THE CATHOLIC CHURCH OF ST. ANN

# ADVENT

ADVENT COMPANION



# Preparing the Way of the Lord

*ADVENT COMPANION*

**Advent is a season that gently invites us to slow down and make room for Christ in our hearts and homes.** As the days grow quieter and the light of the wreath grows brighter each week, we are reminded that Jesus is drawing near. This companion was created to help you enter into that journey with intention and peace.

Inside, you'll find an Advent wreath prayer and candle-lighting guide for each Sunday of Advent, offering a simple way to mark the weeks and pray as a family or on your own. Each Sunday also includes a short devotional written by the saints, whose words can accompany you and deepen your reflection throughout the season.

You'll also find a special prayer for Christmas Day, meant to be prayed before the Nativity scene as you welcome the newborn Christ with joy, wonder, and gratitude.

May this little book be a gentle guide—helping you notice God's presence, savor moments of stillness, and walk through Advent with hope,

Come, Lord Jesus.

# PRACTICAL TIPS FOR LEANING INTO ADVENT

- READ THE DAILY READINGS
- SET 5 MINIUTES ASIDE A DAY FOR SILENCE
- LIGHT THE ADVENT WREATH WITH YOUR FAMILY EVERY NIGHT OR ON SUNDAYS
- GO TO DAILY MASS OR PICK ONE WEEKDAY TO GO TO MASS
- CELEBRATE FEAST DAYS

# FEAST DAYS DURING DECEMBER

- ***DECEMBER 6:*** *FEAST OF ST. NICHOLAS*
- ***DECEMBER 8:*** *SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION*
- ***DECEMBER 12:*** *OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE*
- ***DECEMBER 13:*** *FEAST OF ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS*
- ***DECEMBER 26:*** *ST. STEPHEN, THE FIRST MARTYR*
- ***DECEMBER 27:*** *HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH*
- ***DECEMBER 28:*** *HOLY INNOCENTS*

# FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

## *HOPE*

**FIRST READING**: ISAIAH 2:1-5

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM:** PSALM 122:1-9

**SECOND READING:** ROMANS 13:11-14

**GOSPEL:** MATTHEW 24:37-44

# Preparing the Way of the Lord

## *Advent Wreath Prayer & Candle-Lighting Guide*

**Advent is a season of waiting and hope.**

Each week, the lighting of the Advent wreath reminds us that **Jesus is the Light entering our world.** You can use this prayer at home as you gather around your wreath—on Sundays or any evening during the week.

**1. Begin with the Sign of the Cross:**

✠ *In the name of the Father…*

**2. Light the Candle for the Week:**

*Week 1: Light one purple candle — Hope*

**3. Pray Together**

God of Love,
Your son, Jesus, is your greatest gift to us.
He is a sign of your love.
Help us walk in that love during the weeks of Advent,
As we wait and prepare for his coming.
We pray in the name of Jesus, our Savior.

*- Author Unknown*



**4. Optional Scripture Reading**

*Week 1: Isaiah 9:1–2*

1 The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
Upon those who lived in a land of gloom
a light has shone.

2 You have brought them abundant joy
and great rejoicing;
They rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest,
as they exult when dividing the spoils.

**5. Optional Family Sharing Moment**

After reading the Scripture, invite everyone to pause for a moment of quiet. Then share together:

- What stood out to you in the reading?
- What do you think God might be saying to us this week?
- Is there an Advent purpose or small intention you want to live out this week?

*This simple conversation helps the light of the wreath become the light we carry into our week.*

**6. Closing Prayer**

*Leader*: Come, Lord Jesus, light our hearts and our homes.
*All*: Amen.

# FROM FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT
# HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

Sunday, 29 November 1998

"Let us go joyfully to meet the Lord" (refrain, Responsorial Psalm; Italian Lectionary). These are the words of the Responsorial Psalm for today's liturgy of the First Sunday of Advent, a liturgical season which from year to year renews our expectation of Christ's coming."

