**Diocesan Mission for Renewing the Faith**

**Lectionary Year C**

**Preaching Plan**

*Stages (Based on Creed)*

1. I believe—Advent and Christmas
2. I believe in God, the Father Almighty—Baptism of the Lord till 27 February
3. I believe in the Son—Lent
4. I believe in the Holy Spirit, Church—Easter

*Themes (central to each stage)*

1. God comes to us and speaks in His Word (Heb. 1:1-2; CCC 65)
2. The Almighty Lord (CCC 268-274): I am Who am (Ex. 3:14; CCC 206-209)
3. Jesus Christ is Lord (Ph. 2:6-11; CCC 446)
4. Love has been poured into our hearts (Rom. 5:5; CCC 733-736)

*Main Images (to elucidate themes; may be multiple per stage)*

1. Nativity
2. Baptism of the Lord
3. Crucifixion
4. Pentecost

*Resources*

1. Lectionary readings and corresponding CCC passages (as seen in the *Homiletic Directory*)
2. Bulletin blurbs
3. Preaching points from the Bishop at each stage
4. Weekly homilies from the Bishop
5. Podcast and posters
6. Central page for all resources on diocesan website
7. Prayer groups (established per parish)
8. Missionaries (established per parish: e.g. Legion of Mary)



**Stage 1: Advent/Christmas**

First Sunday of Advent (HD 80-86): God’s desire for Man

* Introit
	+ To you, I lift up my soul, O my God. In you, I have trusted; let me not be put to shame. Nor let my enemies exult over me; and let none who hope in you be put to shame
* Collect
	+ Grant your faithful, we pray, almighty God, the resolve to run forth to meet your Christ with righteous deeds **at his coming**, so that, **gathered** at his right hand, they may be worthy to possess the heavenly Kingdom.
* Preface I of Advent
	+ Two comings of Christ
	+ God’s plan from “long ago” our salvation
* Communio
	+ The Lord will bestow his bounty, and our earth shall yield its increase.
* Catechism
	+ CCC 1: God draws close to man
	+ CCC 671, 1130: "**Come**, Lord Jesus!"

**Reading I**

[Jer 33:14-16](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/jeremiah/33?14)

The days are coming, says the LORD, when **I will fulfill the promise** I made to the house of Israel and Judah. In those days, in that time, I will raise up for David a just shoot; he shall do what is right and just in the land. In those days Judah shall be safe and Jerusalem shall dwell secure; this is what they shall call her: “The LORD our justice.”

**Responsorial Psalm**

[Ps 25:4-5, 8-9, 10, 14](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/psalms/25?4)

R. (1b)  **To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.**
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,
   and for you I wait all the day.
R. **To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.**
Good and upright is the LORD;
   thus he shows sinners the way.
He guides the humble to justice,
   and teaches the humble his way.
R. **To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.**
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. **To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.**

**Reading II**

[1 Thes 3:12—4:2](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/1thessalonians/3?12)

Brothers and sisters: May the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we have for you, so as to strengthen your hearts, to be blameless in holiness before our God and Father  at **the coming of our Lord Jesus** with all his holy ones.  Amen.

Finally, brothers and sisters, we earnestly ask and exhort you in the Lord Jesus that, as you received from us how you should conduct yourselves to please God and as you are conducting yourselves you do so even more. For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

**Alleluia**

[Ps 85:8](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/psalms/85?8)

R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**
Show us, Lord, your love;
and grant us your salvation.
R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**

**Gospel**

[Lk 21:25-28, 34-36](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/luke/21?25)

Jesus said to his disciples: “There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on earth nations will be in dismay, perplexed by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will die of fright in anticipation of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. But when these signs begin to happen, stand erect and raise your heads because **your redemption is at hand**.

“Beware that your hearts do not become drowsy from carousing and drunkenness and the anxieties of daily life, and that day catch you by surprise like a trap. For that day will assault everyone who lives on the face of the earth. Be vigilant at all times and pray that you have the strength to escape the tribulations that are imminent and to stand before the Son of Man.”

