SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT – CYCLE B

Is 40:1–5, 9–11; 2 Pet 3:8–14; Mk 1:1–8

“Prepare the Way of the Lord: Clear the road, open your heart, and make room for Christ.”

INTRODUCTION

A few days before an important wedding, a family discovered that the road leading to their house was blocked by fallen branches and stones. Everyone was busy decorating the house, arranging flowers and preparing food. But an elderly neighbour reminded them, “What is the use of preparing the house if the guests cannot reach the door?” The family immediately cleared the road. They understood that welcoming someone begins by making a way for them.

Dear brothers and sisters, Advent is a season of welcome. We are preparing not simply for a celebration, but for the coming of Jesus Christ. The question is not merely whether our homes are ready for Christmas, but whether our hearts are ready to receive the Lord.

In the first reading, Isaiah proclaims God's message of comfort and announces that the Lord comes like a shepherd to gather, carry and care for His people.

In the second reading, Saint Peter reminds us that the Lord is patient with us and calls us to live holy lives as we await the new heavens and the new earth.

In the Gospel, John the Baptist calls the people to repentance, proclaiming: “Prepare a way for the Lord, make His paths straight.”

Together, these readings invite us to clear the road of our hearts through repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation. They also remind us that we prepare Christ's way not only by changing ourselves, but by bringing comfort, hope and peace to others. Let us therefore examine our hearts. What mountain of pride must be levelled? What resentment must be removed? What broken relationship needs healing? As we acknowledge the obstacles that keep Christ from entering more deeply into our lives, let us humbly ask for His mercy.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Brothers and sisters, John the Baptist calls us to repentance and invites us to prepare the way of the Lord. Let us recognise the times when our pride, selfishness and lack of forgiveness have prevented us from welcoming Christ and sharing His love with others.

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Lord Jesus, You come as the Good Shepherd to comfort, gather and care for Your people. Forgive us when we fail to trust in Your loving presence. Lord, have mercy.

- Christ Jesus, You call us to repentance and offer us the freedom of a new beginning. Forgive us when we refuse to acknowledge our faults and seek reconciliation. Christ, have mercy.

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Lord Jesus, You invite us to prepare Your way by bringing peace, forgiveness and hope to others. Forgive us when we remain indifferent to the suffering and needs of our neighbours. Lord, have mercy.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, remove the obstacles that keep us from welcoming His Son, renew our hearts through repentance and reconciliation, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

COLLECT

Almighty and merciful God, You sent John the Baptist to prepare the way for Your Son and proclaimed through Isaiah Your promise of comfort and salvation. Open our hearts to welcome Christ, level the mountains of our pride, fill the valleys of our discouragement and straighten the crooked paths of our lives. Grant us the grace to repent sincerely, forgive generously and become instruments of Your peace and hope.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

HOMILY

A man once complained to his friend that his house was always untidy. His friend asked, “When do you intend to clean it?” The man replied, “When I have more time.” His friend smiled and said, “A house does not become clean by waiting. Someone must begin.”

That simple observation captures the message of Advent. We can spend these weeks preparing decorations, buying gifts, planning meals and arranging celebrations. But John the Baptist asks us to prepare something much more important: “Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight.” The question is not simply whether our homes are ready for Christmas, but whether our hearts are ready to welcome Christ.

Advent means coming. We remember Christ who came among us at Bethlehem; we welcome Him as He comes to us today in His Word, in the Eucharist and in the people we meet; and we look forward to His coming in glory. Advent is therefore not merely a countdown to Christmas. It is a season of expectation, conversion and hope.

1. God comes to comfort and gather us

The first reading begins with God's tender command: “Comfort, comfort my people.” The people of Israel had experienced suffering, exile and uncertainty. They needed the assurance that God had not abandoned them. Isaiah proclaims: “Here is your God!” Then he describes the Lord as a shepherd who feeds His flock, gathers the lambs in His arms, carries them close to His heart and gently leads them.

This is the God whose way we are preparing. He does not come to frighten us or crush us with our failures. He comes to gather, carry, feed, comfort and lead us. Some of us may be carrying burdens others cannot see: sickness, bereavement, family difficulties, broken relationships, guilt from the past or anxiety about the future. The message of Isaiah is clear: God knows; God comes; God cares.

A child who became separated from his mother in a crowded market was found crying by a shopkeeper. The child could not explain where he lived, but kept saying, “My mother is looking for me.” The shopkeeper stayed with him until they were reunited. The child's hope rested on the certainty that his mother was searching for him. In a far greater way, our hope rests on the God who comes looking for us and gathers us into His loving care.

We can make the prayer “Come, Lord Jesus” our Advent prayer. We can say it when we wake up, when we are worried, when we feel lonely and before we sleep. We are asking Jesus to enter more deeply into those places of our lives that we have kept closed.

2. The road that needs preparation is the road of the heart

Isaiah describes valleys being filled, mountains levelled, winding ways straightened and rough roads made smooth. John the Baptist takes up this prophecy. He is not asking us to build a road through the desert. He is inviting us to examine the landscape of our hearts.

There are mountains that need to be lowered: pride that says, “I am never wrong”; resentment that says, “I will never forgive”; and selfishness that refuses to make room for another person. There are valleys that need to be filled: discouragement that whispers, “There is no hope for me”; fear that says, “I cannot face tomorrow”; and loneliness in which a person feels forgotten. There are crooked paths too: half-truths, excuses, hidden habits, broken promises and relationships that need attention.

A family once prepared for a journey. Their car was ready and their bags were packed, but a fallen tree blocked the road. They could not move forward until the obstacle was removed. In the same way, we may have good intentions, but an unresolved resentment or persistent sinful habit can prevent us from moving closer to God.

Advent asks us to identify the obstacle rather than complain about the journey. Perhaps we must stop blaming someone else and accept our responsibility. Perhaps we need to speak the truth, keep a promise, give up a harmful habit or make time for prayer. We do not have to clear the whole road at once. We can begin with one obstacle.

3. Repentance is the way to a new beginning

The Gospel tells us that John appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming “a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.” Repentance may not be the first word we associate

with Christmas. We think of lights, carols, family gatherings, food and gifts. But John reminds us that the deepest preparation is not external decoration; it is conversion of heart.

Repentance does not mean declaring, “I am a terrible person and there is no hope for me.” It means being honest enough to say, “I have not always lived as God calls me to live, but with His grace I can change. I can return. I can begin again.” It means changing direction and allowing God's mercy to reshape our lives.

We all know what it is to say something we regret, hurt someone, neglect prayer, allow anger to control us or refuse forgiveness. But our worst moment does not have to become our identity.

A priest once spoke of a man who returned to confession after many years. Afterward, the man began to cry. He said, “For the first time in years I have told the truth about myself. It feels as though a great weight has been lifted from me.” That is the freedom repentance can bring. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is not meant to humiliate us; it is an encounter with the mercy of God, who welcomes us and gives us the grace to begin again.

Saint Peter, in the second reading, reminds us that the Lord is patient. His patience gives us an opportunity for conversion, holiness and a new beginning. He asks what sort of people we ought to be as we wait for the Lord: people whose lives are marked by holiness and devotion.

So perhaps this Advent is the right time to return to confession, ask forgiveness from someone we have hurt, or forgive someone who has hurt us. Repentance is not merely feeling sorry; it is taking a step in a new direction.

4. God lives where we let Him in

There is an old story about a rabbi who was asked, “Where does God live?” The scholars answered, “God fills the whole universe!” The rabbi replied, “God lives wherever we let Him in.”

God is present everywhere, yet we can close parts of our lives to Him. We may have a house beautifully decorated for Christmas while the basement of our hearts remains crowded with resentment, jealousy, bitterness or habits we do not want to face.

Perhaps Advent is telling us: do not only decorate the house; clean the heart. Maybe someone needs not another Christmas celebration but reconciliation; not another present but forgiveness; not more noise but ten minutes of silence before God. Maybe we need to say, “I am sorry,” “I forgive you,” or “Let us begin again.”

One sincere apology can open a path. One act of forgiveness can begin to heal a family. One decision to return to prayer can make room for God. We do not have to remove every mountain today. We can begin by removing one stone.

5. Like John, point towards Christ

There is something remarkable about John the Baptist. People came to hear him and admired his preaching. Some wondered whether he might be the Messiah. John could have enjoyed the attention. Instead, he points beyond himself and announces that someone more powerful is coming. His task is not to gather followers for himself but to prepare people to welcome Jesus.

That is also the mission of every Christian. Our lives should point towards Christ. When people meet us, do they encounter His patience, kindness, forgiveness, compassion and peace? Do our words and actions make it easier for others to believe that God is loving and merciful? Or do we become obstacles through harsh words, dishonesty and indifference?

A signpost does not ask travellers to admire it. It simply points them in the right direction. John was a signpost pointing to Jesus. We are called to do the same: not “Look at me,” but “Look at Christ.”

6. Prepare Christ's way for another person

How can we do this practically? We may not be able to change the whole world, but we can change someone's

day. We can phone a lonely person, visit someone who is sick, offer encouragement, apologise, forgive, make room at our table for someone who is alone or show patience towards someone who is difficult.

A woman noticed that an elderly neighbour rarely left his home. She began by greeting him, then brought him a meal and eventually invited him to join her family for Christmas. She did not solve every problem in his life, but she made sure he was not forgotten. That small gesture became a way for Christ to reach another person.

We cannot remove every mountain in the world, but perhaps we can remove one mountain between two people. We cannot stop every war, but we can bring peace into our family. We cannot take away everyone's loneliness, but we can make sure one person is not alone. God comes to us, and often He comes through us to others.

