



## CHRISTMAS NOVENA MASSES 2020

# READING GUIDE

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### FIRST DAY

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#### *Let Us Open Our Hearts to the Lord!*

*Once again, our centuries-long tradition of preparing for Christmas through the “Simbang Gabi” brings us together (though not physically for now). On this first day of our Christmas Novena, we want to tell Jesus how much we long for his coming despite the COVID-19 restrictions.*

*The decorations around us, our singing and our smiles create a joyful atmosphere of expectation. But what matters most is the disposition of our hearts – our desire to welcome Jesus and make him the center of our life... the pledge to love him not only in words but also in deeds.*



*In this Eucharist, let us pray to the Lord for the grace of a persevering and fruitful attendance from the beginning to the end of this nine evening Novena Masses. And may our hearts be ever more eager to welcome the Lord in our midst.*

#### **FIRST READING ( Is 56:1-3.6-8 )**

*God has a plan of salvation which includes both the Jews and the pagans. But for this plan to become a reality, the basic condition to be fulfilled by all is to “observe what is right and do what is just.”*

**R – A proclamation from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah**

**Thus says the Lord: Observe what is right, do what is just; for my salvation is about to come, my justice, about to be revealed. Happy is the man who does this, the son of man who holds to it; who keeps the Sabbath free from profanation, and his hand from any evildoing. Let not the foreigner say, when he would join himself to the Lord, “The Lord will surely exclude me from his people.”**

**The foreigners who join themselves to the Lord, ministering to him, loving the name of the Lord, and becoming his servants – all who keep the Sabbath free from profanation and hold to my covenant. Them, I will bring to my holy mountain and make joyful in my house of prayer; their holocausts and sacrifices will be acceptable on my altar, for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.**

**Thus says the Lord God, who gathers the dispersed of Israel: Others will I gather to him besides those already gathered.**

The Word of the Lord!

**All –Thanks be to God!**

## RESPONSORIAL PSALM

**R – “O GOD, LET ALL THE NATIONS PRAISE YOU!”**

\* May God have pity on us and bless us; may he let his face shine upon us. So may your ways be known upon earth; among all nations, your salvation. *R.*

\* May the nations be glad and exult because you rule the peoples in equity; the nations on the earth you guide. *R.*

\* The earth has yielded its fruits; God, our God, has blessed us. May God bless us, and may all the ends of the earth fear him. *R.*

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia! Alleluia!

**Behold, the king will come, the Lord of earth: and he will set us free.**

Alleluia! Alleluia!

## GOSPEL ( Jn 5:33-36 )

*Jesus is the promised Messiah sent by the Father . Both John the Baptist and the miracles Jesus himself performs give witness to this.*

**P** –The Lord be with you!

**All** –And with your spirit!

**P** –A proclamation from the holy Gospel according to John.

**All** –Glory to you, O Lord!

**Jesus said to the Jews: “You sent emissaries to John, and he testified to the truth. I do not accept testimony from a human being, but I say this so that you may be saved. He was a burning and shining lamp, and for a while you were content to rejoice in his light.**

**But I have testimony greater than John’ s. The works that the Father gave me to accomplish, these works that I perform testify on my behalf that the Father has sent me.”**

The Gospel of the Lord!

**All** –Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

## PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

**P** –As we begin this Christmas Novena, let us present our petitions to the Lord with hearts full of hope and trust, saying:

**All** – COME, LORD JESUS, WE NEED YOU!

**C**—For the universal Church: May she respond to the call of the Lord to renew herself in the light of the Gospel so as to become a source of inspiration to all. Let us pray! **R.**

**C**— For the Holy Father and all our church leaders: Like the prophets of old, may they constantly remind us of the priorities that really matter. Let us pray! **R.**

**C**—For all of us: May we celebrate this Novena with the more fervour amidst the pandemic. Let us pray! **R.**

**C**—For all those who are unemployed, homeless, sick, or suffering in any way: May the beginning of the *Simbang Gabi* arouse in them a well-grounded hope for better days. Let us pray! **R.**

**C**—Let us pray in silence for our personal intentions. (*Pause*)

Let us pray! **R.**

**P**—Lord Jesus Christ, grant that this Novena may be, for all of us, a moment of deep spiritual renewal. May we prepare ourselves perseveringly for the commemoration of your Birthday. You who live and reign for ever and ever.