**Homily Points**

1. Advent begins a new year of grace and favor
	1. Allows for preparation for “coming” of Christ
2. Readings are a bit shocking: trial, tribulation, persecution, death
	1. Two meanings of Advent
		1. First Coming of Christ (Christmas), saved till end of Advent
		2. Second Coming of Christ (Eschaton), first 3 Sundays
3. Both Comings of Christ spurred by God’s desire for man, to be with His sons and daughters
	1. CCC 1: “God, infinitely perfect and blessed in himself, in a plan of sheer goodness freely created man to make him share in his own blessed life. For this reason, at every time and in every place, God draws close to man. He calls man to seek him, to know him, to love him with all his strength. He calls together all men, scattered and divided by sin, into the unity of his family, the Church. To accomplish this, when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son as Redeemer and Saviour. In his Son and through him, he invites men to become, in the Holy Spirit, his adopted children and thus heirs of his blessed life”
	2. Benedict XVI, *Spe salvi*, 41, 44 on the Last Judgment as source of *hope,* for God is just
4. Now in Advent, we can first contemplate God’s desire to be with us
	1. Forms of Real Presence (Eucharist, Word, Priests, Faithful)
	2. This is great consolation after last two years of pandemic: God hears us and wants to be with us, to draw us to Himself
		1. We are not alone, for God in Heaven desires us to be with Him
		2. Introit and Collect for today are our prayer: we cry to God and ask to be gathered at His right hand
		3. The Second Coming, Gospel thus not the fright we initially think, but rather God coming to us to right all wrongs, to show us His love, to help us along the right path
		4. Therefore: Come, Lord Jesus!

Second Sunday of Advent (HD 87-95): Man’s desire for God

* Introit
	+ O people of Sion, behold, the Lord will come to save the nations, and the Lord will make the glory of his voice heard in the **joy of your heart**.
* Collect
	+ Almighty and merciful God, may no earthly undertaking hinder **those who set out in haste to meet your Son**, but may **our learning** of heavenly wisdom gain us admittance to his company.
* Preface I of Advent
	+ Christ’s glory and our lowliness
* Communio
	+ Jerusalem, **arise** and stand upon the heights, and **behold the joy which comes to you** from God.
* Catechism
	+ CCC 522: the prophets and the **expectation** of the Messiah

**Reading I**

[Bar 5:1-9](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/baruch/5?1)

Jerusalem, take off your robe of mourning and misery; **put on the splendor** of glory from God forever: wrapped in the cloak of justice from God, bear on your head the mitre that displays the glory of the eternal name. For God will show all the earth your splendor: you will be named by God forever the peace of justice, the glory of God’s worship.

Up, Jerusalem! stand upon the heights; look to the east and see your children gathered from the east and the west at the word of the Holy One, **rejoicing that they are remembered by God**. Led away on foot by their enemies they left you: but God will bring them back to you borne aloft in glory as on royal thrones. For God has commanded that every lofty mountain be made low, and that the age-old depths and gorges be filled to level ground, that Israel may advance secure in the glory of God. The forests and every fragrant kind of tree have overshadowed Israel at God’s command; for **God is leading Israel in joy by the light of his glory**, with his mercy and justice for company.

**Responsorial Psalm**

[Ps 126:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6.](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/psalms/126?1)

R. (3)  **The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy**.
When the LORD brought back the captives of Zion,
   we were like men dreaming.
Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
   and our tongue with rejoicing.
R. **The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.**
Then they said among the nations,
  “The LORD has done great things for them.”
The LORD has done great things for us;
   we are glad indeed.
R. **The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.**
Restore our fortunes, O LORD,
   like the torrents in the southern desert.
Those who sow in tears
   shall reap rejoicing.
R. **The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.**
Although they go forth weeping,
   carrying the seed to be sown,
They shall come back rejoicing,
   carrying their sheaves.
R. **The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.**

**Reading II**

[Phil 1:4-6, 8-11](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/philippians/1?4)

Brothers and sisters: I pray always with joy in my every prayer for all of you, because of your partnership for the gospel  from the first day until now. I am confident of this, **that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus**. God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer: that your love may increase ever more and more in knowledge and every kind of perception, to discern what is of value, so that you may be **pure and blameless for the day of Christ**, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

**Alleluia**

[Lk 3:4, 6](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/luke/3?4)

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

**Gospel**

[Lk 3:1-6](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/luke/3?1)

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the **word of God came to John** the son of Zechariah in the desert. John went throughout the whole region of the Jordan, proclaiming a **baptism of repentance** for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah: *A voice of one crying out in the desert: “****Prepare the way of the Lord****, make straight his paths. Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill shall be made low. The winding roads shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth, and* ***all flesh shall see the salvation of God****.”*

