

Weekly LWCA

3rd Week of Advent

bayard afrique



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On our cover: Three candles lit.

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Editorial

December 2023



Rev. Fr. Dennis Opoku, Tema Ghana

Joyful Expectation

Beloved in Christ, during this 3rd week of advent, we are called to a deeper reflection on the virtue of JOY. Joy in Christ is a profound and enduring source of spiritual fulfillment. It's a boundless, inner happiness that arises from a deep connection with Christ and a sense of divine love and purpose, transcending worldly circumstances.

Christ brings joy to all who are ready for him. Joy is one of our defining characteristics as Christians. Our demeanor at all times must be joyful. Being joyful with Christ even in times of challenges is a testament to the resilience of our faith in Him. It's a reminder that even amidst adversity, the presence of divine love can fill our hearts with an enduring sense of hope and peace, strengthening us to overcome any obstacle. Let us read His word, pray, and reflect on the joy that God's plan gives us (foretold by the prophets and fulfilled by the life and death of Christ), and meditate on the promise of Christ's coming glory-filled return.



The Pope's Prayer Intention

For persons with disabilities : We pray that people living with disabilities may be at the center of attention in society, and that institutions may offer inclusive programs which value their active participation.

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

Liturgical Symbols (II)

In this article, we continue to focus on some liturgical symbols used in the Eucharistic celebration. These symbols find their origin in the Bible as it is the first source of Liturgy.

Incense

According to the Roman Missal, incensation is an expression of reverence and prayer. When we read the Sacred Scriptures, there are many verses that talk about incense. For instance, Psalm 140, 2: **«Accept my prayer as incense offered to you, and my upraised hands as an evening offering»**; Revelation 8,3: **«Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all God's people, on the golden altar in front of the throne»**. During incensation, the smoke goes up. It symbolizes the prayer of the faithful that ascends to God who dwells in heaven.

The Roman Missal states that incense can be used optionally in any form of Mass. It is used during the

entrance procession, at the beginning of Mass to incense the cross and the altar, at the procession before the Gospel and the proclamation of the Gospel, after the bread and the chalice have been placed on the altar, to incense the offerings, the cross, and the altar as well as the priest and the people; and finally at the elevation of the host and the chalice after the Consecration.

The ambo

During the Eucharistic celebration, the ambo is the place from which the word of God is read and explained. It is the table of the Word. The first reading, the second reading and the Gospel are read from the ambo. The responsorial psalm may be sung also from the ambo since it is part of God's Word. The homily is given from the ambo. The ambo can be considered as the place of proclamation of Jesus' resurrection. This can be clearly seen on Holy Saturday when the deacon or the priest sings the **Alleluia** three times before reading the Gospel.

The Altar

The Altar is the center of the Eucharistic Celebration. It symbolizes Jesus Christ himself who, according to

the fifth preface of Easter, is the Priest, the Altar and the Lamb of sacrifice. Therefore, the Altar is not a geographical center but a theological one. The Altar is also referred to as the Table of the Eucharist.

During the Eucharistic celebration, the significance of the altar is clearly seen through all the signs and events that take place on it. The priest kisses the Altar at the beginning and at the end of the Holy Mass, it is while standing at the Altar that the priest recites some prayers in a low voice, the priest incenses it during the offertory, it is on it that the bread becomes the body of Christ and the wine becomes the blood of Christ.

The Table of the Word (ambo) and the Table of the Eucharist (Altar) are indissolubly connected. In fact, the Word that the faithful hear in the first part of the Eucharistic celebration is the same Word that becomes flesh in the second part.

Rev. Fr. Jérôme K. M. Kombi,
Kinshasa, D.R. Congo



Sunday December 17

3rd Week of Advent

*Isaiah 61:1-2a. 10-11 / Ps Luke 1:46-48.49-50.53-54. /
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 / John 1:6-8.19-28.*



"But among you stands one whom you do not know; It's him who comes behind me..." (John 1:26-27)



Prepare for the Lord

When I was a child, our primary preparation for Christmas was to make sure that we would have a new dress to celebrate Christmas. We would all go to Mass appearing beautiful in our new dress. Many people today still put great importance in making sure that material and food items are adequately provided for Christmas celebration while neglecting the spiritual preparations. Advent is a time of preparation – a time to ready ourselves and make our souls clean for Christ to come and take possession of us.