7. Advent is a season of hope

Saint Peter speaks of the new heavens and the new earth, where righteousness will be at home. Christian hope is not the belief that everything will become easy. It is confidence that God is faithful, that suffering will not have the final word and that Christ is leading creation towards its fulfilment.

Some people carry heavy burdens into this season: grief, illness, unemployment, family conflict or fear about the future. Advent does not ask us to pretend these difficulties do not exist. It invites us to place them in the hands of the Shepherd who gathers His lambs and carries them close to His heart.

The Lord's patience is not indifference. His coming is our hope; His mercy makes a new beginning possible. His presence gives us strength to take the next step, even when we cannot see the whole road.

Conclusion

Let us ask ourselves: What mountain of pride needs to come down? What valley of discouragement needs to be filled with hope? What crooked path needs to be straightened? Whom do I need to forgive? From whom must I ask forgiveness? What is the one stone I can remove today?

A young boy heard that the king was going to pass through his village. Everyone went out to see him, but the boy stayed at home. His father asked, “Why aren't you going to see the king?” The boy replied, “I don't only want to see the king. I want the king to come to our house.” His father smiled and said, “Then you must prepare the way.”

The boy went outside. He moved a large stone from the road, helped an old man carrying a heavy load, comforted a woman sitting alone and helped two neighbours who were quarrelling to make peace. When the king arrived, he asked who had prepared his way. The villagers pointed to the boy. The king said, “You prepared my way because you cleared the road to the hearts of my people.”

Dear brothers and sisters, that is Advent. We are not simply waiting for Christ; we are preparing His way. We may not remove every obstacle, but we can remove one stone. We may not heal every broken relationship, but we can take one step towards reconciliation. We may not comfort everyone, but we can comfort one person.

Let us listen again to John the Baptist: “Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.” Clear the road. Open your heart. Remove the stones. Make peace. Forgive. Begin again.

And let this be our prayer throughout Advent: “Come, Lord Jesus, and show me the stone I need to remove from Your way today. I have prepared a place for You. Enter—and remain with me.” Amen.

PROFESSION OF FAITH FOR PERSONAL MEDITATION

I believe that God comes towards me with comfort, mercy and love.

I believe that Jesus Christ is the Lord whose way I am called to prepare.

I believe that my heart, like a road, needs to be cleared of pride, resentment, fear, selfishness and sin.

I believe that repentance is not a punishment but an invitation to freedom, forgiveness and a new beginning.

I believe that God's patience gives me time to change, grow in holiness and become the person He calls me to be.

I believe that I can prepare the way of Christ through reconciliation, kindness, compassion, forgiveness and service.

I believe that I am called, like John the Baptist, not to draw attention to myself but to point others towards Jesus.

Lord, help me remove one stone today, heal one broken relationship, comfort one suffering person and bring Your peace into one troubled heart.

Come, Lord Jesus. I have prepared a place for You. Enter and remain with me. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Brothers and sisters, our God is the Good Shepherd who comforts His people and patiently calls everyone to conversion. Trusting in His mercy, let us pray that we may prepare the way of the Lord in our hearts and in the world.

Response: Lord, help us prepare Your way.

1. For the Church: That, like John the Baptist, she may courageously proclaim repentance and point all people towards Jesus Christ through her witness of humility, forgiveness and love. Let us pray to the Lord.

2. For the leaders of nations: That they may remove the obstacles of injustice, corruption and division, and work

sincerely to establish peace, dignity and reconciliation among all peoples. Let us pray to the Lord.

3. For those carrying hidden burdens: That those suffering from loneliness, bereavement, guilt, broken relationships or discouragement may hear God's message of comfort and discover the hope of a new beginning. Let us pray to the Lord.

4. For our families and communities: That during this Advent season we may remove the stones of resentment, pride and unforgiveness, seek reconciliation and prepare Christ's way through practical acts of kindness and compassion. Let us pray to the Lord.

5. For the sick and the deceased: That the sick may experience the tender care of Christ, the Good Shepherd, and that our departed brothers and sisters may be welcomed into the eternal joy of God's kingdom. Let us pray to the Lord.

Heavenly Father, You call us to prepare the way for Your Son and promise comfort and salvation to Your people. Hear our prayers, forgive our failures and make us messengers of Your peace and hope.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Brothers and sisters, as we bring our gifts to the altar, let us also offer our hearts, our relationships and our commitment to conversion. May the Lord transform our lives into a worthy preparation for His coming. Pray, brethren, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God the almighty Father.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Accept, O Lord, the gifts we offer in faith. As we prepare to welcome Your Son, purify our hearts from sin and renew in us the spirit of repentance, reconciliation and love. May this sacred offering strengthen our commitment to prepare His way through lives of holiness and generous service.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PREFACE

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give You thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord.

For You promised comfort and salvation to Your people through the prophets and sent John the Baptist to prepare the way for Your Son. He called all people to repentance and pointed towards Christ, the Lamb of God, who comes to forgive, heal and save.

In Your mercy, You patiently invite us to turn away from sin, make straight the paths of our lives and welcome Your Son with hearts renewed in holiness. Through Him, You fill us with hope and lead us towards the new heavens and the new earth, where righteousness dwells.

And so, with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions, and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven, we sing the hymn of Your glory, as without end we acclaim:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

Jesus teaches us to turn away from sin and to seek the Father's forgiveness, so that our hearts may be ready to welcome Him. With humble and repentant hearts, let us pray to our heavenly Father:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil and graciously grant peace in our days. Remove from our hearts the mountains of pride, the valleys of discouragement and the crooked paths of resentment and sin. Give us the grace to repent, forgive and reconcile, and make us instruments of Your comfort and peace as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ, You are the Good Shepherd who comes to gather, comfort and lead Your people. Through John the Baptist, You call us to repentance and invite us to prepare the way for Your coming. Look not on our sins, but on the faith of Your Church, and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with Your will. Remove from our hearts every obstacle of pride, resentment and division, and teach us to forgive one another sincerely. May our families and communities become places of reconciliation, compassion and hope, where Your peace can take root and flourish. Who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd who comes to comfort His people and lead them to eternal life. He is the One announced by John the Baptist, whose way we are called to prepare through repentance, forgiveness and love. Let us welcome Him with hearts made ready by His grace. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Lord Jesus, You have come into my heart.
Remove the stones of pride and resentment that keep me from Your love.
Fill the valleys of my discouragement with hope.
Straighten the crooked paths of my life through Your mercy.
Teach me to forgive, to reconcile and to begin again.
May I never keep Your love to myself, but prepare Your way into the hearts of others through kindness, compassion and peace.
Come, Lord Jesus, and remain with me.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May the food we have received, O Lord, strengthen us in faith and renew our hearts in Your love. Grant that, purified by Your mercy, we may prepare the way for Your Son through sincere repentance, generous forgiveness and loving service. May our lives become signs of Your comfort and hope to all whom we encounter. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord, who comes to comfort and gather His people, fill your hearts with His peace and strengthen you in hope.

May He remove every obstacle that prevents you from welcoming Christ and grant you the grace to forgive, reconcile and begin again.

May you prepare the way of the Lord through lives of holiness, kindness and compassion.

May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go forth, clear the road, make peace and prepare the way of the Lord!

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“You may not remove every mountain today, but you can remove one stone that keeps Christ from entering your heart.”

7 December 2026 - Monday of Second Week of Advent

Is 35:1–10 Lk 5:17–26

INTRODUCTION

A traveller once lost his way in a thick forest. As darkness fell, he became frightened and exhausted. Suddenly, he noticed a small light shining between the trees. Following it, he discovered a little cottage where an elderly man welcomed him. The traveller asked, “How did you know someone would need that light tonight?” The old man replied, “I keep it burning because someone may be lost and looking for hope.”

Dear brothers and sisters, Advent reminds us that Christ is the light who comes into our darkness, the hope who lifts our spirits, and the Saviour who restores our broken lives.

In the **First Reading**, Isaiah announces that the wilderness will blossom, the weak will be strengthened, and God's saving presence will transform sorrow into joy.

In the **Gospel**, Jesus forgives and heals a paralysed man who is brought into his presence by the faith and determination of his friends.

The message of today's liturgy is simple but profound: God never abandons us in our helplessness. He comes to forgive, heal and restore us. Sometimes we need the faith of others to carry us to Jesus; sometimes we are called to carry others through our faith, love and compassion.

As we celebrate this Eucharist, let us recognise our own spiritual paralysis, our failures to trust God and our unwillingness to help those who depend on us. With humble and repentant hearts, let us ask the Lord to forgive us and renew us.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Brothers and sisters, Christ comes to forgive our sins, heal our wounded hearts and restore our hope. Let us acknowledge our failures and ask for his mercy.

Lord Jesus, you come to strengthen the weak and bring hope to those who are discouraged. Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you forgive our sins and restore our broken relationship with God. Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you call us to carry one another through faith, love and compassion. Lord, have mercy.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, strengthen our faith, heal our wounded hearts and help us to carry one another towards Christ, so that, renewed by his mercy, we may walk in hope and holiness, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

COLLECT

Almighty and merciful God,
you never abandon those who are weak and helpless, but come to heal, forgive and restore them. Strengthen our faith when we are discouraged, inspire us to carry one another through love and compassion, and make our hearts fruitful with the hope of your coming. May we rise from our spiritual paralysis and walk joyfully in the freedom of your grace.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

HOMILY

A young mother once carried her sick child through the night to reach a hospital several kilometres away. When someone asked how she managed such a difficult journey, she replied, “When you carry someone you love, you discover strength you never knew you had.”