**All —Amen!**

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**SECOND DAY**


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**God's Faithfulness is Unshakable**

*On this second day of our Christmas Novena, we are reminded that the Messiah comes as the fulfilment of God's plan to redeem mankind from sin and offer eternal life to all human beings. The Lord revealed and implemented His plan by stages with a faithfulness that has its roots in His tender and strong love for each human being. This plan was carried out at the proper time, in spite of the many failings and betrayals on the part of the human "partners."*



*Today, we are invited to reflect on God's faithful love. The challenge for us is to be grateful to Him for His faithfulness and to reciprocate it by being faithful to our Baptismal commitments, both as individuals and as a community of believers.*

**FIRST READING ( Gen 49:2.8-10 )**

*As old Jacob is about to die, he gives his son Judah, the ancestor of David and Jesus, a special blessing which is a prophecy about his tribe's outstanding position among the other tribes of Israel. This prophecy has found its perfect fulfilment in Jesus Christ, "The Son of David," "The Son of Abraham."*

**R** –A proclamation from the Book of Genesis

**Jacob called his sons and said to them: "Assemble and listen, sons of Jacob, listen to Israel, your father. You, Judah, shall your brothers praise – your hand on the neck of your enemies; the sons of your father shall bow down to you. Judah, like a lion's whelp, you have grown up on prey, my son. He crouches like a lion recumbent, the king of beasts – who would dare rouse him? The scepter shall never depart from Judah, or the mace from between his legs, while tribute is brought to him, and he receives the peoples' homage."**

The Word of the Lord!

**All –Thanks be to God!**

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM**

**R - JUSTICE SHALL FLOURISH IN HIS TIME, AND FULLNESS OF PEACE FOR EVER!**

\* O God, with your judgment endow the king, and with your justice, the king's son. He shall govern your people with justice and your afflicted ones with judgment. *R.*

\* The mountains shall yield peace for the people, and the hills justice. He shall defend the afflicted among the people, save the children of the poor. *R.*

\* Justice shall flower in his days, and profound peace, till the moon be no more. May he rule from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. *R.*

\* May his name be blessed forever; as long as the sun his name shall remain. In him shall all the tribes of the earth be blessed; all the nations shall proclaim his happiness. *R.*

## Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia! Alleluia!

**O, Wisdom of our God Most High, guiding creation with power and love:  
come to teach us the path of knowledge!**

Alleluia! Alleluia!

## Gospel Mt 1:1-17

*God had promised Abraham that in his progeny all the peoples of the earth would find a blessing. He also promised David that his dynasty would last for ever. The long genealogy that follows proves that Jesus Christ is the one in whom those two promises were fulfilled.*

**P** –The Lord be with you!

**All** –And with your spirit!

**P** –A proclamation from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

**All** –Glory to you, O Lord!

**The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.**

Abraham became the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers. Judah became the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar. Perez became the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram, Ram the father of Amminadab. Amminadab became the father of Nahshon, Nahshon the father of Salmon, Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab. Boaz became the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth. Obed became the father of Jesse, Jesse the father of David the king.

David became the father of Solomon, whose mother had been the wife of Uriah. Solomon became the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of Abijah, Abijah the father of Asaph. Asaph became the father of Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, Joram the father of Uzziah. Uzziah became the father of Jotham, Jotham the father of Ahaz, Ahaz the father of Hezekiah. Hezekiah became the father of Manasseh, Manasseh the father of Amos, Amos the father of Josiah. Josiah became the father of Jechoniah and his brothers at the time of the Babylonian exile.

After the Babylonian exile, Jechoniah became the father of Shealtiel, Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, Zerubbabel the father of Abiud. Abiud became the father of Eliakim, Eliakim the father of Azor, Azor the father of Zadok. Zadok became the father of Achim, Achim the father of Eliud, Eliud the father of Eleazar. Eleazar became the father of Matthan, Matthan the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary. Of her was born Jesus who is called the Christ.

Thus the total number of generations from Abraham to David is fourteen generations; from David to the Babylonian exile, fourteen generations; from the Babylonian exile to the Christ, fourteen generations.

The Gospel of the Lord!

**All –Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!**

### **PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL**

**P** –Encouraged by God’ s faithfulness to His promises, let us humbly submit to Him our petitions for the needs of the Church and all mankind. Let our response be:

**All – LORD, MAKE US FAITHFUL TO YOU!**

**C** –For the Catholic Church and all other Christian denominations: May the Gospel we share bring ever closer to one another all those who believe in Christ. Let us pray! **R.**

**C** –For all those who have been victims of injustice and oppression: May the spirit of this Christmas Novena instil in their hearts thoughts of forgiveness and peace. Let us pray! **R.**

**C** –For all families, particularly those victimized by *COVID-19*, forced separation, emotional and economic hardships: May they find in their Christian faith the strength they need to overcome the present difficulties. Let us pray! **R.**

**C** –For all of us and those entrusted to our prayers: May the light of God’ s grace brighten our hearts and make us instruments of His saving love. Let us pray! **R.**

**C** –Let us pray in silence for our personal intentions. (*Pause*) Let us pray! **R.**

**P** –Lord God, You are the Faithful One and the source of all grace. Give us the strength that we need to honour our baptismal promises and get closer to you especially during this Christmas Novena. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**All –Amen!**

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**THIRD DAY**


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***Holding On to God's Promises***

*On this third day of our Novena, we are invited to reflect on yet another instance of God's faithfulness to His promise to send a Savior who would be a descendant of Abraham and of David.*

*Today the focus is on Jesus as "the righteous shoot of David" who will bring salvation and security to God's people and will be the "Emmanuel," God in our midst.*