**Homily Points**

1. Compared to last week’s seemingly dark readings, this week’s are full of joy and hope
	1. Focus is on the promises given to those who trust in God
		1. To those who return His desire: God desires us, we desire Him.
2. This desire is at the heart of who we are
	1. Augustine: “You have made us for Yourself, O God, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You.”
	2. God, in making us, loves us, and love is meant to be returned. It is a dialog of love, two sides of the conversation
		1. God starts the conversation and waits for our response
3. The prophets of the Old Testament show that Israel was not responding, but God still sent them to try to speak to His people
	1. Baruch speaks of splendor, joy, light, glory—all things that await those who desire God above all else, who follow His ways
		1. We know from Israel’s history that this never happened. They constantly turned from God, did not listen, followed false gods
	2. St. Luke, however, shows the turning point in salvation history
		1. John the Baptist points to a new thing happening in the desert: God is starting a new conversation: “the word of God came to John”
			1. He prepares people to receive God—to see His salvation—through repentance for sin. He prepares for Jesus the Savior
4. In Jesus we see the full response to God that God has wanted since Adam and Eve
	1. Jesus becomes the bridge between God and man that was broken in the Garden of Eden by sin
		1. His perfect obedience to the Father is what makes it possible for us to return to the Father in Christ
		2. This obedience receives the rewards of these readings: splendor, joy, glory
			1. Because this obedience is born of desire for God and His ways, born of love, wants to “return love for love” (St. Bernard)
5. Ways to express and grow in desire for God
	1. Regular prayer, reading of Scripture (*lectio divina*)
	2. Confession and Communion
	3. Penance and Works of mercy

Third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete Sunday) (HD 87-95): God who comes to save

* Introit
	+ Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice. Indeed, **the Lord is near**.
* Collect
	+ O God, who **see** how your people faithfully await the feast of the Lord’s Nativity, **enable** us, we pray, to attain the joys of so great a **salvation** and to celebrate them always with solemn worship and glad rejoicing.
* Preface I of Advent
	+ Hope for the last day when Christ comes again
* Communio
	+ Say to the faint of heart: Be strong and do not fear. Behold, our God will come, and he will save us.
* Catechism
	+ CCC 523-524: John **prepares** the way for the Messiah
	+ CCC 430-435: **Jesus** the **Savior**

**Reading I**

[Zep 3:14-18a](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/zephaniah/3?14)

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.

**Responsorial Psalm**

[Is 12:2-3, 4, 5-6.](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/isaiah/12?2)

R. (6)  **Cry out with joy and gladness: for among you is the great and Holy One of Israel.**
God indeed is my **savior**;
    I am confident and unafraid.
My strength and my courage is the LORD,
    and he has been my **savior**.
With joy you will draw water
    at the fountain of salvation.
R. **Cry out with joy and gladness: for among you is the great and Holy One of Israel.**
Give thanks to the LORD, acclaim his name;
    among the nations make known his deeds,
proclaim how exalted is his name.
R. **Cry out with joy and gladness: for among you is the great and Holy One of Israel.**
Sing praise to the LORD for his glorious achievement;
    let this be known throughout all the earth.
Shout with exultation, O city of Zion,
    for great **in your midst
    is the Holy One of Israel!**
R. **Cry out with joy and gladness: for among you is the great and Holy One of Israel.**

**Reading II**

[Phil 4:4-7](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/philippians/4?4)

Brothers and sisters: Rejoice in the Lord always. I shall say it again: rejoice! Your kindness should be known to all. **The Lord is near. Have no anxiety at all**, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding  **will guard your hearts and minds** in Christ Jesus.

**Alleluia**

[Is 61:1 (cited in Lk 4:18)](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/isaiah/61?1)

R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**
The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring glad tidings to the poor.
R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**

**Gospel**

[Lk 3:10-18](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/luke/3?10)

The crowds asked John the Baptist, “What should we do?” He said to them in reply, “Whoever has two cloaks should share with the person who has none. And whoever has food should do likewise.” Even tax collectors came to be baptized and they said to him, “Teacher, what should we do?” He answered them, “Stop collecting more than what is prescribed.” Soldiers also asked him, “And what is it that we should do?” He told them, “Do not practice extortion, do not falsely accuse anyone, and be satisfied with your wages.”

Now the people were filled with expectation, and all were asking in their hearts whether John might be the Christ. John answered them all, saying, “I am baptizing you with water, but **one mightier than I is coming**. I am not worthy to loosen the thongs of his sandals. **He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire**. His winnowing fan is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn,  but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.” Exhorting them in many other ways, he preached good news to the people.