**"Let us go joyfully to meet the Lord" is a refrain perfectly in tune with the Jubilee.** It is, so to speak, a "jubilee refrain", according to the etymology of the Latin word iubilare, which in itself contains a reference to joy. Let us go joyfully, then! Let us walk with joy and watchfulness, as we wait for the season that recalls God's coming in human flesh, a time which reached its fullness when Christ was born in a stable in Bethlehem. **It is then that the time of waiting was fulfilled.**

**In Advent we await an event which occurs in history and at the same time transcends it**. As it does every year, this event will take place on the night of the Lord's Birth. The shepherds will hasten to the stable in Bethlehem; later the Magi will arrive from the East. Both the one and the other in a certain sense symbolize the entire human family. The exhortation that rings out in today's liturgy: "Let us go joyfully to meet the Lord" spreads to all countries, to all continents, among every people and nation. The voice of the liturgy — that is, the voice of the Church — resounds everywhere and invites everyone to the Great Jubilee.

**We can meet God, because he has reached out to us.** He did so as the father in the parable of the prodigal son (cf. Lk 15:11-32), because he is rich in mercy, dives in misericordia, and wants to meet us from wherever we come and wherever our journey is taking us. **God comes to us whether we have sought him, ignored him and or even avoided him. He reaches out to us first, his arms open wide like a loving and merciful father.**

If God is moved to reach out to us, can we turn our backs on him? But we cannot go alone to meet the Father. We must join the company of all who are members of "God's family". To prepare for the Jubilee properly, we must be ready to accept everyone. They are all our brothers and sisters because they are all children of the same heavenly Father.

In today's Gospel we heard the Lord's invitation to be watchful: "Watch, therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming". And then immediately: "Therefore you also must be ready; for the Son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect" (Mt 24:42, 44). **The exhortation to be watchful resounds many times in the liturgy, especially in Advent, a season of preparation not only for Christmas, but also for Christ's definitive and glorious coming at the end of time.** It therefore has a distinctly eschatological meaning and invites the believer to spend every day and every moment in the presence of the One "who is and who was and who is come" (Rv 1:4), to whom the future of the world and of man belongs. This is Christian hope! Without this prospect, our existence would be reduced to living for death.

Christ is our Redeemer: Redemptor mundi et Redemptor hominis, Redeemer of the world and of man. **He came among us to help us cross the threshold that leads to the door of life, the "holy door" which is he himself.**

May this consoling truth always be clearly present before our eyes, as we advance on our pilgrimage towards the Great Jubilee. It is the ultimate reason for the joy which today's liturgy urges us to have: "Let us go joyfully to meet the Lord". **By believing in the crucified and risen Christ, we also believe in the resurrection of the flesh and in eternal life."**

# SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

## *PEACE*

**FIRST READING:** ISAIAH 11:1-10

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM:** PSALM 72:1-7, 18-19

**SECOND READING:** ROMANS 15:4-13

**GOSPEL:** MATTHEW 3:1-12

# Preparing the Way of the Lord

## *Advent Wreath Prayer & Candle-Lighting Guide*

**1. Begin with the Sign of the Cross:**

✠ *In the name of the Father…*

**2. Light the Candle for the Week:**

*Week 2: Light two purple candles — Faith*

**3. Pray Together**

God of Love,
Your son, Jesus, is your greatest gift to us.
He is a sign of your love.
Help us walk in that love during the weeks of Advent,
As we wait and prepare for his coming.
We pray in the name of Jesus, our Savior.

*- Author Unknown*



**4. Optional Scripture Reading**

*Week 2: Isaiah 40:1–5*

1 Comfort, give comfort to my people,
says your God.

2 Speak to the heart of Jerusalem, and proclaim to her
that her service has ended,
that her guilt is expiated,
That she has received from the hand of the LORD
double for all her sins.

3A voice proclaims:
In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD!
Make straight in the wasteland a highway for our God!