*God repeated His promise at a time of severe crisis, when the people of Israel had forgotten the solemn promises He had made to Abraham and David. But the Lord neither forgets His promises nor is He unfaithful to them. Today, through the prophet Jeremiah, He renews the promise of a Savior coming from the stock of David, and in the Gospel, He announces its fulfilment to Joseph, a descendant of the great King.*

*God's faithfulness should be a source of encouragement to all of us, especially in moments of crisis and uncertainty. It should also be a reminder to readily cooperate with His plan the way Joseph did.*

**FIRST READING ( Jer 23:5-8 )**

*The prophet Jeremiah has beautiful words of hope for the afflicted people of Judah: a righteous descendant of King David – the Messiah – will lead them to days of peace, unity, and justice.*

**R** – A proclamation from the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah

**"Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord, "when I will raise up a righteous shoot to David. As king he shall reign and govern wisely, he shall do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah shall be saved, Israel shall dwell in security. This is the name they give him: 'The Lord our justice.' "**

**"Therefore, the days will come," says the Lord, "when they shall no longer say, 'As the Lord lives, who brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt'; but rather, 'As the Lord lives, who brought the descendants of the house of Israel up from the land of the north,' and from all the lands to which I banished them. They shall again live on their own land."**

The Word of the Lord!

**All –Thanks be to God!**

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM**

**R – JUSTICE SHALL FLOURISH IN HIS TIME, AND FULLNESS OF PEACE FOREVER!**

\* O God, with your judgment endow the king, and with your justice, the king's son. He shall govern your people with justice and your afflicted ones with judgment. **R.**

\* For he shall rescue the poor when he cries out, and the afflicted when he has no one to help him. He shall have pity for the lowly and the poor; the lives of the poor he shall save. **R.**

\* Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous deeds. And blessed forever be his glorious name; may the whole earth be filled with his glory. *R.*

### **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Alleluia! Alleluia!

**O, Leader of the House of Israel, giver of the Law to Moses on Sinai:  
come to rescue us with your mighty power!**

Alleluia! Alleluia!

### **GOSPEL ( Mt 1:18-25 )**

*God's plan to make His only Son a descendant of David found a serious obstacle in Joseph's decision to break his engagement with Mary. But soon, things were put back on course, thanks to Joseph's perfect obedience.*

**P** –The Lord be with you!

**All** –And with your spirit!

**P** –A proclamation from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

**All** –Glory to you, O Lord!

**This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the Holy Spirit. Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly. Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."**

**All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means 'God is with us.' " When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home. He had no relations with her until she bore a son, and he named him Jesus.**

The Gospel of the Lord!

**All** –Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

### **PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL**

**P** – God constantly cares for us and all that He does is for our good. On this third day of our Novena, let us entrust ourselves and the rest of all mankind to His fatherly love, saying:

**All**– LORD, GRACIOUSLY HEAR US!

**C** –For the Holy Father, our Bishop, and the spiritual leaders of our community: May they constantly inspire their flocks with their zeal and dedication. Let us pray! *R.*



**C**—For all nations and international organizations: May the ideals of universal brotherhood, solidarity, and fraternal charity taught by Christ guide their plans and actions. Let us pray! **R.**

**C**—For all husbands and fathers: May they live up to their responsibility of being loving companions to their wives and instruments of God's providence for their children, in imitation of St. Joseph. Let us pray! **R.**

**C**—For all of us gathered to prepare our hearts for the coming of Jesus: May our good example in our family life be a source of inspiration and unity for all. Let us pray! **R.**

**C**—Let us pray in silence for our personal intentions. (*Pause*) Let us pray! **R.**

**P**—Lord God, Father of all, shower Your blessings on those You created in Your image and likeness. Console the afflicted, give hope to the dying, give peace and grace to all, through Christ, our Lord.

**All —Amen!**

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**FOURTH DAY**


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***Putting Our Trust in God  
Even When Things Seem Impossible***

*On this fourth day of our Novena we are reminded that, occasionally, God challenges people to trust Him even when He plans to do “impossible things.” The episode of the disbelief of Zechariah warns us that those who doubt God’s word will be left to witness, ashamed and speechless, the fulfilment of the divine plan. On the other hand, those who accept God’s plan in full trust and are ready to cooperate become His partners and instruments of His love and power.*



*Today’s liturgy challenges us to choose between being spectators of God’s wonders or His enthusiastic collaborators along the highway of salvation history. In today’s liturgy, we are also invited to reflect on and pray for the elderly and the childless in our families and friends. Their happiness depends so much on how we treat them.*

**FIRST READING ( Jgs 13:2-7.24-25 )**

*The extraordinary conception of Samson by a barren woman foreshadows the conception of John the Baptist by the elderly, barren Elizabeth.*

