful love and faithfulness have met; justice and peace have kissed. Faithfulness shall spring from the earth, and justice look down from heaven. *R.*

Also, the Lord will bestow his bounty, and our earth shall yield its increase. Justice will march before him, and guide his steps on the way. *R.*

**Acclamation** (*Isaiah 40:9-10*)

**Alleluia. Alleluia.** Lift up your voice with strength, O herald of good tidings; behold the Lord God comes with might. **Alleluia.**

**Gospel** —————  
(*Luke 7:19-23*)

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

At that time: John, calling to him two of his disciples, sent them to the Lord, saying, “Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?” And when the men had come to him, they said, “John the Baptist has sent us to you, saying, ‘Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?’” In that hour he cured many of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many that were blind he bestowed sight. And he answered them, “Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame

walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is he who takes no offence at me.”

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

### **Prayer over the Offerings**

Look upon the sacrificial gifts we offer, almighty God, in commemoration of Saint John of the Cross and grant that we, who celebrate

the mysteries of the Lord's Passion, may imitate what we now enact. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **Communion Antiphon**

*(Mt 16:24)* **Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me, says the Lord.**

### **Prayer after Communion**

O God, who in Saint John have wonderfully made known the mystery of the

Cross, graciously grant that, drawing strength from this sacrifice, we may cling faithfully to

Christ and labour in the Church for the salvation of all. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## Help Us Grow in the Virtue of Hope

### Commentary

Isaiah 45:6b-8. 18. 21c-25 / Luke 7:19-23

We normally look forward to something or someone because we hope that our desires will be fulfilled. However, waiting requires patience and a lot of trusts. The virtue of hope goes hand in hand with patience, which, far from revealing apathy, is a manifestation of strength. In the words of Saint Augustine, patience is *"like an imprint of God that resides in us"*.

As we know that God has his times which do not always coincide with ours, let us turn to our Lord often and ask him to help us grow in the virtue of hope.

***Rev. Fr. Sylvano Ochuodho, Nairobi-Kenya***



# Thursday December 15

3<sup>rd</sup> Week of Advent

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## Entrance Antiphon

You, O Lord, are close, and all your ways are truth. From of old, I have known of your decrees, for you are eternal.

## Collect

Unworthy servants that we are, O Lord, grieved by the guilt of our deeds, we pray that you may gladden us by the saving advent of your Only- Begotten Son. Who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God for ever and ever. **Amen.**

## Reading ————— (Isaiah 54: 1-10)

A reading from the book of Isaiah

“Sing, O barren one, who did not bear; break forth into singing and cry aloud, you who have not had labour pains! For the children of the desolate one will be more than the children of her that are married, says the lord. Enlarge the place of your tent, and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out; hold not back, lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes; For you will spread abroad to the right and the left, and your



descendants will possess the nations and will people the desolate cities. “Fear not, for you will not be ashamed; be not confounded, for you will not be put to shame; for you will forget the shame of your youth, and the reproach of your widowhood you will remember no more. For your Maker is your husband, The Lord of hosts is his name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth he is called. For the Lord has called you like a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit, like a wife of youth when she is cast off, says your God. For a brief moment, I forsook you, with great compassion, I will gather you. In overflowing

wrath for a moment, I hid my face from you, but with everlasting mercy, I will have compassion on you, says the Lord, your Redeemer. “For this is like the day of Noah for me: as I swore that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so I have sworn that I will not be angry with you and will not rebuke you. For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my mercy shall not depart from you and my covenant of peace shall not be removed, says the Lord, who has compassion on you. The word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

***Responsorial Psalm —  
(psalm 30: 2 and 4. 5- 6.  
11- 12a and 13b (R. 2A)***

**R.** I will extol you, Lord, for  
you have raised me up.

I will extol you, Lord, for  
you have raised me up, And  
have not let my enemies  
rejoice over me. O lord, you  
have lifted up my soul from  
the grave, Restored me to life  
from those who sink into the  
pit. R.

Sing psalms to the Lord,  
you faithful; Give thanks to  
his Holy ame. His anger lasts  
a moment; his favour all  
through life, At night there  
are tears, but at dawn comes  
joy. R.