4Every valley shall be lifted up,
every mountain and hill made low;
The rugged land shall be a plain,
the rough country, a broad valley.

5Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
and all flesh shall see it together;
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

**5. Optional Family Sharing Moment**

- *What stood out to you in the reading?*
- *What do you think God might be saying to us this week?*
- *Is there an Advent purpose or small intention you want to live out this week?*

**6. Closing Prayer**

*Leader*: Come, Lord Jesus, light our hearts and our homes.
*All*: Amen.

# FROM *THE CHRISTIAN VOCATION*
# ADVENT HOMILY OF
# ST. JOSEMARIA ESCRIVA
## DECEMBER 2, 1951

“Open your own hearts to Jesus and tell him your story.

I don't want to generalize. But one day perhaps an ordinary Christian, just like you, opened your eyes to horizons both deep and new, yet as old as the Gospel. He suggested to you the prospect of following Christ earnestly, seriously, of becoming an apostle of apostles. Perhaps you lost your balance then and didn't recover it. Your complacency wasn't quite replaced by true peace until you freely said "yes" to God, because you wanted to, which is the most supernatural of reasons. And in its wake came a strong, constant joy, which disappears only when you abandon him.

**Now that the time of our salvation is approaching, it is consoling to hear from the lips of St Paul that "when the goodness and kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not by the works of justice which we have done, but according to his mercy."**

If you leaf through the holy Scripture, you will discover constant references to the mercy of God. **Mercy fills the earth.** It extends to all his children, and is "all around us." It "watches over me." It "extends to the heavens" to help us, and has been continually "confirmed". God in taking care of us as a loving father looks on us in his mercy — a mercy that is "tender", welcome as "rain-clouds".

It is under the "umbrella" of God's mercy that Christian existence should develop. Ever mindful of that, the Christian should strive to behave as a child of God.
**In order to reach sanctity, an ordinary Christian — who is not a religious — has no reason to abandon the world, since that is precisely where he is to find Christ.** He needs no external signs, such as a habit or insignias. All the signs of his dedication are internal: a constant presence of God and a spirit of mortification. As a matter of fact, only one thing is necessary, because mortification is nothing more than prayer of the senses.

The christian vocation is one of sacrifice, penance, expiation. We must make reparation for our sins — for the many times we turned our face aside so as to avoid the gaze of God — and all the sins of mankind. We must try to imitate Christ, "always carrying about in our body the dying of Christ," his abnegation, his suffering on the cross, "so that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies." Our way is one of immolation and, in this denial, we find gaudium cum pace, both joy and peace.

You see within yourselves, on the one hand, pride, sensuality, boredom and selfishness; on the other, love, commitment, mercy, humility, sacrifice, joy. **You have to choose. You have been called to a life of faith, hope and charity.**

"Look up, and lift up your heads, because your redemption is at hand," we have just read in the Gospel. This time of Advent is a time for hope. These great horizons of our christian vocation, this unity of life built on the presence of God our Father, can and ought to be a daily reality.”

# THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

## *JOY*

**FIRST READING**: ZEPHANIAH 3:14-18A

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM:** ISAIAH 12:2-3, 4, 5-6

**SECOND READING:** PHILIPPIANS 4:4-7

**GOSPEL:** LUKE 3:10-18

# Preparing the Way of the Lord

## *Advent Wreath Prayer & Candle-Lighting Guide*

**1. Begin with the Sign of the Cross:**

✠ *In the name of the Father…*

**2. Light the Candle for the Week:**

- *Week 3: Light the rose candle + the two purple — Joy (Gaudete)*

**3. Pray Together**

God of Love,
Your son, Jesus, is your greatest gift to us.
He is a sign of your love.
Help us walk in that love during the weeks of Advent,
As we wait and prepare for his coming.
We pray in the name of Jesus, our Savior.