**R** –A proclamation from the Book of Judges

**There was a certain man from Zorah, of the clan of the Danites, whose name was Manoah. His wife was barren and had borne no children. An angel of the Lord appeared to the woman and said to her , “Though you are barren and have had no children, yet you will conceive and bear a son. Now, then, be careful to take no wine or strong drink and to eat nothing unclean. As for the son you will conceive and bear , no razor shall touch his head, for this boy is to be consecrated to God from the womb. It is he who will begin the deliverance of Israel from the power of the Philistines.”**

**The woman went and told her husband, “A man of God came to me; he had the appearance of an angel of God, terrible indeed. I did not ask him where he came from, nor did he tell me his name. But he said to me, ‘You will be with child and will bear a son. So take neither wine nor strong drink, and eat nothing unclean. For the boy shall be consecrated to God from the womb, until the day of his death.’ ”**

**The woman bore a son and named him Samson. The boy grew up and the Lord blessed him. The Spirit of the Lord stirred him.**

The Word of the Lord!

**All –Thanks be to God!**

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM**

**R – MY MOUTH SHALL BE FILLED WITH YOUR PRAISE, AND I WILL SING YOUR GLORY!**

\* Be my rock of refuge, a stronghold to give me safety, for you are my rock and my fortress. O my God, rescue me from the hand of the wicked. *R.*

\* For you are my hope, O Lord; my trust, O God, from my youth. On you I depend from birth; from my mother's womb you are my strength. *R.*

\* I will treat of the mighty works of the Lord; O God, I will tell of your singular justice. O God, you have taught me from my youth, and till the present I proclaim your wondrous deeds. *R.*

### **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Alleluia! Alleluia!

**O, Root of Jesse's stem, sign of God's love for all his people:**

**Come to save us without delay!**

Alleluia! Alleluia!

### **GOSPEL ( Lk 1:5-25 )**

*The conception of John the Baptist is an important step in the fulfilment of God's plan, for John's mission will be so closely associated with that of the Messiah. The announcement to Zechariah foreshadows the Annunciation which Mary will receive in Nazareth.*

**P** –The Lord be with you!

**All** –And with your spirit!

**P** –A proclamation from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

**All** –Glory to you, O Lord!

In the days of Herod, King of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah of the priestly division of Abijah; his wife was from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. Both were righteous in the eyes of God, observing all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren and both were advanced in years.

Once when he was serving as priest in his division's turn before God, according to the practice of the priestly service, he was chosen by lot to enter the sanctuary of the Lord to burn incense. Then, when the whole assembly of the people was praying outside at the hour of the incense offering, the angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right of the altar of incense. Zechariah was troubled by what he saw, and fear came upon him.

But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, because your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall name him John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He will drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb, and he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the hearts of fathers toward children and the disobedient to the understanding of the righteous, to prepare a people fit for the Lord."

Then Zechariah said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." And the angel said to him in reply, "I am Gabriel, who stand before God. I was sent to speak to you and to announce to you this good news. But now you will be speechless and unable to talk until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled at their proper time."

Meanwhile the people were waiting for Zechariah and were amazed that he stayed so long in the sanctuary. But when he came out, he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary. He was gesturing to them but remained mute. Then, when his days of ministry were completed, he went home.

After this time his wife Elizabeth conceived, and she went into seclusion for five months, saying, "So has the Lord done for me at a time when he has seen fit to take away my disgrace before others."

The Gospel of the Lord!

**All –Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!**

#### **PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL**

**P** –Encouraged by the interest of the Lord in our good, let us present to Him our humble supplications as we say together:

**All– ALMIGHTY GOD, HEAR OUR PRAYER!**

**C** –For the Holy Father and all other religious and civil leaders: May their example of dedication, honesty, and generous service to their communities be an inspiration to all. Let us pray! **R.**

**C** –For all parents, teachers, and catechists: May they see in all children as many precious gifts from the Lord and raise them according to God's will. Let us pray! **R.**

**C** –For the elderly in our families and our community: May they continue to offer their contribution of wisdom and prayer and never doubt God's special love for them. Let us pray! **R.**

**C** –For the couples who cannot have children: May they consider the possibility of adopting some of the thousands of babies who have been rejected by their parents. Let us pray! **R.**

**C** –Let us pray in silence for our personal intentions. *(Pause)* Let us pray! **R.**

**P** –Open our hearts, Lord, to receive Your Word with faith and generosity, always mindful that You want our good and that nothing is impossible to You. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**All –Amen!**

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**FIFTH DAY / FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**


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***Open Our Hearts To God's Presence***

*Today, the liturgical readings invite us to reflect on the presence of God in our midst. His presence is enlivening and reassuring. It is not the presence of the spy or of the judge that fills people with uneasiness and fear. Rather, God's presence among us is the source of our salvation. It is an undeserved gift that transforms our lives, filling them with hope and peace.*

*But if we want to enjoy all these benefits, we must respond adequately to God's presence in us. We do that by opening our hearts to Him with gratitude and eagerness, following the example of Mary*

*Most Holy who declares her total availability to do whatever God wants. Let this be our disposition today as we are about to begin the Eucharistic celebration.*