**Homily Points**

1. Our daily experience reminds us that we are sinners
	1. Our own actions, those around us, show that we are fallen creatures
	2. Important to recognize: self-knowledge and humility are the basis of holiness
2. This Gaudete Sunday reminds us that that is not the whole story
	1. The God Who desires us, Whom we desire, is in our midst as “mighty Savior”
		1. He rejoices over us, over His creation, that we may see His love and care for us
		2. He sends Jesus, Whose Name means “God saves” to be with us and to save us from sin
		3. Therefore Paul says we ought to rejoice too, not having any worry, fear, or anxiety
3. This is why John the Baptist was sent
	1. People couldn’t handle such a message without preparation
	2. He paves the way with repentance so Jesus can come with power: with the Holy Spirit and fire
		1. His saving grace is not only from externals, but from all those things within that keep us bound:
			1. Sins: Pride, greed, lust, envy, gluttony, anger, sloth
			2. Past events that have left our hearts and souls wounded
			3. Two years of pandemic stress
			4. Everything else that keeps us locked up and slaves to this world
4. Jesus is the Savior
	1. He is the one Who makes it possible to escape all the evils of this world
		1. Who frees us and brings us true salvation and life without end
	2. He is God among us
		1. Who turns away our enemies, burns the chaff of our lives, and renews us in His love
	3. This is why Isaiah says in the Communion antiphon: Say to the faint of heart: Be strong and do not fear. Behold, our God will come, and he will save us.
		1. Indeed, He has come. He has saved us. And so we rejoice!

Fourth Sunday of Advent (HD 96-109): God’s plan

* Introit
	+ Drop down dew from above, you heavens, and **let the clouds rain down the Just One**; let the earth be opened and bring forth a **Savior**.
* Collect
	+ Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord, your grace into our hearts, that we, to whom the **Incarnation** of **Christ** your **Son** was made known by the message of an Angel, may by his **Passion** and **Cross** be brought to the glory of his **Resurrection**.
	+ Preface II of Advent
		- Twofold expectation of Christ
		- Salvation history up to Nativity
* Communio
	+ Behold, a **Virgin shall conceive** and bear a son; and his name will be called **Emmanuel**.
* Catechism
	+ CCC 606-607, 2824: **the Son becomes incarnate to do the Father’s will**

**Reading I**

[Mi 5:1-4a](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/micah/5?1)

Thus says the LORD: You, Bethlehem-Ephrathah too small to be among the clans of Judah, **from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel**; whose origin is from of old, from ancient times. Therefore the Lord will give them up, **until the time when she who is to give birth has borne**, and the rest of his kindred shall return to the children of Israel. He shall stand firm and shepherd his flock by the strength of the LORD, in the majestic name of the LORD, his God; and they shall remain, for now his greatness shall reach to the ends of the earth; he shall be peace.

**Responsorial Psalm**

[Ps 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19.](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/psalms/80?2)

R. (4)  **Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved.**
O shepherd of Israel, hearken,
    from your throne upon the cherubim, shine forth.
Rouse your power,
    and come to save us.
R. **Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved.**
Once again, O LORD of hosts,
    look down from heaven, and see;
take care of this vine,
    and protect what your right hand has planted
the son of man whom you yourself made strong.
R. **Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved.**
May your help be with the man of your right hand,
    with the son of man whom you yourself made strong.
Then we will no more withdraw from you;
    give us new life, and we will call upon your name.
R. **Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved.**

**Reading II**

[Heb 10:5-10](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/hebrews/10?5)

Brothers and sisters: When Christ came into the world, he said: “Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but **a body you prepared for me;** in holocausts and sin offerings you took no delight. Then I said, ‘As is written of me in the scroll, behold, I come to do your will, O God.’“

First he says, “Sacrifices and offerings, holocausts and sin offerings, you neither desired nor delighted in.” These are offered according to the law. Then he says, “Behold, I come to do your will.” He takes away the first to establish the second. By this “will,”  we have been consecrated through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

**Alleluia**

[Lk 1:38](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/luke/1?38)

R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**
Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord.
May it be done to me according to your word.
R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**

**Gospel**

[Lk 1:39-45](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/luke/1?39)

Mary set out 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, “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.”

**Homily Points**

1. Good things are worth waiting for, worth preparing for
	1. Even thousands of years
	2. Since the Fall of man in the Garden of Eden, we had been waiting for God’s promise to be fulfilled
		1. He promised a Savior to crush the head of the devil
		2. But God played the long game, preparing the people for something greater than they could imagine
	3. For thousands of years, they had glimpses of what was to come
		1. God promised He Himself would come to shepherd His people (Ezekiel)
		2. He promised a Virgin would give birth (Isaiah)
		3. He sent prophets to proclaim a New Creation, Kingdom, Covenant (Isaiah, Jeremiah)
		4. Then…the prophecies stopped
			1. 500 year gap between last prophet (first reading today) and Christ
2. In this long waiting period, God was preparing His people, their hearts to receive the greatest gift: God Himself
	1. Not just His wonders and miracles but God Himself
		1. The waiting made them long for Him, pine for Him, try to draw near to Him
			1. He did the unthinkable: He drew near them them, to us, as one of us
3. The Incarnation of Jesus in the womb of Mary = Emmanuel, for God is with us (Communio)
	1. The people would never have considered this
	2. They only wanted, at times, a, earthly political savior
		1. God gave them a heavenly salvation from sin and death. (Introit)
		2. 1 Cor. 2:9. God is always doing more than we can ask or imagine
4. Here at the end of Advent we see this applies to us too
	1. The prophecies of old point to Jesus, Who comes to us here and now again at Christmas
		1. We too must prepare to receive Him
			1. Confession to prepare heart and grow in obedience to Father’s Will
			2. Prayer to prepare soul, especially Eucharistic Adoration, to pray with/to God-among-us
		2. In this last week before Christmas, above all, seek the Face of the Lord. Seek salvation, and not only gifts. Seek a relationship with Him!
			1. Then when He comes at Christmas/in our daily lives, we can greet Him joyfully, and welcome Him properly, like Elizabeth
5. Christ is coming at Christmas. He comes to bring you God. Are you ready?