Hear, O Lord, and have  
mercy on me; Be my helper,  
O, Lord. You have changed  
my mourning into dancing

Oh Lord my God, I will thank  
forever. R.

***Acclamation (Luke 3: 4. 6)***

**Alleluia. Alleluia.** Prepare  
the way of the Lord , make  
his paths straight; all flesh  
shall see the salvation of  
God. **Alleluia.**

***Gospel —  
(Luke 7: 24-30)***

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

When the messengers of  
John had gone, Jesus began  
to speak to the crowd  
concerning John: “What  
did you go out into the  
wilderness to behold? A  
reed shaken by the wind?  
What then did you go out to  
see? A man clothed in soft  
raiment? Behold, those who  
are gorgeously appalled

and live in luxury are in kings courts. What then did you go out to see? A prophet. Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is him of whom it is written, ‘Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who shall prepare your way before you’ I tell you, among those born women none is greater than John; Yet he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he” (When they heard this all the people and the tax collectors justified God, having been baptised with the baptism of John; but the Pharisees and the lawyer rejected the purpose of god for themselves, not having

been baptised by him.) Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

### **Prayer over the Offerings**

Accept, we pray, O Lord, these offerings we make, gathered from among your gifts to us, and may what you grant us to celebrate devoutly here below, gain for us the prize of eternal redemption through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **Communion Antiphon**

**Let us live justly and devoutly in this age, as we await the blessed hope and the coming of the glory.**

### **Prayer after Communion**

May these mysteries, O Lord, in which we have participated, profit us, we pray, for even now as we walk amid passing things,

you teach us by them to love the things of heaven and hold fast to what endures. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **Thanksgiving Prayer**

### **Commentary**

**Isaiah 54:1-10 /  
Luke 7:24-30**

Jesus, You have prepared plans for me, a mission that I must fulfil on earth. In order for me to carry it out, You have given me human and supernatural means: human abilities, a family, friends, economic circumstances; and the necessary grace of God, which I usually find through the sacraments.

In a show of gratitude, I want to thank you, Jesus, for corresponding to your calls, following your plans, and striving hard not to reject them as the Pharisees and doctors of the Law did.

***Rev. Fr. Sylvano Ochuodho, Nairobi-Kenya.***



# Friday December 16

3<sup>rd</sup> Week of Advent

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## Entrance Antiphon

**Behold, the Lord will come descending with splendour to visit his people with peace, and he will bestow on them eternal life.**

## Collect

May your grace, almighty God, always go before us and follow after, so that we, who await with heartfelt desire the coming of your Only-Begotten Son, may receive your help both now and in the life to come. 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 56: 1-3a. 6- 8)*

**A reading from the Book of Isaiah**

Thus says the Lord: “Keep justice, and do righteousness, for soon my salvation will come, and my deliverance be revealed. Blessed is the man who does this, and the son of man who holds it fast, who keeps the Sabbath, not profaning it, and keeps his hand from doing any evil”. Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the Lord say, “The Lord will surely separate me from his people”. For that says

the Lord: The foreigners who join themselves to the Lord, to minister to him, to love the name of the Lord, and to be his servants, every one who keeps the Sabbath, and does not profane it, and holds fast my covenant – these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; for my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples. Thus says the Lord, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, I will gather yet others to him besides those already gathered.”  
The word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

***Responsorial Psalm —  
(Psalm (66) 67: 2- 3. 5. 7-8)***

***R. Let the people praise you, O God; Let all the people praise you***

O God, be gracious and bless us And let your face shed its light upon us So will your ways be known upon earth And all nations learn your salvation. *R.*

Let the nations be glad and shout for joy, With uprightness you rule the peoples; You guide the nations on earth. *R.*

The earth has yielded its fruit For God, our God, has blessed us. May God still give us his blessing. That all the ends of the earth may revere him. *R.*



## Acclamation

**Alleluia. Alleluia.** Come, Lord, visit us in peace, that we may rejoice in your presence with hearts made new. **Alleluia.**

## Gospel ————— (John 5: 33-36)

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

At that time: Jesus said to the Jews, “You sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. Not that the testimony which I receive is from man; but I say this that you may be saved. He was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light. But the testimony which I have is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father has

granted me to accomplish, these very works which I am doing, bear me witness that the Father has sent me”.