This is precisely what we encounter in today's Gospel.

Four men bring their paralysed friend to Jesus. Finding the entrance blocked by the crowd, they refuse to give up. They climb onto the roof, remove the tiles and lower him before Jesus. What an extraordinary expression of friendship and faith!

The Gospel tells us something remarkable: “Seeing their faith, Jesus said, ‘My friend, your sins are forgiven you.’”

Notice that Jesus recognises the faith of the friends. The paralysed man is carried not only by their physical strength but also by their faith. Sometimes, when our own faith becomes weak, we need others to carry us towards God.

A grandfather once told his grandson, “Whenever you cannot pray, remember that someone who loves you may be praying for you.” What a beautiful expression of the communion of faith!

But Jesus sees something deeper than physical paralysis. He recognises the man's spiritual wound. Before healing his body, he heals his soul: “Your sins are forgiven you.”

The scribes and Pharisees question his authority. But Jesus demonstrates that he has the power to forgive sins and restore life. He commands the man: “Get up, pick up your stretcher and go home.”

The man rises immediately. The very stretcher that once carried him becomes something he himself carries. What a powerful symbol of transformation! What once represented his helplessness now becomes a testimony to God's healing power.

Isaiah gives us the same message of hope: the wilderness will blossom, weak hands will be strengthened, and fearful hearts will be encouraged. Nothing is beyond God's power to renew.

A little community in a village once collected money to help a struggling family rebuild its damaged house. One person provided bricks, another contributed cement, and others offered their labour. Together, they restored what one family could never have achieved alone. That is faith working through love.

Dear friends, during this Advent, let us ask ourselves: Are we paralysed by fear, resentment, guilt or discouragement? Do we help others encounter Jesus, or do we sometimes become obstacles in their way?

Remember, there are times when we need to be carried, and there are times when we must carry others.

A man once saw a little girl struggling to climb a steep hill with her younger brother on her back. He offered to carry the boy for her. She smiled and said, “He is not a burden; he is my brother!”

May we never consider those who need our help a burden. Let us carry one another in faith, love and prayer.

For when faith carries us to Jesus, his mercy enables us to rise and walk again!

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Brothers and sisters, encouraged by God's promise to renew the wilderness and inspired by the faith of those who carried the paralysed man to Jesus, let us bring our prayers and the needs of the world before our merciful Father.

1. For the Church: That the Church may always be a community of faith, compassion and healing, carrying those who are spiritually weak and leading them towards the mercy of Christ. Let us pray to the Lord. All: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

2. For world leaders and those in authority: That they may recognise the suffering of the poor, the marginalised and the helpless, and work courageously to restore dignity, justice and hope to every human person. Let us pray to the Lord.

3. For those burdened by sin, fear and discouragement: That they may encounter the forgiving and healing presence of Jesus, experience the freedom of

his mercy and find the courage to rise again. Let us pray to the Lord.

4. For families and our Christian communities: That we may become people who strengthen one another through prayer, friendship and practical love, never allowing difficulties or obstacles to prevent us from bringing others closer to Christ. Let us pray to the Lord.

5. For the sick and the faithful departed: That the sick, especially those suffering from physical pain, emotional distress and spiritual wounds, may experience the healing touch of Christ; and that our departed brothers and sisters may be welcomed into the eternal joy of God's heavenly kingdom. Let us pray to the Lord.

Heavenly Father, you are the source of forgiveness, healing and hope. Hear the prayers of your people, strengthen our faith and make us instruments of your compassionate love. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Dear brothers and sisters, just as the friends of the paralysed man brought him into the presence of Jesus, let us now bring our lives, our struggles and our hopes to the altar, and pray that these gifts, offered with faith and love, be acceptable to God the almighty Father.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Lord, receive these gifts which we offer with humble hearts. As you restored the paralysed man through your healing mercy, transform our lives through this Eucharistic sacrifice. May the bread and wine we offer become for us the source of forgiveness, strength and renewed hope. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PREFACE

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord.

For in your boundless mercy, you never abandon those who are weak, wounded or discouraged. Through your

prophets, you promised that the wilderness would blossom, the weak would be strengthened and the fearful would find courage.

In Jesus your Son, you have revealed your healing compassion. He forgives our sins, restores our broken lives and calls us to carry one another through faith and love.

Through him, the helpless find strength, the burdened discover hope and the fallen are raised to new life.

And so, with the Angels and all the Saints, we proclaim your glory, as with one voice we acclaim:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

Dear brothers and sisters, Jesus has taught us to trust in the Father who forgives, heals and restores us. As one family of faith, carrying one another in prayer, let us confidently say:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, and graciously grant peace in our days. By the help of your mercy, free us from the paralysis of sin, fear and discouragement. Strengthen our faith when we are weak, give us generous hearts to carry one another through love and compassion, and help us to bring those who are suffering closer to you. May your healing presence restore our broken lives and enable us to rise with renewed hope as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Priest: Lord Jesus Christ, you forgave the sins of the paralysed man and restored him to a new life. Look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church, and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with your will. Remove from our hearts every obstacle of resentment, division and selfishness, and help us become instruments of reconciliation, healing and hope to those around us. Who live and reign forever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold Jesus, the divine Physician, who forgives our sins, heals our wounds and restores our strength. He invites us to rise from our spiritual paralysis and walk in the freedom of his grace. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Lord Jesus, you have come into our hearts. You know our hidden wounds, our fears and our struggles. When we cannot walk, carry us with your grace. When others are weak, give us the faith and compassion to carry them. Transform our burdens into opportunities for love, our weaknesses into occasions for grace, and our despair into renewed hope. May we rise from this Eucharist strengthened to walk with you and bring others closer to your healing presence.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Lord our God, you have nourished us with the Bread of Life. May this holy Communion strengthen our faith, heal our wounded hearts and renew our hope. As we have received your mercy, help us to become bearers of your mercy to others, carrying the weak, encouraging the discouraged and leading all whom we meet towards Christ. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the God who makes the wilderness blossom fill your hearts with hope and strengthen you in times of weakness.
All: Amen.

Priest: May Christ, who forgives and heals, free you from every burden of sin and restore you to newness of life.
All: Amen.

Priest: May the Holy Spirit make you people of faith and compassion, always ready to carry one another towards the Lord. **All:** Amen.

And may almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit. All: **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Go forth, strengthened by faith, renewed by mercy and ready to carry others towards Christ.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“When faith carries us to Jesus, his mercy enables us to rise; when love carries others, we become instruments of his healing.”

SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Gen 3:9–15, 20; Eph 1:3–6, 11–12; Lk 1:26–38

“Full of Grace: Like Mary, let us open our hearts to God's will and allow the light of Christ to shine through us.”

INTRODUCTION

A gardener once planted a young rosebush in a neglected corner of his garden. The soil was hard, weeds surrounded it and very little sunlight reached it. He carefully cleared the weeds, loosened the soil and opened the space to the morning sun. Months later, the rosebush blossomed beautifully. A visitor asked, “How did you create such a beautiful flower?” The gardener replied, “I did not create its beauty. I simply removed what prevented it from growing.”

Dear brothers and sisters, today we celebrate the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. From the first moment of her conception, Mary was preserved from original sin by God's grace, in view of

the merits of Jesus Christ. She was prepared by God to become the mother of His Son. Her life shows us what happens when a human heart is completely open to God's grace.

In the first reading, Adam and Eve disobey God and hide in fear, while God promises that evil will not have the final victory.

In the second reading, Saint Paul reminds us that God chose us in Christ to be holy and blameless before Him, and destined us to become His adopted children.

In the Gospel, Mary receives the angel's message with humility and faith, responding: “I am the handmaid of the Lord. Let what you have said be done to me.”

These readings invite us to recognise the power of God's grace and the importance of our response. Mary did not keep God's gift to herself; she welcomed His will and carried Christ to the world. As we continue our Advent journey, we too are called to open our hearts, come out of hiding, renew our trust in God and allow Christ to be formed in us.

Let us examine our lives. Where have we closed our hearts to God? Where have we allowed sin, pride, fear or selfishness to block His light? With Mary as our example and God's mercy as our hope, let us humbly acknowledge our failures and seek His forgiveness.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Brothers and sisters, Mary teaches us to welcome God's grace with humble and trusting hearts. Let us acknowledge the times when we have hidden from God, resisted His will and failed to allow His light to shine through us.

- Lord Jesus, You came into the world through the humble obedience of Mary. Forgive us when pride and selfishness prevent us from saying yes to God's will. Lord, have mercy.

- Christ Jesus, You are the light who overcomes the darkness of sin. Forgive us when we hide our failures instead of seeking Your mercy. Christ, have mercy.
- Lord Jesus, You call us to be holy and to reflect Your love to others. Forgive us when our words and actions fail to reveal Your goodness. Lord, have mercy.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, draw us out of the darkness of sin and fear, renew our hearts through His grace, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

COLLECT

O God, who by the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary prepared a worthy dwelling for Your Son, grant us, through her intercession, the grace to welcome Your will with humble and trusting hearts. Free us from whatever keeps us distant from You, strengthen our response to Your grace, and help us, like Mary, to become instruments through whom the light and love of Christ shine into the world. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

HOMILY: “I am the handmaid of the Lord.”

A teacher once asked a class of children, “Who are the saints?” One little girl looked towards the stained-glass windows of the church and answered, “The saints are people who let the light shine through them.”

What a beautiful definition! A saint is someone through whom the light of God can shine. And if that is true of the saints, it is supremely true of Mary, the Immaculate Conception.