Christmas (HD 110-119): “Holy Exchange”

* Introit (Mass during day)
	+ A child is born for us, and a son is given to us; his scepter of power rests upon his shoulder, and his name will be called Messenger of great counsel.
* Collect (Mass during day)
	+ O God, who wonderfully created the dignity of human nature and still more wonderfully restored it, grant, we pray, that we may **share in the divinity of Christ**, who humbled himself to share in our humanity.
		- Similar to mingling prayer for Chalice
* Preface III of Christmas
	+ **Exchange in Incarnation**
* Communio (Mass during day)
	+ All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.
* Catechism
	+ CCC 457-460: "**Why** did the Word become flesh?"

**Reading I**

[Is 52:7-10](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/isaiah52?7)

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings glad tidings, announcing peace, bearing good news, announcing salvation, and saying to Zion, “Your God is King!”

Hark! Your sentinels raise a cry, together they shout for joy, for they see directly, before their eyes, **the LORD restoring Zion**. Break out together in song, O ruins of Jerusalem! For the LORD comforts his people, he redeems Jerusalem. The LORD has bared his holy arm in the sight of all the nations; all the ends of the earth will behold the salvation of our God.

**Responsorial Psalm**

[Ps 98:1, 2-3, 3-4, 5-6.](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/psalms/98?1)

R. (3c)  **All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.**
Sing to the LORD a new song,
   for he has done **wondrous deeds**;
his right hand has won victory for him,
   his holy arm.
R. **All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.**
The LORD has made his salvation known:
   in the sight of the nations he has revealed his justice.
He has remembered his kindness and his faithfulness
   toward the house of Israel.
R. **All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.**
All the ends of the earth have seen
   the salvation by our God.
Sing joyfully to the LORD, all you lands;
   break into song; sing praise.
R. **All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.**
Sing praise to the LORD with the harp,
   with the harp and melodious song.
With trumpets and the sound of the horn
   sing joyfully before the King, the LORD.
R. **All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.**

**Reading II**

[Heb 1:1-6](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/hebrews/1?1)

Brothers and sisters: In times past, God spoke in partial and various ways to our ancestors through the prophets; in these last days, he has spoken to us through the Son, whom he made heir of all things and through whom he created the universe, who is the refulgence of his glory, the very imprint of his being, and who sustains all things by his mighty word. When he had accomplished purification from sins, he took his seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high, as far superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

For to which of the angels did God ever say: *You are my son; this day I have begotten you*? Or again: *I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me*? And again, when he leads the firstborn into the world, he says: *Let all the angels of God worship him.*

**Alleluia**

R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**
A holy day has dawned upon us.
Come, you nations, and adore the Lord.
For today a great light has come upon the earth.
R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**

**Gospel**

[Jn 1:1-18](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/john/1?1)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race; the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. A man named John was sent from God. He came for testimony, to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came to be through him, but the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, but his own people did not accept him.

**But to those who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to those who believe in his name, who were born not by natural generation nor by human choice nor by a man’s decision but of God. And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father’s only Son, full of grace and truth.**

John testified to him and cried out, saying, “This was he of whom I said, ‘The one who is coming after me ranks ahead of me because he existed before me.’” From his fullness we have all received, grace in place of grace, because while the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. The only Son, God, who is at the Father’s side, has revealed him.