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

## Prayer over the Offerings

Be pleased with our humble prayers and offerings, O Lord, we pray, and since we have no merits to plead our cause, come to our rescue with the protection of your mercy. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## Communion Antiphon

**We await a saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our mortal bodies, to confirm with his glorified body.**

### **Prayer after Communion**

Replenished by the food of spiritual nourishment, we humbly beseech you, O Lord, that through our partaking in this mystery,

you may teach us to judge wisely the things of earth and hold firm to the things of heaven. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **How Is It Possible?**

### **Commentary**

**Isaiah 56:1-3a. 6-8 /  
John 5:33-36**

Jesus accompanies His words with numerous “miracles, wonders and signs” (Acts 2:22) manifesting that the Kingdom is present in Him. They testify that Jesus is the Messiah announced. The Jewish leaders are aware of it but they do not want to accept that you are the Son of God. How is it possible that, seeing your miracles, they did not believe in you?

If I do not pray, if I do not lead a life of piety, if I do not follow your advice and the advice of the ministers of your Church, no extraordinary event will give me faith.

***Rev. Fr. Sylvano Ochuodho, Nairobi-Kenya***





# Saturday December 17

3<sup>rd</sup> Week of Advent

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## Entrance Antiphon

*(Isaiah 49:13)* **Rejoice, O heavens, and exult, O earth, for our Lord will come to show mercy to his poor.**

## Collect

O God, Creator, and Redeemer of human nature, who willed that your Word should take flesh in an ever-virgin womb, look with favour on our prayers, that your Only Begotten Son, having taken to himself our humanity, may be pleased to grant us a share in his divinity. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity

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

## Reading

***(Genesis 49:2. 8-10)***

**A reading from the Book of Genesis**

In those days: Jacob called his sons, and said, “Assemble and hear, O sons of Jacob, and hearken to Israel your father. “Judah, your brothers shall praise you; your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; your father’s sons shall bow down before you. Judah is a lion’s whelp; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He stooped down,

he lurked as a lion, and as a lioness; who dares rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples."

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

***Responsorial Psalm —  
(Psalm (71) 72:1-2.3-4ab.7-8.17)***

**R. In his days shall justice flourish, and great peace forever.**

O God, give your judgement to the king, to a king's son your justice, that he may judge your people

in justice, and your poor in right judgement. R.

May the mountains bring forth peace for the people, and the hills justice. May he defend the poor of the people, and save the children of the needy. R.

In his days shall justice flourish, and great peace till the moon is no more. He shall rule from sea to sea, from the River to the bounds of the earth. R.

May his name endure forever, his name continue like the sun. Every tribe shall be blest in him, all nations shall call him blessed. R.

**Acclamation**

**Alleluia. Alleluia.** Come, O wisdom of the Most High!

You order all things with gentle power: come and teach us the way of prudence. **Alleluia.**

***Gospel*** —————  
***(Matthew 1:1-17)***

**The beginning of the holy Gospel according to Matthew**

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and

Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asa, and Asa the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ. So, all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation

to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations.

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

### **Prayer over the Offerings**

Sanctify these gifts of your Church, O Lord, and grant that, through these venerable mysteries, we may be nourished with the bread of heaven. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **Communion Antiphon**

*(Haggai 2:7)* **Behold, the Desired of all the nations will come, and the house of the Lord will be filled with glory.**

### **Prayer after Communion**

Nourished by these divine gifts, almighty God, we ask

you to grant our desire:  
that, aflame with your  
Spirit, we may shine like  
bright torches before your

Christ when he comes.  
Who lives and reigns for  
ever and ever. **Amen.**

## Our Greatness Lies in God's Love for Us

## Commentary

Genesis 49:2. 8-10 /  
Matthew 1:1-17

In order to prepare us more immensely for Christmas, the Church has Christmas preceded by an “octave”, which begins today with the genealogy of Jesus. First of all, it leads us to experience that our greatness does not lie in our merits but in God's love for us. Then, we are all interconnected, and what we do influences others and history.

These two points are very much alive at Christmas. To understand the need to deepen our dignity Jesus came to form a new people, as children of God.

***Rev. Fr. Sylvano Ochuodho, Nairobi-Kenya***



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