Today we celebrate the mystery that, from the first moment of her conception, Mary was preserved by God's grace from original sin. This was not because she had earned it or because she was divine. It was God's extraordinary gift to her, given in view of the saving work of Jesus Christ. Mary was completely prepared by grace to become the mother of the Saviour.

She was not full of herself. She was full of God. And that is what makes this feast so beautiful and so relevant to us.

1. “Hail, full of grace!”

When the angel Gabriel comes to Mary, he greets her with extraordinary words: “Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you.”

Mary is uniquely favoured by God. She has been chosen for a mission beyond anything she could have imagined: to become the mother of the Son of God. Yet notice her reaction. The Gospel tells us that she is deeply disturbed by the angel's greeting. She has questions: “How can this be?”

Mary does not understand everything. She does not know where this journey will lead. She cannot foresee Bethlehem, the flight into Egypt, the loss of Jesus in the Temple, or the suffering she will experience at the foot of the Cross.

But eventually she responds: “I am the handmaid of the Lord. Let what you have said be done to me.”

That is Mary's greatness. Her holiness is not simply that she received an extraordinary grace; it is that she responded to that grace with an extraordinary “Yes.” She gives God her complete consent.

Her response anticipates the prayer her Son will one day make in Gethsemane: “Not my will, but yours be done.” Mary says it first: “Let it be done to me according to your word.”

2. Mary and Adam: two very different responses

Today's first reading takes us back to the Garden of Eden. After Adam and Eve disobey God, they hear the sound of the Lord walking in the garden and hide themselves. God asks Adam a question: “Where are you?”

Adam is hiding because he has sinned. And when God questions him, he does not take responsibility. He blames

the woman: “The woman you put with me.” Eve, in turn, blames the serpent.

This is a familiar picture of human weakness. We make mistakes, we hide, we become afraid of facing the truth, and sometimes we blame others for what we ourselves have done.

How different is Mary! Adam hides from God; Mary opens herself to God. Adam resists God's will; Mary accepts it. Adam's disobedience brings humanity into the darkness of sin, while Mary's obedience opens the way for Christ, the Light of the World, to enter human history.

Of course, Mary is not the Saviour. Jesus Christ alone saves us. But through God's grace, Mary becomes the mother through whom the Saviour enters the world.

There is an important message here for us. Most of us are somewhere between Adam and Mary. We know what it means to fail, to hide from God and to avoid responsibility.

But the beautiful message of Genesis is that even when Adam is hiding, God goes looking for him.

God's question, “Where are you?” is not simply an accusation. It is also an invitation to return. God continues to ask every human heart: Where are you in your relationship with Me? Where have you gone? What are you hiding? Come out of hiding. Come back into the light.

3. God never gives up looking for us

Children love the game of hide-and-seek. One person hides, and the others search until they find that person. Sometimes we behave as though our spiritual life is a game in which we can hide from God. We may imagine that our failures are too great, our past too shameful or our sins too serious for God to forgive.

But today's first reading gives us the opposite picture: we are the ones hiding, and God is the one searching.

Jesus tells us that He came “to seek out and save the lost.” God never gives up looking for us. His mercy is greater than our failures.

A child who has broken something in the house may hide because he is afraid of being punished. But a loving parent does not want the child to remain frightened and hidden. The parent wants the child to come forward, tell the truth and be restored to the family.

In a much deeper way, God wants us to come out of hiding. Perhaps someone is carrying guilt from many years ago. Perhaps someone has been away from the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Perhaps someone thinks, “How could God still love me after what I have done?”

Today's feast reminds us that God's grace is always reaching out to us. We are not asked to pretend that we have never sinned. We are invited to acknowledge our weakness and allow God's mercy to heal us.

4. Mary shows us what grace can do

Mary is not presented to us as someone less human than we are. Her holiness was lived in the midst of real human struggles. At the Annunciation, she was disturbed and had questions. Later, she would experience the anxiety of losing Jesus in the Temple. Simeon would tell her that a sword would pierce her soul. Finally, she would stand at the foot of the Cross and watch her Son suffer and die.

Yet through all these experiences, her “Yes” remained.

That is important. Mary's holiness did not remove her from suffering. It gave her the grace to remain faithful within suffering.

Faith does not mean understanding everything. Sometimes faith means saying: “I do not understand, Lord, but I trust You.”

A patient once asked a doctor why recovery was taking so long. The doctor could not promise an immediate cure, but encouraged the patient to continue the treatment and not

lose hope. The patient replied, “I do not understand everything that is happening, but I will trust the process.” Mary's faith goes much deeper: she trusts not merely a process, but the God who calls her.

She asks, “How can this be?” But she does not say, “Therefore, I refuse.” She asks her question and then surrenders herself to God's plan: “Let it be done to me according to your word.”

5. “Full of grace” means full of God

The Immaculate Conception does not mean that Mary was a goddess or that she did not need a Saviour. She was fully human and completely dependent upon God's grace. In 1854, Pope Pius IX formally defined the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, affirming that Mary was preserved from original sin from the first moment of her conception by a singular grace of God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ.

Mary's privilege points towards Christ. Everything in her life is a gift received from God and directed towards His saving plan.

And notice what happens immediately after the Annunciation. Mary does not sit back and say, “God has chosen me. How privileged I am!” She goes in haste to visit Elizabeth. She carries Christ within her and brings Christ to another person.

That is the Christian vocation. The more Christ fills us, the more we should become a blessing to others.

A person who receives good news naturally wants to share it. Someone who has experienced kindness often becomes more attentive to the needs of others. In the same way, a person who has genuinely received God's grace should become more compassionate, generous and ready to serve.

Grace is never meant to make us proud. It makes us available to God and to our neighbours.

6. Advent: let Christ be formed in us

This feast comes during Advent for a beautiful reason. Mary teaches us how to prepare for Christ. At the Annunciation, the angel says: “The Lord is with you.” That message is also an invitation to us.

Saint Paul, in the second reading, reminds us that God chose us in Christ to be holy and blameless before Him and destined us to become His adopted children. This is not only Mary's vocation; it is ours too. God wants Christ to be formed in us.

We may not have been preserved from original sin as Mary was, but we have received the gift of Baptism. We have received the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, the sacraments and the mercy of Christ. God's grace continues to work within us.

So the question this Advent is not simply, “Have I prepared for Christmas?” It is, “Have I prepared my heart for Christ?” Is there something in me that needs to change? Is there someone I need to forgive? Is there a sin from which I need to turn? Is there a prayer life I need to renew? Is there something God has been asking of me to which I have been saying no?

Perhaps today we can learn from Mary to say, “Yes, Lord.” Not because we understand everything, not because the road will always be easy, but because we trust the One who calls us.

7. Let the light shine through you

Let us return to that little girl's definition: “A saint is someone who lets the light shine through them.”

Mary was the perfect example. She allowed God's grace to fill her completely. Her life became a window through which the light of Christ entered the world.

And today she invites us to do the same. We are sinners. We stumble, we fail and sometimes we hide from God. But

God's grace is still working in us. We can still say, “Yes, Lord.”

A kind word can let God's light shine. A forgiving heart can let God's light shine. A visit to someone who is lonely can let God's light shine. A patient response, a generous act of service and a willingness to reconcile can all reveal something of Christ to another person.

We do not need to be perfect before we begin. We need to be open to grace and willing to let God work in us.

Conclusion

There is an old story of a man walking through a village at night carrying a lamp. Someone asked him, “Why are you carrying a lamp? You are blind. The light cannot help you to see.”

The man smiled and replied, “I carry the lamp not because I need it to see, but so that others can see me and not stumble over me.”

That is a beautiful image of Christian life. God has given us His light not only for ourselves. He wants that light to shine through us for others.

Mary was the greatest human window through which God's light entered the world. Her whole life said: “I am the handmaid of the Lord.” Today, she invites us to say the same.

When God calls us: “Yes, Lord.”
When we do not understand: “Yes, Lord.”
When the road is difficult: “Yes, Lord.”
When we are afraid: “Yes, Lord.”

Mary teaches us that holiness is not having all the answers. It is having a heart open enough to say: “Let it be done to me according to your word.”

May Mary, the Immaculate Mother, accompany us through this Advent. May she help us come out of hiding and into God's light. May she help us surrender our lives to God's

grace. And may Christ, who was formed in her, be formed more fully in us.

Then, like Mary, we too can become people through whom the light of Christ shines into a world that needs hope, mercy and love. Amen.

PROFESSION OF FAITH FOR PERSONAL MEDITATION

I believe in the God whose grace is greater than my weakness and whose mercy never stops searching for me.

I believe that Mary was preserved from original sin from the first moment of her conception by God's grace, in view of the saving work of Jesus Christ.

I believe that Mary is the perfect example of a heart open to God, a heart that responds with humility, trust and obedience.

I believe that, like Adam, I sometimes hide from God, make excuses and blame others for my failures. Yet God continues to call me: “Where are you?”

I believe that through Jesus Christ I am offered forgiveness, healing and a new beginning.

I believe that God's grace is at work in me through Baptism, the Holy Spirit and the sacraments, calling me to holiness and love.

I believe that I am called, like Mary, to say: “I am the handmaid of the Lord. Let it be done to me according to Your word.”

Lord, remove whatever prevents Your light from shining through me. Help me to become a blessing to others through kindness, forgiveness, compassion and service.

Mary, Immaculate Mother, teach me to say yes to God every day. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Brothers and sisters, on this solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, we celebrate the grace of God at work in Mary and recognise her as a model of faith and obedience. Inspired by her humble “Yes”, let us bring our prayers before our heavenly Father.