**Homily Points**

1. Not the Gospel we were expecting
	1. The Nativity story was at other Masses
	2. This Gospel tells us what is happening “underneath” it all—the spiritual realities of the Nativity
2. At heart of Incarnation is what has been called the “Glorious Exchange” which contains the reasons why the Son of God took flesh (CCC 457-460)
	1. 457: The Word became flesh for us *in order to save us by reconciling us with God*, who “loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins”: “the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world”, and “he was revealed to take away sins”
	2. 458: The Word became flesh so *that thus we might know God’s love:* “In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.” “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”
	3. 459: The Word became flesh *to be our model of holiness:* “Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me.” “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me.” On the mountain of the Transfiguration, the Father commands: “Listen to him!” Jesus is the model for the Beatitudes and the norm of the new law: “Love one another as I have loved you.” This love implies an effective offering of oneself, after his example
	4. 460: The Word became flesh to make us “*partakers of the divine nature*”: “For this is why the Word became man, and the Son of God became the Son of man: so that man, by entering into communion with the Word and thus receiving divine sonship, might become a son of God.” (Irenaeus) “For the Son of God became man so that we might become God.” (Athanasius) “The only-begotten Son of God, wanting to make us sharers in his divinity, assumed our nature, so that he, made man, might make men gods.” (Thomas Aquinas)
3. Each of these aspects of the Glorious Exchange is present in the Nativity
	1. God now looks to humanity and sees His Son among us, making reconciliation even from the manger
	2. The Christ Child shows that God is willing to humble Himself to show us His great love: The Incarnation “made the One Who abides equal in eternity to the Father, equal to us in mortality, imposing the form of a servant on the Lord of the world; so that Bread itself would be hungry, Fullness would be thirsty, Strength would become weak, Health would be wounded, and Life would die!” (Augustine)
	3. The Christ Child shows that we must be like children to be holy, and we must love to the point of holding nothing back, trusting always in the Father as a child
	4. By taking human nature, God transforms it into a new creation. In Jesus, our humanity is redeemed in His flesh, we are touched by divinity
4. The power of Christmas makes all this possible
	1. Draw near to Christ in the manger. Ask Him for the grace to be a humble child of the Father, to be like God, to be full of the love we see in the eyes of the Infant Jesus

Holy Family (HD 120-122): God’s plan in family life

* Introit
	+ The shepherds went in haste, and found Mary and Joseph and the Infant lying in a manger.
* Collect
	+ God, who were pleased to give us the shining example of the **Holy Family**, graciously grant that we may imitate them in practicing the **virtues of family life** and in the bonds of **charity**, and so, in the joy of your **house**, delight one day in eternal rewards.
* Communio
	+ Our God has appeared on the earth, and lived among us.
* Catechism
	+ CCC 1655-1658, 2204-2206: the Christian family, a **domestic Church**
	+ CCC 2214-2233: **duties** of family members

**Reading I**

[Sir 3:2-6, 12-14](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/sirach/3?2)

God sets a father in **honor** over his children; a mother’s **authority** he confirms over her sons. Whoever **honors** his father atones for sins, and preserves himself from them. When he prays, he is heard; he stores up riches who **reveres** his mother. Whoever **honors** his father is gladdened by children, and, when he prays, is heard. Whoever **reveres** his father will live a long life; he who **obeys** his father brings comfort to his mother.

My son, take care of your father when he is old; grieve him not as long as he lives. Even if his mind fail, be considerate of him; revile him not all the days of his life; kindness to a father will not be forgotten, firmly planted against the debt of your sins—a house raised in justice to you.

**Responsorial Psalm**

[Ps 128:1-2, 3, 4-5.](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/psalms/128?1)

R. (cf. 1)  **Blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways.**
Blessed is everyone who fears the LORD,
   who walks in his ways!
For you shall eat the fruit of your handiwork;
   blessed shall you be, and favored.
R. **Blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways.**
Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine
   in the recesses of your home;
your children like olive plants
   around your table.
R. **Blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways.**
Behold, thus is the man blessed
   who fears the LORD.
The LORD bless you from Zion:
   may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem
   all the days of your life.
R. **Blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways.**

**Reading II**

[Col 3:12-21 or 3:12-17](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/colossians/3?12)

Brothers and sisters: Put on, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, **heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience**, bearing with one another and **forgiving** one another, if one has a grievance against another; as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do. And over all these put on **love**, that is, the bond of perfection. And let the **peace** of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you were also called in one body. And be **thankful**. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or in deed, **do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus**, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Wives, be subordinate to your husbands, as is proper in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and avoid any bitterness toward them. Children, obey your parents in everything, for this is pleasing to the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children, so they may not become discouraged.

**Alleluia**

[Col 3:15a, 16a](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/colossians/3?15)

R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**
Let the peace of Christ control your hearts;
Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.
R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**

**Gospel**

[Lk 2:41-52](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/luke/2?41)

Each year Jesus’ parents went to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, and when he was twelve years old, they went up according to festival custom. After they had completed its days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Thinking that he was in the caravan, they journeyed for a day and looked for him among their relatives and acquaintances, but not finding him, they returned to Jerusalem to look for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions, and all who heard him were astounded at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished, and his mother said to him, “Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety.” And he said to them, “Why were you looking for me? **Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?**” But they did not understand what he said to them. He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was **obedient** to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and favor before God and man.