**FIRST READING ( 2 Sm 7:15.8-12.14.16 )**

*The Israelites knew that the Messiah would be a descendant of King David. Such a conviction was based on the promise made by the Lord to David that He would build for him a "house/dynasty" that would last forever. Let us listen to the account of that very important promise.*

**R** – A proclamation from the Second Book of Samuel

**When King David was settled in his palace, and the Lord had given him rest from his enemies on every side, he said to *Nathan* the prophet, "Here I am living in a house of cedar, while the ark of God dwells in a tent!" Nathan answered the king, "Go, do whatever you have in mind, for the Lord is with you."**

**But that night the Lord spoke to Nathan and said: "Go, tell my servant David, 'Thus says the Lord: Should you build me a house to dwell in? It was I who took you from the pasture and from the care of the flock to be commander of my people Israel. I have been with you wherever you went, and I have destroyed all your enemies before you. And I will make you famous like the great ones of the earth.**

**I will fix a place for my people Israel; I will plant them so that they may dwell in their place without further disturbance. Neither shall the wicked continue to afflict them as they did of old, since the time I first appointed judges over my people Israel.**

**I will give you rest from all your enemies. The Lord also reveals to you that he will establish a house for you. And when your time comes and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your heir after you, sprung from your loins, and I will make his kingdom firm. I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me. Your house and your kingdom shall endure forever before me; your throne shall stand firm forever.' "**

The Word of the Lord!

**All –Thanks be to God!**

## RESPONSORIAL PSALM

### **R – FOR EVER I WILL SING THE GOODNESS OF THE LORD!**

\* I will sing forever; through all generations my mouth shall proclaim your faithfulness. For you have said, “My kindness is established forever.” In heaven you have confirmed your faithfulness. *R.*

\* “I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant: Forever will I confirm your posterity and establish your throne for all generations.” *R.*

\* “He shall say of me, ‘You are my father, my God, the Rock, my Savior.’ Forever I will maintain my kindness to- ward him, and my covenant with him stands firm.” *R.*

## SECOND READING ( Rom 16:25-27 )

*This excerpt from the Letter to the Romans is a solemn hymn of glory to God, especially on account of the Gospel that has been announced to all Gentiles.*

**R –** A proclamation from the Letter of Paul to the Romans

**Brothers and sisters: To him who can strengthen you, according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret for long ages but now manifested through the prophetic writings and, according to the command of the eternal God, made known to all nations to bring about the obedience of faith, to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ be glory forever and ever. Amen!**

The Word of the Lord!

**All –**Thanks be to God!

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia! Alleluia!

**Behold, I am the hand- maid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.**

Alleluia! Alleluia!

## GOSPEL ( Lk 1:26-38 )

*The episode of the Annunciation marks the beginning of the fulfilment of the mysterious promise made by God to David concerning an everlasting dynasty.*

**P –**The Lord be with you!

**All –**And with your spirit!

**P –**A proclamation from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

**All –**Glory to you, O Lord!

**The angel *Gabriel* was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary.**

Coming to her, the angel said, "Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you." But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.

Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and

you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called 'Son of the Most High,' and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?" And the angel said to her in reply, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God."

Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

The Gospel of the Lord!

**All –Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!**

#### **PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL**

**P**—In union with Mary, God's generous handmaid, let us set our hearts to do the Lord's will and implore from Him the grace we need to do so. Together we pray:

**All – FAITHFUL GOD, HEAR US!**

**C**—That the Church and her leaders may always give priority to the building of strong communities of faith and action, let us pray! **R.**

**C**—That all the political and civil leaders may keep in mind that all their plans will come to nothing unless they conform to God's will, let us pray! **R.**

**C**—That all those who prepare for Christmas may prioritize their spiritual needs rather than exhaust their energies in the preparation of external decorations, let us pray! **R.**

**C**—That all those who do not yet believe in Jesus as their Savior may open their hearts to the message of God's word and let it bear fruit in their lives, let us pray! **R.**

**C**—That all of us may live these last days of the Christmas Novena with the same disposition with which Mary Most Holy prepared herself for the birth of Jesus, let us pray! **R.**

**C**—Let us pray in silence for our personal intentions. *(Pause)* Let us pray! **R.**

***P***—God of all faithfulness, grant that our behavior be always in accordance with the Gospel of life we profess, and a witness to Jesus, the only Savior of the world who lives and reigns forever and ever.