Response: Lord, fill us with Your grace.

1. For the Church: That, following the example of Mary, she may remain faithful to God's Word, proclaim the Gospel with humility and become a shining witness of Christ's mercy and love. Let us pray to the Lord.

2. For the leaders of nations: That they may be guided by wisdom, justice and compassion, reject selfish ambition and work sincerely for peace, human dignity and the common good. Let us pray to the Lord.

3. For those who are burdened by guilt, fear or past failures: That they may hear God's loving invitation to come out of hiding, experience the healing power of His mercy and find the courage to begin again. Let us pray to the Lord.

4. For our families and communities: That, inspired by Mary's humble obedience, we may welcome God's will, forgive one another, serve those in need and allow the light of Christ to shine through our daily lives. Let us pray to the Lord.

5. For the sick and the deceased: That the sick may receive strength, comfort and healing through the loving presence of Christ, and that our departed brothers and sisters may be welcomed into the eternal light of God's kingdom, together with Mary and all the saints. Let us pray to the Lord.

Heavenly Father, You prepared the Blessed Virgin Mary by Your grace to become the mother of Your Son. Hear our prayers, renew our hearts through Your mercy and help us follow her example of faith, humility and obedience. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Brothers and sisters, Mary offered her whole life to God with the words, “Let it be done to me according to your word.” Let us place our gifts, our hopes and our lives upon the altar, asking for the grace to surrender ourselves more completely to God's will, and pray, brethren, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God the almighty Father.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Graciously accept, O Lord, the gifts we bring before You on this solemnity. As You prepared the Blessed Virgin Mary to become the dwelling place of Your Son, purify our hearts by Your grace and make us willing to welcome Christ into our lives. May this offering strengthen our faith and help us become instruments of Your love. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PREFACE

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give You thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord.

For You chose the Blessed Virgin Mary, preserved from original sin by Your singular grace, to become the worthy mother of Your Son. In her, You revealed the beauty of a heart completely open to Your will and filled with Your grace.

Through her humble obedience, the Saviour entered our world, bringing light to those in darkness, forgiveness to sinners and hope to all who seek You. In Mary, You have given Your Church a model of faith, purity and loving service.

As we celebrate her Immaculate Conception, grant that we may follow her example, welcome Your Word with faith and allow Christ to be formed in us.

And so, with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions, and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven, we sing the hymn of Your glory, as without end we acclaim:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

Mary placed her complete trust in the heavenly Father and surrendered herself to His loving will. Following her example, let us approach God with humble and trusting hearts and pray as Jesus Himself taught us:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil and graciously grant peace in our days. Free us from the darkness of sin, pride and fear; give us hearts that are humble and open to Your will, and help us, like Mary, to respond to Your call with faith and obedience. May Your grace shine through our lives and make us instruments of Your mercy and love, as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ, You entered our world through the humble and faithful “Yes” of the Blessed Virgin Mary. You are the Light who overcomes the darkness of sin and brings reconciliation to humanity. Look not on our sins, but on the faith of Your Church, and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with Your will. Remove from our hearts pride, resentment and selfishness, and teach us to forgive one another as You have forgiven us. May Your light shine through our families and communities, healing divisions and bringing hope to those who live in darkness. Who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold Jesus Christ, the Son of God, whom the Blessed Virgin Mary welcomed into the world with her humble “Yes”. He is the Light who comes to dwell within us and transform our lives by His grace. Let us receive Him with the faith, humility and openness of Mary.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Lord Jesus, You have come to dwell within me.
Like Mary, teach me to welcome Your Word with an open heart. When I am afraid, give me trust.
When I do not understand, give me faith.
When I fall, lead me out of hiding and into the light of Your mercy. Remove whatever prevents Your grace from working within me. May my words bring kindness, my actions bring hope and my life reveal Your love.
Lord, let Your light shine through me.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May the Sacrament we have received, O Lord our God, strengthen us in faith and renew our hearts by Your grace. As we celebrate the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, grant that, following her example of humility and obedience, we may welcome Your will, reflect the light of Christ and become a blessing to all whom we encounter. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord, who prepared the Blessed Virgin Mary by His grace to become the mother of His Son, fill your hearts with His love and strengthen you in faith.
May He lead you out of the darkness of sin and fear, grant you the grace to trust in His will and help you begin anew through His mercy.
May He make your lives windows through which the light of Christ shines upon the world.

May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go forth like Mary: say yes to God and let the light of Christ shine through you!

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“A heart full of God's grace becomes a window through which the light of Christ shines.”

WEDNESDAY SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT – 09.12.

Isaiah 40:25–31; Matthew 11:28–30

“COME TO JESUS: FIND REST IN HIS LOVE, STRENGTH IN HIS PRESENCE, AND HOPE FOR YOUR JOURNEY.”

INTRODUCTION

A little girl once watched her mother carrying several heavy shopping bags. Seeing her struggle, she asked, “Mummy, why don't you put everything down?” Her mother smiled and replied, “I cannot put everything down just now, but I can ask someone to help me carry it.” The little girl immediately took one bag and said, “Then let me carry something for you!” Sometimes, what makes a burden lighter is knowing that we do not have to carry it alone.

Dear brothers and sisters, we all carry burdens that others cannot see: worries, disappointments, family problems, sickness, loneliness and unanswered prayers. Advent invites us to bring these burdens to the Lord, who never grows weary of loving us.

In the **First Reading**, Isaiah assures us that God never grows tired or weary; he gives strength to the powerless and renews those who hope in him.

In the **Gospel**, Jesus lovingly invites all who labour and are overburdened to come to him, promising rest for their souls.

Today's liturgy reminds us that our strength does not come from our own abilities alone, but from our relationship with God. Jesus does not promise to remove every difficulty, but he promises to walk with us and sustain us through every trial. His presence transforms our weariness into renewed strength and our anxiety into hope.

As we begin this Eucharist, let us honestly acknowledge the burdens we carry, the times we have relied only on ourselves, and the moments when we have failed to trust in God's sustaining love. With humble and contrite hearts, let us seek his mercy.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Brothers and sisters, Jesus invites all who are weary and burdened to come to him and find rest. Let us acknowledge our sins and ask for his healing mercy.

Lord Jesus, you are our strength when we are weak and our hope when we are discouraged. Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you invite us to lay down our burdens and learn from your gentle and humble heart. Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you call us to trust in your loving presence rather than depend only on our own strength. Lord, have mercy.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, renew our weary hearts, strengthen our faith and teach us to place all our burdens in the loving hands of Christ, so that, sustained by his grace, we may walk faithfully towards his kingdom, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

COLLECT

Almighty and eternal God, you never grow weary and your wisdom is beyond understanding. You give strength to the weak and hope to the discouraged. Grant that we may respond wholeheartedly to the invitation of your Son, Jesus Christ, lay our burdens at his feet and find rest in his loving presence. Renew our strength through your grace, that we may journey through life with unwavering faith and joyful hope.

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

HOMILY

A businessman once complained to his friend, “I have everything, but I have no peace.” His friend replied, “Perhaps you have filled your life with everything except God.”

We live in a world where everyone seems busy, yet many hearts are exhausted. We carry family responsibilities,

financial worries, sickness, disappointments and anxieties. Sometimes the greatest exhaustion is not physical but spiritual.

Isaiah gives us a wonderful assurance: God never grows tired or weary. He strengthens the powerless, and those who hope in him renew their strength and soar like eagles.

Jesus makes this promise personal: “Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest.” Notice that Jesus does not say, “Come to me when everything is settled.” He says, “Come to me” precisely when you are tired, troubled and burdened.

A little boy once told his father, “I cannot sleep because I am worried about tomorrow.” His father answered, “Tomorrow belongs to God; tonight belongs to you. Sleep in his hands.”

That is the trust Jesus invites us to discover. His rest does not necessarily mean the absence of problems; it means the presence of someone who walks with us through them.

An elderly woman once said, “My prayers have not removed all my difficulties, but they have taught me not to face them alone.”

Dear friends, Advent gives us two invitations: we pray, “Come, Lord Jesus,” and Jesus responds, “Come to me!” Let us make time for him in prayer, silence and the Eucharist. Let us stop trying to carry everything by ourselves.

A traveller once asked a shepherd how he managed to guide his flock through difficult mountain paths. The shepherd replied, “I know the way, because I walk it with them.”

Jesus is that Shepherd. He knows our journey, understands our struggles and walks beside us.

You may be tired of carrying your burdens, but Jesus is never tired of carrying you!

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Dear brothers and sisters, our God never grows weary, and his Son invites all who are burdened to find rest in him. Trusting in his unfailing love, let us bring our prayers and the needs of the world before him.

1. For the Church: That the Church may always be a welcoming refuge for the weary, the suffering and the discouraged, bringing them the strength, comfort and hope of Christ. Let us pray to the Lord.

All: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

2. For world leaders and those in authority: That they may recognise the burdens of the poor, the oppressed and the vulnerable, and work tirelessly to establish justice, peace and conditions that promote human dignity. Let us pray to the Lord.

3. For those carrying heavy burdens: That those struggling with family problems, financial difficulties, loneliness, anxiety and disappointments may hear the invitation of Jesus, find rest in his presence and receive renewed strength to face their difficulties. Let us pray to the Lord.

4. For families and our Christian communities: That we may learn from the gentle and humble heart of Jesus, support one another in times of difficulty and become sources of encouragement, comfort and strength to those around us. Let us pray to the Lord.