*- Author Unknown*



**4. Optional Scripture Reading**

*Week 3: Luke 1:46–55*

And Mary said:
"My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord;
my spirit rejoices in God my savior.
For he has looked upon his handmaid's lowliness;
behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed.
The Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.

His mercy is from age to age
to those who fear him.
He has shown might with his arm,
dispersed the arrogant of mind and heart.
He has thrown down the rulers from their thrones
but lifted up the lowly.
The hungry he has filled with good things;
the rich he has sent away empty.

He has helped Israel his servant,
remembering his mercy,
according to his promise to our fathers,
Abraham and to his descendants forever."

**5. Optional Family Sharing Moment**

- *What stood out to you in the reading?*
- *What do you think God might be saying to us this week?*
- *Is there an Advent purpose or small intention you want to live out this week?*

**6. Closing Prayer**

*Leader*: Come, Lord Jesus, light our hearts and our homes.
*All*: Amen.

# FROM *THE THREE COMINGS OF THE LORD*
# ADVENT HOMILY OF
# ST. BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX
# 12TH CENTURY

"We know that **the coming of the Lord is threefold**: the third coming is between the other two and it is not visible in the way they are. **At his first coming the Lord was seen on earth and lived among men, who saw him and hated him**.

At his last coming All flesh shall see the salvation of our God, and They shall look on him whom they have pierced. In the middle, the hidden coming, only the chosen see him, and they see him within themselves; and so their souls are saved. **The first coming was in flesh and weakness, the middle coming is in spirit and power, and the final coming will be in glory and majesty.**

This middle coming is like a road that leads from the first coming to the last. At the first, Christ was our redemption; at the last, he will become manifest as our life; but in this middle way he is our rest and our consolation.

If you think that I am inventing what I am saying about the middle coming, listen to the Lord himself: If anyone loves me, he will keep my words, and the Father will love him, and we shall come to him. Elsewhere I have read: Whoever fears the Lord does good things. - but I think that what was said about whoever loves him was more important: that whoever loves him will keep his words.

Where are these words to be kept? In the heart certainly, as the Prophet says I have hidden your sayings in my heart so that I do not sin against you. **Keep the word of God in that way: Blessed are those who keep it.**

**Let it penetrate deep into the core of your soul and then flow out again in your feelings and the way you behave;** because if you feed your soul well it will grow and rejoice. Do not forget to eat your bread, or your heart will dry up. Remember, and your soul will grow fat and sleek.

If you keep God's word like this, there is no doubt that it will keep you, for the Son will come to you with the Father: the great Prophet will come, who will renew Jerusalem, and he is the one who makes all things new. **For this is what this coming will do: just as we have been shaped in the earthly image, so will we be shaped in the heavenly image."**

# FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

## *LOVE*

**FIRST READING**: ISAIAH 7:10-16

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM:** PSALM 24:1-2, 3-4, 5-6

**SECOND READING:** ROMANS 1:1-7

**GOSPEL:** MATTHEW 1:18-25

# Preparing the Way of the Lord

## *Advent Wreath Prayer & Candle-Lighting Guide*

**1. Begin with the Sign of the Cross:**

✠ *In the name of the Father…*

**2. Light the Candle for the Week:**

- *Week 4: John 1:1–5*

**3. Pray Together**

God of Love,
Your son, Jesus, is your greatest gift to us.
He is a sign of your love.
Help us walk in that love during the weeks of Advent,
As we wait and prepare for his coming.
We pray in the name of Jesus, our Savior.

*- Author Unknown*



**4. Optional Scripture Reading**

*Week 3: Luke 1:46–55*

1 In the beginning* was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.

2 He was in the beginning with God.

3 All things came to be through him,
and without him nothing came to be.
What came to be

4 through him was life,
and this life was the light of the human race;

5 the light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness has not overcome it.

**5. Optional Family Sharing Moment**

- *What stood out to you in the reading?*
- *What do you think God might be saying to us this week?*
- *Is there an Advent purpose or small intention you want to live out this week?*

**6. Closing Prayer**

*Leader*: Come, Lord Jesus, light our hearts and our homes.
*All*: Amen.