***All—Amen!***



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**SIXTH DAY**


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***In Praise of Mary, the Mother of the Lord***

*Today's Gospel brings us to meditate on the second Joyful Mystery: Mary's Visitation to Elizabeth. The two holy women have been the recipients of God's special favor: the gift of a child. For Elizabeth, her child is a most unexpected gift in her old age; for Mary, her child is an even more precious gift: the very Son of God.*

*Together with Elizabeth, we greet and proclaim Mary as "the Mother of our Lord" and "the Woman of Faith." In this Eucharistic celebration, let us open our hearts to welcome Jesus, who is brought to us by his Most Holy Mother to be our Savior, Brother, and Model.*


**FIRST READING ( Zep 3:14-18 )**

*The happiness of Jerusalem originated from the presence of the Lord. This foreshadowed the joy experienced by Elizabeth in receiving the visit of Mary Most Holy who was carrying in her womb the Savior of the world.*

**R**—A proclamation from the Book of the Prophet Zephaniah

**Shout for joy, O daughter Zion! Sing joyfully, O Israel! Be glad and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem!**

**The Lord has removed the judgment against you, he has turned away your enemies. The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst, you have no further misfortune to fear.**

**On that day, it shall be said to Jerusalem: Fear not, O Zion, be not discouraged! The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a mighty savior. He will rejoice over you with gladness, and renew you in his love. He will sing joyfully because of you, as one sings at festivals.**

The Word of the Lord!

**All —Thanks be to God!**

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM**

**R — EXULT, YOU JUST, IN THE LORD! SING TO HIM A NEW SONG!**

\* Give thanks to the Lord on the harp; with the ten-stringed lyre chant his praises. Sing to him a new song; pluck the strings skilfully, with shouts of gladness. *R.*

\* But the plan of the Lord stands forever; the design of his heart, through all generations. Blessed the nation whose God is the Lord, the people he has chosen for his own inheritance. *R.*

\* Our soul waits for the Lord, who is our help and our shield, for in him our hearts rejoice; in his holy name we trust. *R.*

## **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Alleluia! Alleluia!

**O Emmanuel, our King and Giver of Law: come to save us, Lord our God!**

Alleluia! Alleluia!

## **GOSPEL ( Lk 1:39-45 )**

*We continue our meditation on the Joyful Mysteries of our salvation. Today's Gospel passage makes us reflect on the preciousness of God's gift to us in the person of Jesus, the "blessed fruit" of the womb of the Virgin Mary.*

**P** –The Lord be with you!

**All** –And with your spirit!

**P** –A proclamation from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

**All** –Glory to you, O Lord!

**Mary set out in those days and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."**

The Gospel of the Lord!

**All** –Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

## **PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL**

**P** –As we meditate on the joyful mystery of the Visitation, our attention turns to Mary Most Holy and Elizabeth, with Jesus as the source of their shared joy. Together with them, let us pray:

**All** – LORD, GRACIOUSLY HEAR US!

**C** –For the Universal Church: May she ever more appreciate the role of women in the Christian community and constantly defend their dignity. Let us pray! **R.**

**C** –For all wives: May they be instruments of sanctification for their husbands and promoters of harmony and joy in the home. Let us pray! **R.**

**C** –For all mothers: May they raise their children in the holy fear and love of the Lord, and be an inspiration to them in the fulfillment of their duties. Let us pray! **R.**

**C**—For all the women who have vowed their lives to the Lord: May they always be faithful to their commitments and mirror to the lay faithful the splendour of an undivided love. Let us pray! **R.**

**C**—For all girls: May they be loving daughters to their parents, treasure purity and a spirit of dedication to the good of others. Let us pray! **R.**

**C**—Let us pray in silence for our personal intentions. (*Pause*) Let us pray! **R.**

**P**—Lord God, may we prepare ourselves for the coming Christmas the way Elizabeth prepared herself for the birth of John, and Mary for the birth of Jesus, our Lord and Savior who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

**All —Amen!**

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**SEVENTH DAY**


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***The Lord Has Done Great Things for Us!***

*Today's theme is gratitude to God (UTANG NA LOOB SA DIYOS) for the wonders the Lord has done not only for Mary Most Holy, but also for our community and each of us. A grateful heart is a wonderful heart, a heart that knows all is grace and knows how to be thankful to the Lord, the Source of all blessings.*



*We thank the Lord together with our Blessed Mother for the wonderful things He has done for her and for us. Let us equally express our gratitude to all those who have done good to us by praying for their needs and intentions. Let our grateful prayer in this Eucharistic celebration be our best advance Christmas gift for them.*

**FIRST READING ( 1 Sm 1:24-28 )**

*The gift of a baby boy filled Hannah with joy and gratitude. Her offering the child back to God and the hymn of thanks in the Responsorial Psalm fore-shadow the manifestation of Mary's gratitude to the Lord as expressed in her "Magnificat."*

**R**—A proclamation from the First Book of Samuel

**In those days, Hannah brought Samuel with her, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour, and a skin of wine, and presented him at the temple of the Lord in Shiloh.**

**After the boy's father had sacrificed the young bull, Hannah, his mother, approached Eli and said: "Pardon, my lord! As you live, my lord, I am the woman who stood near you here, praying to the Lord. I prayed for this child, and the Lord granted my request. Now I, in turn, give him to the Lord; as long as he lives, he shall be dedicated to the Lord." She left Samuel there.**

The Word of the Lord!