5. For the sick and the faithful departed: That the sick, especially those suffering from prolonged illness, physical exhaustion and emotional distress, may experience the healing and comforting presence of Christ; and that our departed brothers and sisters may find eternal rest in God's heavenly kingdom. Let us pray to the Lord.

Heavenly Father, you are the source of our strength and the refuge of all who are weary. Hear these prayers, renew our hearts and teach us to trust in your loving presence. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Priest: Dear brothers and sisters, let us place before the Lord not only the bread and wine, but also our struggles, worries and burdens. May our humble offering, united with Christ's sacrifice, be acceptable to God the almighty Father.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Lord, receive the gifts we bring to your altar. As we offer this bread and wine, we place our weariness, struggles and hopes into your loving hands. May this sacred offering unite us more closely with Christ, who gives rest to our souls and strength to our journey. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PREFACE

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord.

For you never grow weary, nor does your strength ever fail. You are the refuge of the weary, the strength of the powerless and the hope of all who trust in you.

In your Son, Jesus Christ, you have revealed the tenderness of your heart. He invites the burdened to come to him, promises rest to the weary and teaches us the way of gentleness and humility.

Through him, our burdens become lighter, our hearts are renewed and our journey is filled with hope.

And so, with Angels and Archangels, Thrones and Dominions, and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven, we sing the hymn of your glory, as without end we acclaim:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

Dear brothers and sisters, Jesus invites us to trust in the Father who knows our needs and sustains us through every difficulty. With confidence and childlike trust, let us pray as he taught us:

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, and graciously grant peace in our days, that, by the help of your mercy, we may be freed from sin, strengthened in times of weakness and relieved of the burdens that weigh heavily upon our hearts. Keep us faithful in hope as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ, you promised rest to all who are weary and burdened. Look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church, and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with your will. Calm our troubled hearts, remove the anxieties that divide us and teach us to become instruments of your peace and consolation to those who are suffering. May your gentle presence bring reconciliation to our families and hope to our communities. Who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold Jesus, the Bread of Life, who strengthens the weary, comforts the burdened and renews those who place their hope in him. He invites us to come to his table and receive the strength we need for our life's journey. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Lord Jesus, you have entered our hearts. You know the burdens we carry, the worries we conceal and the weariness we cannot express. Teach us to rest in your loving presence. When we are weak, be our strength; when we are anxious, be our peace; when we are discouraged, be our hope. May your presence renew our spirits and give us courage to continue our journey with faith and confidence.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Lord our God, you have nourished us with the Bread of Life. May this holy Communion renew our strength, quiet our troubled hearts and deepen our trust in your unfailing love. Help us to carry our daily responsibilities with patience, face our difficulties with courage and become sources of comfort and encouragement to those who are weary. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May God, who never grows weary, strengthen you whenever you are weak and renew your hope whenever you are discouraged. Amen.

May Christ, who invites the burdened to find rest in him, lighten your burdens and fill your hearts with his peace. Amen.

May the Holy Spirit accompany you throughout life's journey and make you instruments of comfort, strength and hope to others. Amen.

And may almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, strengthened by Christ; carry your burdens with faith and bring hope to the weary.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“You may be tired of carrying your burdens, but Jesus is never tired of carrying you!”

THURSDAY – SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT (10.12.2026)

Isaiah 41:13–20; Matthew 11:11–15

"BLESSED BY GOD'S GRACE, CALLED TO BLESS OTHERS"

INTRODUCTION TO THE LITURGY

A little boy once watched a gardener planting tiny seeds in a dry, barren piece of land. He asked, "Why are you planting here? Nothing will ever grow in this soil!" The gardener smiled and replied, "I am not planting because the soil is already fruitful; I am planting because I believe it can become fruitful."

What a beautiful reminder that God never gives up on us, even when our lives seem barren!

In the First Reading, the prophet Isaiah assures God's people that the Lord takes them by the hand, strengthens their weakness and transforms their barrenness into abundance.

In the Gospel, Jesus praises John the Baptist as the greatest among those born of women, yet declares that even the least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he. It is a reminder of the extraordinary grace and privileges we have received through Christ.

The central message of today's liturgy is that we are blessed not because we deserve God's goodness, but because He loves us unconditionally. Our response must therefore be gratitude, generosity and a willingness to become blessings for others. As we celebrate these mysteries, let us acknowledge those moments when we have taken God's gifts for granted, failed to appreciate His grace or neglected to share His blessings with others.

Let us now approach the Lord with humble and contrite hearts and ask for His mercy.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Brothers and sisters, God takes us by the hand, strengthens our weakness and fills our lives with His abundant grace. Yet, we often fail to recognise His blessings and share them generously. Let us acknowledge our failures and seek His mercy.

- Lord Jesus, You take us by the hand when we are weak and fearful. Lord, have mercy.

- Christ Jesus, You have blessed us abundantly through Your death and resurrection, yet we often take Your gifts for granted. Christ, have mercy.

- Lord Jesus, You call us to become blessings for others, yet we often fail to share Your love and generosity. Lord, have mercy.

May almighty God, who takes us by the hand, strengthens our weakness and enriches our lives with His grace, forgive us our sins, awaken in us grateful hearts, and make us generous instruments of His blessings to others; and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

COLLECT

Heavenly Father, source of every blessing, You never abandon Your children but strengthen the weak and make the barren fruitful through Your loving power. Through Your Son, Jesus Christ, You have bestowed upon us the fullness of grace and called us to share it generously with others. Grant that, following the example of John the Baptist, we may faithfully witness to Christ and become instruments of Your goodness to all whom we encounter. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

HOMILY

A young artist once painted a beautiful picture of a candle shining in a dark room. Someone asked him, “Why did you paint such a tiny flame in such a vast darkness?” He replied, “Because even a little light can make a great difference.”

Today's readings remind us that God's greatness is revealed precisely in His ability to transform our weakness into strength and our lives into blessings for others.

In the First Reading, Isaiah assures the people that God will take them by the hand, strengthen them and transform their barren land into a fruitful garden. What a consoling promise! God does not abandon us when we are weak; He holds us closer.

In the Gospel, Jesus pays the highest tribute to John the Baptist: “Of all the children born of women, a greater than John the Baptist has never been seen.” John was the great prophet who prepared the way for the Messiah. Yet Jesus adds something astonishing: “The least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he is.”

Why? John announced Christ, but did not live to witness His death and resurrection, the coming of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the Church. We have received all these extraordinary privileges. Through Baptism, we belong to Christ; through the Eucharist, we encounter the Risen Lord.

A poor woman once received a small sum of money from a generous neighbour. Instead of keeping it all, she shared a portion with another family in greater need. When asked why, she replied, “I know what it means to receive kindness; I want somebody else to experience it too.” That is the secret of Christian living! We are blessed not to keep our blessings, but to share them.

Remember, our greatness does not come from what we possess, but from the grace we have received and the love we share. A grateful heart must become a generous heart.

An old tree does not eat its own fruit; it provides shade and nourishment for others. Likewise, our faith must produce fruits of kindness, forgiveness, compassion and generosity. As we journey through Advent, let us remember: God takes us by the hand so that we can extend our hands to others. The greatest proof that we have received God's blessings is that others become blessed through us.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Dear brothers and sisters, our loving Father takes us by the hand, strengthens our weakness and enriches our lives with His grace. Conscious of the many blessings we have received, let us bring our prayers before Him, asking for the grace to become blessings for others.

Lord, make us instruments of Your blessings.

1. For the Holy Father, Pope, bishops, priests and religious: that, strengthened by God's grace, they may faithfully proclaim Christ and generously share the blessings of the Gospel with all entrusted to their care. We pray to the Lord.

2. For world leaders and those entrusted with authority: that they may recognise their responsibilities as gifts and use their power and resources to protect the weak, uplift the poor and promote peace and justice. We pray to the Lord.

3. For all Christians: that, conscious of the extraordinary blessings received through Baptism, the Eucharist and the Holy Spirit, we may never take God's grace for granted, but become generous witnesses of His love through our daily lives. We pray to the Lord.

4. For those who feel weak, discouraged, abandoned or spiritually barren: that they may experience the reassuring hand of God, discover new hope and find strength to begin again. We pray to the Lord.

5. For the sick and suffering, especially those who are seriously ill, and for our beloved deceased: that the sick may experience God's healing presence and comfort, and that our departed brothers and sisters may enjoy the fullness of God's eternal blessings in heaven. We pray to the Lord.

Heavenly Father, You have blessed us beyond measure through Your Son. Hear these prayers and grant us grateful hearts, generous spirits and willing hands, that we may share with others the blessings we have received. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Dear brothers and sisters, God has enriched our lives with His countless blessings. Let us now offer Him the gifts of bread and wine, together with our grateful hearts and our commitment to become blessings for others, that our sacrifice may be acceptable to God the almighty Father.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Lord, accept these gifts which we offer with grateful hearts. As these offerings will become the Body and Blood of Your Son, may our lives also be transformed by His grace, that we may generously share with others the blessings we have received. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PREFACE

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give You thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For in Your boundless love, You never abandon Your children in their weakness, but take them by the hand, strengthen their hearts and make their lives fruitful with Your grace.

Through Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, You have bestowed upon us the fullness of salvation. Through His death and resurrection, You have opened for us the treasures of Your Kingdom and poured Your Holy Spirit into our hearts.

You have blessed us beyond measure, not because of our merits, but because of Your infinite goodness. You now call us to share these blessings generously, to become instruments of Your compassion and witnesses of Your love.