**Homily Points**

1. God’s plan for the family
	1. God has a purpose and structure of the family
		1. Goes back to Genesis, confirmed by Christ’s relationship with the Church
		2. Best to follow God’s plan and not ours/the world’s
	2. The family is the following:
2. Image of the Trinity in the world
	1. A Christian family shows God’s love and power in everyday life
	2. Therefore must be loving and open to life
		1. Sacrificial for others out of love for God and them
3. Domestic Church
	1. The Church listens to Christ and follows Him, does not lead
		1. So too the family in regular prayer together
	2. The life and faith of the Church is present and shown in a Christian family
	3. Places no obstacles to fullness of the faith, to leading family and others to Christ
4. School of virtue
	1. Readings this week list many virtues:
		1. Obedience to authority of parents, caring and careful discipline/education of children, thanksgiving, peace, patience, *forgiveness*
			1. Above all: being about the Father’s business first (First Commandment)
		2. Family is a place to grow in holiness
		3. Home is the holy dwelling where saints are made
5. Aid of the Holy Family
	1. Perfect intercessors and examples
		1. They can and want to help you be holy families
		2. Seek their aid

Mother of God (HD 123): Obedience of faith

1. Introit
	1. Hail, Holy Mother, who gave birth to the King, who rules heaven and earth for ever.
2. Collect
	1. O God, who **through the fruitful virginity** of Blessed Mary bestowed on the human race the grace of eternal salvation, grant, we pray, that we may experience the intercession of her, **through whom we were found worthy** to receive the author of life, our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son.
3. Communio
	1. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and for ever.
4. Catechism
	1. CCC 527, 580, 1972: Jesus **submits to/perfects the Law**, frees from its restrictions

**Reading I**

[Nm 6:22-27](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/numbers/6?22)

The LORD said to Moses: “Speak to Aaron and his sons and tell them: **This is how** you shall bless the Israelites. Say to them: The LORD bless you and keep you! The LORD let his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you! The LORD look upon you kindly and give you peace! So shall they invoke my name upon the Israelites, and I will bless them.”

**Responsorial Psalm**

[Ps 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/psalms/67?2)

R. **(2a) May God bless us in his mercy.**
May God have pity on us and bless us;
may he let his face shine upon us.
So may your way be known upon earth;
among all nations, your salvation.
R. **May God bless us in his mercy.**
May the nations be glad and exult
because you rule the peoples in equity;
the nations on the earth you guide.
R. **May God bless us in his mercy.**
May the peoples praise you, O God;
may all the peoples praise you!
May God bless us,
and may all the ends of the earth fear him!
R. **May God bless us in his mercy.**

**Reading II**

[Gal 4:4-7](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/galatians/4?4)

Brothers and sisters: When the fullness of time had come, **God sent his Son**, born of a woman, born **under the law**, to **ransom those under the law**, so that **we might receive adoption as sons**. As proof that you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!” So you are **no longer a slave but a son**, and if a son then also an heir, through God.

**Alleluia**

[Heb 1:1-2](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/hebrews/1?1)

R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**
In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets;
in these last days, he has spoken to us through the Son.
R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**

**Gospel**

[Lk 2:16-21](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/luke/2?16)

The shepherds went in haste to Bethlehem and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known the message that had been told them about this child. All who heard it were amazed by what had been told them by the shepherds. And **Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart**. Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told to them.

When eight days were completed for his **circumcision**, **he was named Jesus, the name given him by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.**

**Homily Points**

1. At beginning of new year we have examples from Old Testament, Jesus, and Mary about what happens when we obey God
	1. Usual reminder: “obedience” comes from “hearing” first
		1. We hear God, Who is trustworthy, and therefore do what He says
2. Old Testament priests
	1. First reading shows that God tells them specifically how to bless, what words to use
		1. This results in God’s grace being given to the world!
		2. This happens all through Old Testament
			1. When Noah, Abraham, Moses, David obey God in faith, even when there are questions remaining, that obedience of faith allows
	2. Reminder here at beginning of year is to obey God that His grace may enter our lives
		1. Obey so we don’t put obstacles to His grace
3. Jesus
	1. St. Paul in second readings speaks about the obedience of the Son of God
		1. Father sent Him into this world and He obeyed
		2. This obedience, even to the laws of nature and the Old Testament Law, brought about redemption from sin
			1. More than this, we were transformed from slaves to sons and daughters, to heirs of the grace of God
	2. The obedience of Jesus the Son of God made our salvation possible
		1. Therefore we have our model of obedience in Him Who was like us in all but sin
4. Mary
	1. Today is not only New Year’s, but more importantly, the Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God
		1. Her obedience is what brought us Jesus (Collect)! So obviously an example of obedience leading to grace in the world
	2. More than this, we see that even though She had questions, she trusted
		1. The Gospel shows that She kept reflecting in Her Heart on all that God was doing
			1. This increases trust and allows for more obedience and therefore more grace
				1. It keeps deepening
		2. She also obeyed the Law of God
			1. Reminds us to obey Church Law and teaching, for God works through these and they show us Who He is and who we are
				1. As this preaching mission continues, we see all that we are to hear and obey
5. Resolve this day anew to listen to God, obey Him, and so allow grace to come to this world through your obedience of faith