In today's Gospel, John the Baptist was referred to 'as a witness to speak for the light'. In humility, he was focused in his mission and prepared a way for Christ. Thus, he enabled people to know about Christ and to prepare themselves to welcome Him when He comes. In humility, he acted as 'directional arrow signs' showing the way to Christ. John's objective was for Christ to increase while he decreased, thus, he did not claim to be Christ but the one who was not fit to undo the strap of His sandals. As baptized Christians, we are called like John the Baptist to be witnesses to



Sunday December 17

proclaim the Good News, to tell about the greatness of God and by our way of life lead people to Christ. As we approach Christmas, may our preparations not be limited to what we would eat, wear and how our home will look nice but may we put great efforts in preparing ourselves spiritually. I advocate that families should together go for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, pray the Christmas Novena and do other spiritual exercises and practices as preparation for the coming of the Lord at Christmas. Also, as we make plans for ourselves, let us remember the less privileged ones around us and include them in our provision plans because through them we feed, clothe and visit Christ.

The Lord desires to make a home with us, may we avail Him the opportunity to possess us and transform us to what He wants us to be. It only requires faith, trust, openness and a positive response to His invitation of love.

Rev. Sr. Mary Clare, Nigeria



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

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

The Gloria in excelsis (*Glory to God in the highest*) **is not 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 Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading (*Isaiah 61:1-2a.10-11*)

A reading from the Book of Isaiah

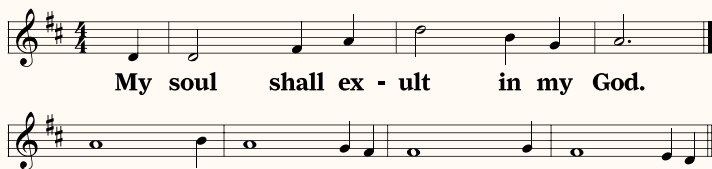
The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted; he has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour. I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the



robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.

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

Responsorial Psalm —————
(Luke 1:46-48.49-50.53-54)



R. My soul shall exult in my God.

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. R.



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. R.

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. R.

Second Reading (1 Thessalonians 5:16-24) —————

**A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the
Thessalonians**

Brethren: Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit, do not despise prophesying, but test everything; hold fast what is good, abstain from every form of evil. May the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, and he will do it. The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.



Sunday December 17

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 (*John 1:6-8.19-28*)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came for testimony, to bear witness to the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness to the light. And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed, he did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" And he answered, "No." They said to him then, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said." Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, "Then why are you baptising, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" John answered them, "I baptise with water; but among you stands one whom you do not know, even he who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I



am not worthy to untie.” This took place in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptising.

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

Prayer of the Faithful

The following intentions are suggestions only.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

For the Church, called to lead humanity to the light of Christ, we pray to the Lord: R.

For civil authorities fulfilling their responsibilities to guide people to a deeper appreciation of all the stages of life, we pray to the Lord: R.

For all who are facing the coming year without hope, we pray to the Lord: R.

For each of us, in our vocation to live the Good News, we pray to the Lord: R.



Sunday December 17

The Creed is said.

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 18

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Entrance Antiphon

**Christ our King is coming,
he is the Lamb foretold by
John.**

Collect

Grant, we pray, almighty God, that we who are weighed down from of old by slavery beneath the yoke of sin, may be set free by the newness of the long-awaited Nativity of your Only Begotten Son. Who lives and reigns with you. **Amen.**

Reading

(Jeremiah 23:5-8)

**A reading from the Book
of Jeremiah**

“Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: ‘The Lord is our righteousness.’ “Therefore, behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when men shall no longer say, ‘As the



Lord lives who brought up the sons of Israel out of the land of Egypt,' but 'As the Lord lives who brought up and led the descendants of the house of Israel out of the north country and out of all the countries where he had driven them.' Then they shall dwell in their own land." The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm——
(Psalm (71) 72:1-
2.12-13.18-19)

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.**

For he shall save the needy when they cry, the poor, and those who are helpless. He will have pity on the weak and the needy, and save the lives of the needy. **R.**

Blest be the Lord, God of Israel, who alone works wonders, ever blest his glorious name. Let his glory fill the earth. **Amen! Amen! R.**

Acclamation

Alleluia. Alleluia. O Leader of the house of Israel! You gave the law to Moses on Sinai: come and redeem us with an outstretched arm.
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 over the Offerings

May the sacrifice to be offered to you, O Lord, make us acceptable to your name, that we may merit for all eternity to be the companions of Christ, by whose Death our own mortality was healed. Who



Monday December 18

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

Communion Antiphon

(Mt 1:23) **His name will be called Emmanuel, which means God-with-us.**

Prayer after Communion

May we receive your mercy in the midst of your temple, O Lord, and show fitting honour to the coming solemnities of our redemption. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Have Faith

Commentary

Matthew 1: 18-25

Sometimes in our lives we are faced with confusion that is beyond our comprehension. In the Gospel of today, Joseph was faced with such situation but with great faith, he was open to listen to God and follow His guidance. We are enjoined to see God's work in the different events of our lives. May God enable us to always take the leap of faith and decipher God's purpose in our lives even when they are hidden in the confusion and storms of life we experience.