And so, with grateful hearts, we join the angels and saints in proclaiming Your glory, as we acclaim:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

Dear brothers and sisters, we have received countless blessings from our heavenly Father. With grateful hearts and confident trust, let us pray as Jesus Himself taught us, asking that His Kingdom may come and His love may be shared throughout the world.

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, from every evil, and grant us Your peace in our days. In Your mercy, free us from selfishness, ingratitude and indifference, and strengthen us to share generously the blessings we have received. Keep us faithful to Your grace as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ, You take us by the hand, strengthen our weakness and fill our lives with Your blessings. Look not on our failures, but on the faith of Your Church, and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with Your will. Remove from our hearts all bitterness, selfishness and indifference, and make us instruments of Your peace, compassion and generosity in a wounded world.
Who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Dear brothers and sisters, Jesus Christ is the greatest blessing bestowed upon us by the Father. He comes to strengthen our weakness, nourish our faith and transform us into generous witnesses of His love.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Lord Jesus, You have blessed us with Your very presence. You have taken us by the hand, strengthened our weakness and nourished us with Your Body and Blood.

Never allow us to take Your blessings for granted.

May the love we have received at this altar become love shared with others; may Your mercy become our forgiveness, Your compassion become our kindness, and Your generosity become our way of life.

Lord, make our lives a blessing wherever we go. Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Heavenly Father, we thank You for nourishing us with the Bread of Life. Having received the abundant blessings of Your Son, grant that we may never keep Your gifts to ourselves, but share them generously with those who need our love, compassion and encouragement. May our lives bear abundant fruits of gratitude and goodness, and lead others to experience Your unfailing love. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord, who takes you by the hand and strengthens you in your weakness, bless you and keep you. Amen.

May He fill your hearts with gratitude for the blessings you have received and make your lives fruitful in love and generosity. Amen.

May He make you instruments of His goodness, bringing hope to the discouraged, comfort to the suffering and joy to those you encounter. Amen.

And may almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go forth, blessed by God, and become a blessing to everyone you meet!

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“God blesses us not merely to enrich our lives, but to make our lives a blessing for others.”

FRIDAY – SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT (11.12.2026)

Is 48:17–19; Mt 11:16–19

"GOD IS SPEAKING – OPEN YOUR HEART AND LISTEN!"

INTRODUCTION

A telephone operator once received a complaint from a customer who said, "My telephone is not working. Nobody ever calls me!" After checking the connection, the technician discovered that the telephone was perfectly functional. The problem was that the customer had disconnected the receiver!

Sometimes, we complain that God does not speak to us, when the real problem is that we have disconnected our hearts from Him!

In the First Reading, Isaiah reminds us that God teaches us what is good and leads us along the right path. If only we listened to His commandments, our peace would flow like a river.

In the Gospel, Jesus compares His contemporaries to children who refuse to respond either to joyful music or to funeral songs. They rejected both John the Baptist's call to repentance and Jesus' proclamation of God's merciful love.

Today's liturgy invites us to examine our hearts. Are we genuinely listening to God, or are our prejudices, criticisms and preconceived ideas preventing us from recognising His voice? God speaks in different ways, through different people and circumstances. What matters is our willingness to listen and respond.

As we begin this Eucharistic celebration, let us acknowledge those occasions when we have been deaf to God's Word, judgmental towards others and unwilling to accept His guidance. With humble and contrite hearts, let us seek His mercy.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Brothers and sisters, God continually speaks to us and leads us along the path of life. Yet, we often allow prejudice, criticism and indifference to close our hearts to His voice. Let us humbly acknowledge our failures and ask for His mercy.

- Lord Jesus, You speak to us through Your Word, but we often fail to listen. Lord, have mercy.

- Christ Jesus, You come to us through unexpected people and circumstances, but we often judge rather than recognise Your presence. Christ, have mercy.

- Lord Jesus, You invite us to follow the joyful music of Your Gospel, but we often remain indifferent to Your call. Lord, have mercy.

May almighty God, who teaches us what is good and leads us along the path of life, forgive our deafness to His Word, remove our prejudices and indifference, open our hearts to His voice, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

COLLECT

O God, who are the source of all wisdom and truth, You continually guide Your children along the path of life and speak to them through Your Word and the events of each day. Remove from us every prejudice, pride and indifference that prevents us from recognising Your presence. Grant us attentive hearts to listen to Your voice, willing spirits to follow Your guidance and joyful lives that bear witness to Your merciful love. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

HOMILY

A music teacher once noticed that one of her students never joined the school orchestra. Whether the music was cheerful or sad, he simply sat motionless. One day she asked him, “Don't you like music?” He replied, “I do, but I don't want to listen!” The teacher smiled sadly: “Then you will miss the beauty of every song.”

In today's Gospel, Jesus encounters precisely this attitude among His contemporaries. He compares them to children in the marketplace who refuse to respond to either joyful music or funeral songs. When John the Baptist came with his austere lifestyle and call to repentance, they dismissed him as possessed. When Jesus came proclaiming God's merciful love, eating and drinking with sinners, they called Him a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners. There was simply no pleasing them!

How often do we behave similarly? We find fault with everyone, criticise those who challenge us and reject anything that does not fit our expectations. In doing so, we may fail to recognise God's voice speaking through unexpected people and circumstances.

The First Reading offers a beautiful contrast. Through Isaiah, God assures His people: “I, the Lord your God, teach you what is good for you; I lead you in the way that you must go.” God's guidance is always directed towards our well-being, peace and fruitfulness. We need only listen and follow.

A farmer once complained that the rain came when he wanted sunshine and sunshine when he wanted rain. His neighbour remarked, “Perhaps the problem is not the weather, but your unwillingness to accept what each season brings!”

Advent invites us to become attentive listeners. God may speak through joy or sorrow, through encouragement or correction, through familiar voices or unexpected encounters. The important thing is to keep our hearts open.

A little girl once asked her mother why she could hear the birds singing only when she switched off the television. Her mother replied, “Because silence allows you to hear what was always there!”
Let us silence our prejudices, open our hearts and learn to recognise God's voice. The Lord is speaking; are we listening?

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Dear brothers and sisters, God continually speaks to us, teaches us what is good and leads us along the path of life. Let us approach Him with attentive hearts and present our prayers, asking for the grace to recognise His voice and respond generously.

Response: Lord, teach us to listen to Your voice.

1. For the Church: That the Holy Father, bishops, priests and religious may proclaim God's Word with wisdom and courage, helping all people recognise His voice amid the confusion of the world. We pray to the Lord.

2. For world leaders and those in authority: That they may listen to the cries of the poor, the suffering and the marginalised, and be guided by wisdom, justice and compassion in their decisions. We pray to the Lord.

3. For all Christians: That we may overcome prejudice, criticism and indifference, remain open to God's guidance and recognise His presence in people and circumstances we encounter every day. We pray to the Lord.

4. For those who have become spiritually indifferent: That those who have stopped listening to God's Word may rediscover the joy of the Gospel, return to prayer and experience the transforming power of His merciful love. We pray to the Lord.

5. For the sick and the deceased: That the sick and suffering may hear God's comforting voice and experience His healing presence, and that our departed loved ones may be welcomed into the eternal peace of His Kingdom. We pray to the Lord.

Priest: Heavenly Father, You continually speak to Your children and guide them towards the fullness of life. Hear our prayers, remove the obstacles that close our hearts to You, and grant us the wisdom to listen and follow. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Dear brothers and sisters, God speaks to us through His Word and invites us to respond with open and willing hearts. Let us now present these gifts of bread and wine, together with our commitment to listen to His voice and follow His ways, that they may be acceptable to God the almighty Father.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Lord, accept the gifts we offer at Your altar. As we prepare to celebrate the sacrifice of Your Son, open our hearts to His living Word, remove our prejudices and make us attentive to Your guidance, that our lives may become a joyful response to Your merciful love. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PREFACE

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give You thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For You never cease to speak to Your people and guide them along the paths of truth and life. Through the prophets, You called them to conversion; through John the Baptist, You prepared their hearts for the coming of Your Son.

In Jesus Christ, You have spoken Your definitive Word of love, bringing joy to the sorrowful, hope to the discouraged and mercy to sinners.

Yet, we often fail to recognise Your voice because of our prejudices and indifference. Therefore, in Your goodness, You continually invite us to listen anew and discover Your presence in the events and people of our daily lives.

May Your Holy Spirit attune our hearts to the joyful music of Your Gospel, that our lives may become a song of gratitude and praise.

And so, with all the angels and saints, we proclaim Your glory, as with one voice we acclaim:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

Dear brothers and sisters, Jesus teaches us to listen to the Father's voice and trust in His loving guidance. With hearts open to His will, let us pray in the words our Saviour gave us.

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, and graciously grant peace in our days. Keep us free from prejudice, pride and indifference, and open our hearts to recognise Your voice in every circumstance of life. As we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ, You are the voice of the Father and the source of our peace. Look not on our sins, but on the faith of Your Church, and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with Your will. Remove from our hearts every prejudice, resentment and judgment that divides us, and teach us to listen to one another with patience, understanding and love. Make us instruments of reconciliation and harmony wherever we live and work. Who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Dear brothers and sisters, Jesus is the living Word of the Father, who speaks to our hearts and invites us to share in His divine life. Let us receive Him with open hearts, ready to listen to His voice and follow His ways. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Lord Jesus, You have spoken to us through Your Word and now nourish us with Your Body and Blood.

Forgive us for the times we have been deaf to Your voice, blinded by prejudice and quick to judge others.

Teach us to recognise Your presence in the unexpected moments of life.

May our hearts become silent enough to hear You, humble enough to accept Your guidance and generous enough to respond to Your call.