Epiphany (HD 124-130): Witnessing to the Faith (Epiphany —> way of life)

1. Introit
	1. Behold, the Lord, the Mighty One, has come; and kingship is in his grasp, and power and dominion.
2. Collect (Mass during the Day)
	1. O God, who on this day **revealed** your Only Begotten Son to the **nations** by the guidance of a star, grant in your mercy that we, who know you already by **faith**, may be brought to **behold** the beauty of your sublime glory.
3. Preface: Christ the light of nations
	1. Theme of exchange continues (immortality given to our mortality)
4. Communio
	1. We have seen his star in the East, and have come with gifts to adore the Lord.
5. Catechism
	1. CCC 528: the Epiphany
	2. CCC 2466: Christ the **light of truth** to the nations

**Reading I**

[Is 60:1-6](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/isaiah/60?1)

Rise up in splendor, Jerusalem!  Your **light has come**, the glory of the Lord shines upon you. See, darkness covers the earth, and thick clouds cover the peoples; but **upon you the LORD shines**, and over you appears his **glory**. Nations shall walk by your light, and kings by your shining radiance. Raise your eyes and look about; they all gather and come to you: your sons come from afar, and your daughters in the arms of their nurses.

Then you shall be radiant at what you see, your heart shall throb and overflow, for the riches of the sea shall be emptied out before you, the wealth of nations shall be brought to you. Caravans of camels shall fill you, dromedaries from Midian and Ephah; all from Sheba shall come bearing gold and frankincense, and proclaiming the praises of the LORD.

**Responsorial Psalm**

[Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13.](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/psalms/72?1)

R. (cf. 11) **Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.**
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. Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.**
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. Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.**
The kings of Tarshish and the Isles shall offer gifts;
the kings of Arabia and Seba shall bring tribute.
All kings shall pay him homage,
all nations shall serve him.
**R. Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.**
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. Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.**

**Reading II**

[Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/ephesians/3?2)

Brothers and sisters: You have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace that was given to me for your benefit, namely, that the **mystery was made known to me by revelation**. It was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: that the Gentiles are coheirs, members of the same body, and copartners in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

**Alleluia**

[Mt 2:2](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/matthew/2?2)

R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**
We saw his star at its rising
and have come to do him homage.
R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**

**Gospel**

[Mt 2:1-12](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/matthew/2?1)

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, “Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his **star** at its rising and have come to do him homage.” When King Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. Assembling all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, He inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it has been written through the prophet: *And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; since from you shall come a ruler, who is to shepherd my people Israel.*” Then Herod called the magi secretly and ascertained from them the time of the star’s appearance. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search diligently for the child. When you have found him, bring me word, that I too may go and do him homage.”After their audience with the king they set out. And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was. They were overjoyed at seeing the star, and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. **They prostrated themselves and did him homage**. Then they opened their treasures and offered him **gifts** of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their country by **another way**.

**Homily Points**

1. Epiphany = manifestation, revelation
	1. Shown by the “light” (star) and “glory” throughout
	2. God’s glory breaks out of heaven as light and reveals to His people who He is
		1. First Reading: this light helps people to walk aright, according to His will
		2. Second reading: shows that all are called to be part of God’s family, all called to holiness and salvation
			1. In Christ, through the Gospel: means we must tell people the Good News
		3. Gospel: leads people to Christ
2. Epiphany leads to way of life
	1. First Reading: people told to rise in splendor—to imitate that glory which dawns upon them
	2. Gospel: magi offer gifts to Christ and their lives are changed—they leave by another way
	3. Collect shows implication for us:
		1. Allow the faith to guide our lives, not the world or personal desires, but above all faith
		2. Gives the goal of the beholding the “beauty of sublime glory”
3. Examine
	1. Consider areas of darkness, not illumined by light, in your life
		1. Why dark?
		2. How to bring the light?
	2. Make the effort like the wise men: leave by another way