Rev. Sr. Mary Clare, Nigeria



Tuesday December 19

3rd Week of Advent

Entrance Antiphon

(Heb 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...**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 drink 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 71:3-4a.5-6ab.16-17 (R. see 8a)***

***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 hear 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 at 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

(Lk 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.

Don't Doubt but Believe

Commentary

Luke 1: 5-25

Believing in what God has decreed requires faith. Faith enables us to believe without doubting God's actions. At different events of our lives, like Zecharia, we have doubted God's work in our lives. God works in mysterious ways and we may not understand it. May God increase our faith and enable us to believe that there is nothing impossible for God to do. Our unanswered prayers can be answered prayer in disguise. In our prayers, may we believe that what we request will be answered.

Rev. Sr. Mary Clare, Nigeria



Wednesday December 20

3rd Week of Advent

Entrance Antiphon

(Is 11:1; 40:5; Lk 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... **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)

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 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.

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 know not 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

(Lk 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.

Be Open to Christ

Commentary

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

In the first reading Isaiah prophesized the birth of a son and in the Gospel, it manifested as a mystery of love that came to dwell among us. This is not a long past event but God, in the present, continuing His dwelling among us and desiring our 'fiat' just like Mary did. Today, God calls us to open our hearts to receive Him and allow Him to make a home with us. The way God is working in our lives and how we witness to that is the good news we are called to proclaim.

Rev. Sr. Mary Clare, Nigeria



Thursday December 21

3rd Week of Advent

Entrance Antiphon

(Is 7:14; 8:10) **The Lord-and Ruler will be coming soon, and his name will be 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...**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 time 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 3:14-18a)

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 Lord singing as on a day of festival.” The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm —
(Psalm (32) 33:2-3.1
1-12.20-21)

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 skilfully, with shouts of joy. ***R.***

The designs of the Lord stand forever, 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 Lord 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

(Lk 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.**

Testify God's Goodness

Commentary

Luke 1: 39-45

Are we proclaimers of the good news? Can we be quick to testify God's goodness to us? The Gospel tells us that Mary set out as quickly as she could to visit her cousin, Elizabeth, not for pleasure but to tell her about the promise and good deeds of God. Each day we experience God's goodness in our lives – breathing in free oxygen and being alive are proofs of God's goodness to us, which most times we sometimes take for granted. May we live our lives in a way that they are testimonies to God's goodness to us.

Rev. Sr. Mary Clare, Nigeria



Friday December 22

3rd Week of Advent

Entrance Antiphon

(Ps 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 **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

(Lk 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.**

Lowliness is Greatness

Commentary

Luke 1: 46-56

In the life of Mary, we see that lowliness can be translated to greatness. In her humility, she positively responded to God's invitation and was raised to greatness. In our lives, we often consider being lowly as a sort of weakness, therefore, we want to show our strength and efforts in different aspects. The Gospel today highlights, using the life of Mary, that in humility, we can achieve greatness and in losing, we can win. May we imitate our mother Mary to live the life worthy of our calling.

Rev. Sr. Mary Clare, Nigeria



Saturday December 23

3rd Week of Advent

Entrance Antiphon

(Is 9:5; Ps 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. **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 25:4-5ab.8 and
14) (R. see Luke 21:28)***

**℟. 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. ℟

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. ℟

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 come in to him, 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's Works are Great**Commentary****Luke 1: 57-66**

God works in mysterious ways. From the conception of John the Baptist to his birth are series of miracles showing God's omnipotence. Most times in the events of our lives, we don't recognize God's miracles because we fail to see with the eyes of faith. The events of our daily lives are filled with great works of God that might seem insignificant in our perception. We are enjoined not to overlook the such deeds of God because in them we can experience holy moments that can bring about transformation.

Rev. Sr. Mary Clare, Nigeria



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