**FROM *MAKE WAY FOR THE SON OF GOD AND YOUR SALVATION!***
**ST. THOMAS AQUINAS**

"God so loved the world, as to give His only begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in Him, may have everlasting life." (John 3:16).

The will of God is the cause of things, from this very fact, good comes to us because God loves us. **The cause of all good things is the Lord and Divine love.** For to wish good to anyone is an action of love. God loves man and for man's salvation, God willed to become man. God gave us the greatest gift possible—for He gave us His only begotten Son. **Nothing inspires us more to love, than to know that we are being loved.** Man could not easily raise himself to those things which are above him, since his intellect and affections were burdened with material things. God assumed human nature; so that man might subject his will to no creature, either by worshiping devils or any created things, or by debasing himself through the improper love of worldly things. For it is unworthy of a man that he should improperly subject himself to things inferior to God.

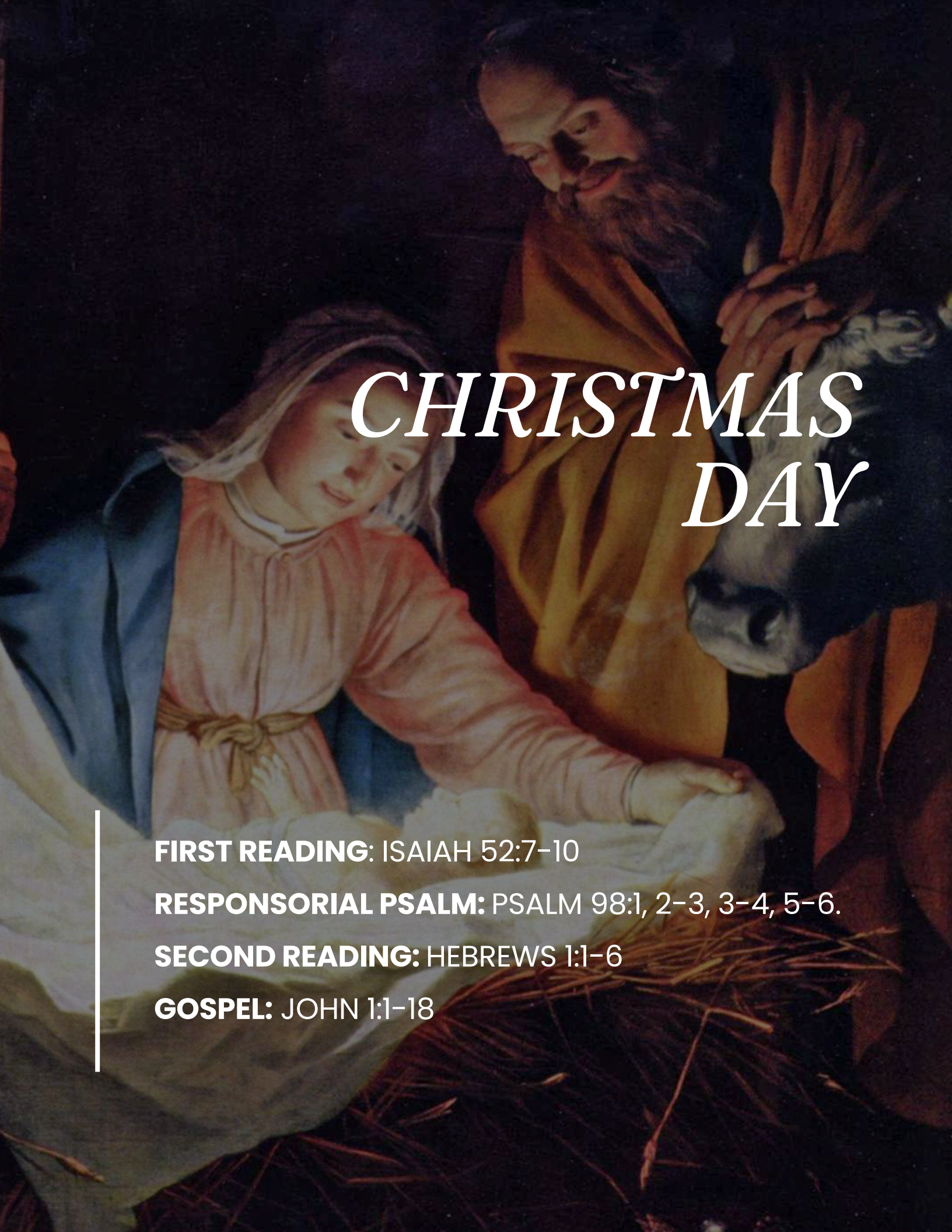
**Christ's power especially shines forth in the work of restoration,** and His wisdom is seen; while in the work of retribution, His kindness is apparent to all men. Redemption, through Christ becoming man, was most fitting because man, through sin, had fallen into infirmity, ignorance and wickedness by which he had become unfitted to imitate or acquire Divine virtue, or know truth, or love goodness. Therefore, God became man, so that He might give Himself to man to be imitated, to be known and to be loved. **The Son of God became incarnate, so that, in the form of a slave, He might procure the salvation of the slave of sin;** and in order that the way to God might be opened and made clear to all men; and, thus, by this means can all understand God, and gradually arrive at perfection.