**All —Thanks be to God!**

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM**

**R — MY HEART EXULTS IN THE LORD, MY SAVIOR!**

\* "My heart exults in the Lord, my horn is exalted in my God. I have swallowed up my enemies; I rejoice in my victory." *R.*

\* "The bows of the mighty are broken, while the tottering gird on strength. The well-fed hire themselves out for bread, while the hungry batten on spoil. The barren wife bears seven sons, while the mother of many languishes." *R.*

\* "The Lord puts to death and gives life; he casts down to the netherworld; he raises up again. The Lord makes poor and makes rich, he humbles, he also exalts." *R.*

\* "He raises the needy from the dust; from the dung heap he lifts up the poor, to seat them with nobles and make a glorious throne their heritage." *R.*

## **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Alleluia! Alleluia!

**O, King of all nations and keystone of the Church:  
come and save man, whom you formed from the dust!**  
Alleluia! Alleluia!

## **GOSPEL ( Lk 1:46-56 )**

*In response to Elizabeth's greeting and words of congratulation, Mary lifts her heart to the Lord in the hymn of praise we call "Magnificat." Indeed, all good things are from the Lord, both in Mary's life and ours.*

**P** –The Lord be with you!

**All** –And with your spirit!

**P** –A proclamation from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

**All** –Glory to you, O Lord!

**Mary said: "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my Savior for he has looked upon his lowly servant. From this day all generations will call me blessed: the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name. He has mercy on those who fear him in every generation. He has shown the strength of his arm, and has scattered the proud in their conceit. He has cast down the mighty from their thrones and has lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. He has come to the help of his servant Israel for he remembered his promise of mercy, the promise he made to our fathers, to Abraham and his children for ever ."**

**Mary remained with Elizabeth about three months and then returned to her home.**

The Gospel of the Lord!

**All** –Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

## **PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL**

**P** –The Lord has done great things not only for Mary but also for us. Let us express our gratitude to Him as we say:

**All** – WE THANK YOU, LORD!

**C** –For the gift of the Church and the fruits of holiness that have flourished in it over the centuries, up to our very days, let us give thanks! **R.**

**C** –For the gift of creation, the very foundation of all other gifts the Lord has bestowed on us, let us give thanks! **R.**

**C** –For the gift of our life, and all the opportunities the Lord has given us to become instruments of His love for others, let us give thanks! **R.**

**C**—For the gift of Jesus, our Lord and Savior who opened for us the gates of heaven, let us give thanks! **R.**

**C**—For the gift of God' s Word which is for us a source of enlightenment, encouragement, and strength, let us give thanks! **R.**

**C**—For the gift of the Sacraments in which we encounter the Risen Christ from whom we receive the strength we need to live according to the Gospel, let us give thanks! **R.**

**C**—Let us realize the other personal reasons for which we should be grateful to the Lord.  
(Pause) For all these gifts, let us give thanks! **R.**

**P**—Lord God, source of all goodness and life, continue to shower Your blessings upon us. May all that we are and do be a constant thanksgiving to You who live and reign forever and ever.

**All—Amen!**

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**EIGHTH DAY**


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**God Never Lets People Down**

*On this eighth day of our Novena, as we rejoice with Elizabeth and Zechariah over the birth of the baby John, we are invited to reflect on God's faithfulness to His promises. God never lets anybody down. The whole history of salvation is a glorious record of the fulfillment of His promises.*



*The Lord's faithfulness is also a reminder for us to finally become dependable people who keep their promises to God and people, no matter what the cost. John the Baptist was faithful to his calling and mission even at the cost of his life. So was Jesus. So should we be, if we want to deserve the title of "Disciples of the Lord," the Faithful One. In this Eucharist, let us ask for all the people we love and ourselves the grace to be faithful to our baptismal promises.*

**FIRST READING ( Mal 3:1-4.23-24 )**

*Malachi, the last of the prophets, tells us that the coming of the Messiah was to be preceded by a "return" of Elijah, the "Prophet of fire." Here is how he describes the mission of the Lord's Messenger whom Christian tradition identifies with John the Baptist.*

**R**—A proclamation from the Book of the Prophet Malachi

**Thus says the Lord God:**

**Lo, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me; and suddenly there will come to the temple the Lord whom you seek, and the messenger of the covenant whom you desire. Yes, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who will endure the day of his coming? And who can stand when he appears? For he is like the refiner's fire, or like the fuller's lye. He will sit refining and purifying silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi, refining them like gold or like silver that they may offer due sacrifice to the Lord. Then the sacrifice of Judah and Jerusalem will please the Lord, as in the days of old, as in years gone by.**

**Lo, I will send you Elijah, the prophet, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and terrible day, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with doom.**

The Word of the Lord!