Lord, let our lives become a joyful melody of Your love. Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Lord our God, You have nourished us with the Bread of Life and strengthened us through this holy Communion. May the grace we have received make us attentive to Your voice, free us from every prejudice and guide our steps along the path of truth. May we carry the joy of Your Gospel into the world and recognise Your presence in everyone we meet. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May almighty God bless you with wisdom to recognise His voice and grace to follow His guidance. Amen.

May He remove every prejudice from your hearts and make you attentive to His presence in the people and circumstances of your daily lives. Amen.

May He fill your lives with the joy of the Gospel and make you instruments of His peace and love. Amen.

And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever. Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go forth, listen to God's voice and let your lives sing the joyful music of His love!

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“God is always speaking; the real challenge is to keep our hearts open and our ears attentive!”

SATURDAY – SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT (12.12.2026)

Sir 48:1–4, 9–11; Mt 17:10–13

"RECOGNISE GOD'S MESSENGERS – PREPARE THE WAY FOR THE LORD!"

INTRODUCTION

A king once sent a messenger ahead of his arrival to prepare his palace and announce his coming. Unfortunately, the people were so occupied with their daily activities that they ignored the messenger. When the king finally arrived, they were completely unprepared. The messenger had come, the announcement had been made, but nobody had paid attention!

The greatest danger is not that God fails to come, but that we fail to recognise Him when He comes!

In the First Reading, Sirach recalls the extraordinary prophetic mission of Elijah, whose powerful words burned like a blazing fire and whose life prepared God's people for His saving intervention.

In the Gospel, Jesus identifies John the Baptist as the Elijah who was expected to prepare the way for the Messiah. Sadly, people failed to recognise him and treated him shamefully. Jesus also foretells that He Himself will suffer at their hands.

Today's liturgy reminds us that recognising God's messengers requires open hearts, courage and readiness to accept the truth, even when it challenges our comfort. The Child of Bethlehem comes as God's greatest gift, but His mission leads to the Cross. As we prepare for Christmas, we are invited not merely to welcome the Child in the manger but also to embrace the self-giving love of the Saviour who gave His life for us.

Let us now examine our hearts. Have we ignored God's messengers, rejected the truth because it disturbed us, or failed to respond to His love with generosity and sacrifice? With humble and repentant hearts, let us seek the Lord's mercy.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Brothers and sisters, God continually sends His messengers to awaken our hearts and prepare us for His coming. Yet, we often fail to recognise them, reject their message and resist the sacrifices demanded by genuine discipleship. Let us acknowledge our failures and ask for God's mercy.

- Lord Jesus, You send Your messengers to prepare our hearts, but we often fail to recognise Your presence. Lord, have mercy.
- Christ Jesus, You embraced the Cross out of love for us, but we often resist the sacrifices demanded by Christian discipleship. Christ, have mercy.
- Lord Jesus, You gave Yourself completely for our salvation, but we often fail to share Your self-giving love with others. Lord, have mercy.

May almighty God, who sends His messengers to awaken our hearts and prepares us to welcome His Son, forgive our failures to recognise His presence, strengthen us to accept His truth and inspire us to live in self-giving love; and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

COLLECT

Almighty and merciful God, You sent the prophets to prepare Your people for the coming of Your Son and raised up John the Baptist to announce His arrival. Open our hearts to recognise Your messengers, give us courage to embrace Your truth and teach us to welcome Christ not only in the manger but also in the mystery of His Cross. May we receive Your love with gratitude and share it generously through lives of service and sacrifice. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

HOMILY

A young man once received a precious gift from his father but, thinking it was worthless, left it unopened in a cupboard. Years later, he discovered that it was something his father had treasured all his life. He regretted not recognising its value earlier. Sometimes, the greatest tragedy is not losing a gift, but failing to recognise it!

In today's Gospel, the disciples ask Jesus why the scribes say that Elijah must come before the Messiah. Jesus explains that Elijah has already come in the person of John the Baptist, but people failed to recognise him and treated him shamefully. John prepared the way for Christ, yet his mission cost him his life. Jesus also foretells that He Himself will suffer at their hands.

The First Reading from Sirach recalls the greatness of Elijah, whose prophetic ministry burned like a blazing fire. He was God's powerful messenger, preparing people for the Lord's coming.

How often God sends us people who challenge, guide and awaken us, but instead of recognising them as His messengers, we reject or criticise them! Sometimes, the very people who disturb our comfort are those through whom God wants to transform us.

A painting of the Nativity by the artist Sieger Köder depicts the shadow of the Cross falling upon the Christ Child. What a profound reminder! The wood of the manger points towards the wood of Calvary. Christmas cannot be separated from Good Friday. The Child born in Bethlehem came to give His life out of love for humanity.

A mother once told her son, “Whenever you receive love, remember that someone has paid a price to give it to you.” God's love for us was indeed costly: He gave His only Son.

As we approach Christmas, let us recognise God's messengers, welcome His gifts and prepare our hearts to receive Christ. Let us also remember that genuine Christian discipleship involves courage, sacrifice and self-giving love.

The greatest way to welcome the Christ Child is to practise the self-giving love of the crucified Christ.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Dear brothers and sisters, God sent Elijah and John the Baptist to prepare His people for the coming of the Messiah. As we prepare to welcome Christ, let us pray for the grace to recognise God's messengers, accept His truth and live lives of courageous and self-giving love.

Response: Lord, prepare our hearts to welcome You.

1. For the Church: That the Holy Father, bishops, priests and religious may proclaim God's truth with the courage of Elijah and John the Baptist, and prepare the hearts of people to welcome Christ. We pray to the Lord.

2. For world leaders and those in authority: That they may recognise their responsibility to defend truth, justice and human dignity, and have the courage to stand against oppression and exploitation, even when it demands personal sacrifice. We pray to the Lord.

3. For all Christians: That we may recognise God's messengers in our daily lives, remain open to challenging truths and follow Christ faithfully, even when discipleship demands sacrifice and courage. We pray to the Lord.

4. For those who suffer persecution and rejection: That those who courageously defend truth, justice and the dignity of human life may receive strength, protection and perseverance through the grace of God. We pray to the Lord.

5. For the sick and the deceased: That the sick and suffering may experience Christ's healing love through the care of others, and that our departed loved ones may be welcomed into the eternal joy of God's Kingdom. We pray to the Lord.

Heavenly Father, You sent Your Son to reveal the depth of Your love through His self-giving sacrifice. Hear our prayers, prepare our hearts to welcome Him and make us courageous witnesses of His love. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Dear brothers and sisters, Christ gave Himself completely for our salvation. Let us now present these gifts of bread and wine, together with our willingness to offer ourselves in love and service, that they may be acceptable to God the almighty Father.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Lord, accept the gifts we place upon Your altar. As these offerings become the sacrament of Your Son's self-giving love, may we too learn to offer our lives generously in the service of others and faithfully follow Him along the way of the Cross. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PREFACE

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give You thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For throughout the ages, You have prepared Your people for the coming of Your Son. You sent Elijah and the prophets to proclaim Your truth, and raised up John the Baptist to prepare the way for the Messiah.

In the fullness of time, You sent Your beloved Son, who came among us in humility, bringing salvation through His self-giving love. Though rejected and crucified, He embraced the Cross for the redemption of the world.

As we await His coming, You invite us to recognise Your presence in our brothers and sisters and to imitate the generous love revealed through His sacrifice.

And so, with grateful hearts, we join the angels and saints in proclaiming Your glory, as we acclaim:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

Dear brothers and sisters, through Jesus, God's beloved Son, we have received the gift of divine love. With hearts prepared to welcome Him and confidence in our heavenly Father, let us pray in the words our Saviour taught us.

EMBOLISM

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, and graciously grant peace in our days. By Your mercy, free us from indifference, fear and selfishness, and give us the courage to recognise Your presence, accept Your truth and imitate the self-giving love of Your Son, as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ, You embraced the Cross to reconcile humanity with the Father and bring peace to the world. Look not on our sins, but on the faith of Your Church, and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with Your will. Remove from our hearts all hatred, prejudice and indifference, and teach us to recognise Your presence in one another. May we have the courage to overcome divisions, forgive generously and become instruments of reconciliation wherever we go.
Who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Dear brothers and sisters, behold Jesus Christ, the beloved Son of God, who gave Himself completely for our salvation. He is the greatest gift of Christmas and the source of our eternal life. Let us receive Him with grateful hearts and learn to love as He has loved us.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Lord Jesus, You came into our world as a humble Child and gave Your life for us on the Cross.

Open our eyes to recognise Your presence in those who need our love.

Give us the courage of Elijah, the faithfulness of John the Baptist and the self-giving love of Your own heart.

May we never celebrate Your birth without imitating Your love.

Make our lives a living gift to others. Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Almighty Father, we have received the Body and Blood of Your Son, the greatest gift of Your love. May this sacred nourishment strengthen us to recognise Your presence in others, proclaim Your truth with courage and imitate the self-giving love of Christ. As we prepare to celebrate His birth, may our lives become a generous offering of love and service to all. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May almighty God, who sent His prophets to prepare the way for His Son, awaken your hearts to recognise His presence and bless you with His wisdom. Amen.

May He give you the courage of Elijah and John the Baptist to stand for truth and remain faithful to Christ even in times of difficulty. Amen.

May He fill your hearts with the self-giving love of Jesus, so that you may recognise Him in others and serve Him generously. Amen.

And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever. Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go forth, recognise Christ in others and love them as He has loved you!

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“Welcome the Child of Bethlehem by living the self-giving love of the Christ of Calvary.”