**By God becoming man, Hope was given to man,** so that man could arrive at the participation of perfect happiness—a happiness that God alone has naturally—which man himself could hardly ever hope to achieve. So God became man to give to us the Hope, that we also can obtain that perfection which will unite us to God in everlasting enjoyment.

"The night is passed and the day is at hand. Let us, therefore, cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light." (Romans 12:13). **The entire time of the present life in this world can be compared to night**—because of the darkness of ignorance in which the present life is surrounded. **Future blessedness in Heaven can to be compared to "the day"**—because of the brightness of God by which the saints are enlightened.

In another way, the state of sin or crime might be compared to "night"—because of the darkness of crime; of which it is written: "They have not known, nor understood. They walk on in darkness." (Psalm 81:5). Whereas the "day" is called the state of grace—because of the light of spiritual intelligence which the just have, but which the wicked have not. **"Light is risen to the just, and joy to the right of heart." (Psalm 96:11).**

In another way, the time before the Incarnation of Christ might be compared to "night"—because the world was under a certain cloud of darkness. **On the contrary, the time from the Incarnation of Christ is compared to the "day", because of the power of the spiritual sun which came into the world with the birth of Christ.**



# *CHRISTMAS DAY*

**FIRST READING**: ISAIAH 52:7-10

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM:** PSALM 98:1, 2-3, 3-4, 5-6.

**SECOND READING:** HEBREWS 1:1-6

**GOSPEL:** JOHN 1:1-18

# Christmas Day Prayer

*Before the Nativity Scene*

***Gather together***

*Invite your family to stand or kneel before the Nativity scene. Take a quiet moment to look at the Holy Family and give thanks for the gift of Jesus.*

**Christmas Day Prayer**

> Loving Father,
> On this holy day, we come
> before the manger
> to adore Your Son, Jesus—
> born in humility, yet King
> of Heaven and Earth.
>
> As we look upon the Holy
> Family,
> open our hearts to receive
> Your peace.
> May the light of Christ fill
> our home,
> our family, and all those
> we love.
>
> Teach us to welcome
> Jesus
> with the same joy the
> shepherds felt,
> with the same faith Mary
> carried,
> and with the same trust
> Joseph lived.
>
> Bless our home today
> with gentleness,
> forgiveness, and hope.
>
> Help us carry the love of
> Christmas
> into every day of the year.
>
> We pray through Christ our
> Lord.
>
> Amen.


Catholic Church of
St. Ann