**All—Thanks be to God!**

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM**

**R — LIFT UP YOUR HEADS AND SEE; YOUR REDEMPTION IS NEAR AT HAND!**

\* Your ways, O Lord, make known to me; teach me your paths, guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my savior. **R.**

\* Good and upright is the Lord; thus he shows sinners the way. He guides the humble to justice, he teaches the humble his way. **R.**

\* All the paths of the Lord are kindness and constancy toward those who keep his covenant and his decrees. The friendship of the Lord is with those who fear him, and his covenant, for their instruction. *R.*

### **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Alleluia! Alleluia!

**O, King of all nations and keystone of the Church:  
come and save man, whom you formed from the dust!**

Alleluia! Alleluia!

### **GOSPEL ( Lk 1:57-66 )**

*The birth of John the Baptist proved the Lord's faithfulness to His promise and filled the baby's parents, their relatives and friends with great rejoicing. We are all invited to share in their happiness.*

**P** –The Lord be with you!

**All** –And with your spirit!

**P** –A proclamation from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

**All** –Glory to you, O Lord!

**When the time arrived for Elizabeth to have her child, she gave birth to a son. Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy toward her, and they rejoiced with her.**

**When they came on the eighth day to circumcise the child, they were going to call him Zechariah after his father, but his mother said in reply, "No. He will be called John." But they answered her, "There is no one among your relatives who has this name." So they made signs, asking his father what he wished him to be called. He asked for a tablet and wrote, "John is his name," and all were amazed. Immediately his mouth was opened his tongue freed, and he spoke blessing God.**

**Then fear came upon all their neighbors, and all these matters were discussed throughout the hill country of Judea. All who heard these things took them to heart, saying, "What, then, will this child be?" For surely the hand of the Lord was with him.**

The Gospel of the Lord!

**All** –Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

### **PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL**

**P** –The birth of John was a decisive step in the fulfilment of God's promise to send the Messiah. Mindful of the Lord's faithfulness, let us pray for the grace to treasure this moral quality in our lives:

**All** – LORD, HEAR OUR PRAYER !



**C**—That the Church, under the guidance of the Holy Father, may be ever more faithful to her mission to be the instrument of salvation for all mankind, let us pray! **R.**

**C**—That all the priests and religious may be shining examples of faithfulness to their vows to live the radical demands of the Gospel, let us pray! **R.**

**C**—That husbands and wives may bring about the unity and harmony of their families through their mutual faithfulness and dedication to the good of their children, let us pray! **R.**

**C**—That all teachers, catechists, and youth leaders may honour their commitment to give their very best for the proper formation of all the children and young people entrusted to their care, let us pray! **R.**

**C**—That all those who work to promote peace and justice in the world may reap the fruits of their labours, let us pray! **R.**

**C**—Let us pray in silence for our personal intentions. (*Pause*) Let us pray! **R.**

**P**—Lord God, enkindle in us a greater desire to see the fulfilment of Y our promise and the determination to imitate You, who are the Faithful One who live and reign for ever and ever.

**All—Amen!**

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**NINTH DAY**


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**FIRST READING ( 2 Samuel 7: 1-16 )**

**R** –A proclamation from the Second Book of the Prophet Samuel

When King David was settled in his palace, and the LORD had given him rest from his enemies on every side, he said to Nathan the prophet, "Here I am living in a house of cedar, while the ark of God dwells in a tent!"

Nathan answered the king, "Go, do whatever you have in mind, for the LORD is with you."

But that night the LORD spoke to Nathan and said: "Go, tell my servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: Should you build me a house to dwell in?"

"Now then, speak thus to my servant David, 'The LORD of hosts has this to say: It was I who took you from the pasture and from the care of the flock to be commander of my people Israel.

I have been with you wherever you went, and I have destroyed all your enemies before you. And I will make you famous like the great ones of the earth.

I will fix a place for my people Israel; I will plant them so that they may dwell in their place without further disturbance. Neither shall the wicked continue to afflict them as they did of old, since the time I first appointed judges over my people Israel. I will give you rest from all your enemies. The LORD also reveals to you that he will establish a house for you. And when your time comes and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your heir after you, sprung from your loins, and I will make his kingdom firm.

I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me. And if he does wrong, I will correct him with the rod of men and with human chastisements; Your house and your kingdom shall endure forever before me; your throne shall stand firm forever."

The Word of the Lord!

**All** –Thanks be to God!

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM (to be sung)**
**GOSPEL ( Luke 1: 67-79 )**

**P** –The Lord be with you!

**All** –And with your spirit!

**P** –A proclamation from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

**All** –Glory to you, O Lord!

Then Zechariah his father, filled with the holy Spirit, prophesied, saying:

"Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, for he has visited and brought redemption to his people. He has raised up a horn for our salvation within the house of David his servant, even as he promised through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old: salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us, to show mercy to our fathers and to be

mindful of his holy covenant and of the oath he swore to Abraham our father, and to grant us that, rescued from the hand of enemies, without fear we might worship him in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

And you, child, will be called prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give his people knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God by which the daybreak from on high will visit us to shine on those who sit in darkness and death's shadow, to guide our feet into the path of peace."

The Gospel of the Lord!

**All –Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!**

***“A blessed Advent and  
a grace-filled Christmas  
and New Year!”***