



18 December 2018

CHRISTMAS NOVENA – Third Day

Year C

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 fulfillment 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.



INTRODUCTORY RITES



Entrance Antiphon

(To be recited only when no Entrance Hymn is sung.)

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

Greeting

P –The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all!
All –**And with your spirit!**

Penitential Act

P –Coming together as God's family on this third day of our Novena, with confidence let us ask the Lord's forgiveness. (Pause)

P –Lord Jesus, you are the righteous shoot of David who does what is just and right. Lord, have mercy!
All –**Lord, have mercy!**

P –Lord Jesus, you are the son of the Virgin foretold

by the prophet Isaiah.
Christ, have mercy!
All –**Christ, have mercy!**

P –Lord Jesus, you are our compassionate brother and fellow traveler.
Lord, have mercy!
All –**Lord, have mercy!**

P –May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life.
All –**Amen!**

Gloria

All –Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of

the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen!

Collect (Opening Prayer)

P –All-powerful God, we are oppressed and weighed down by the ancient yoke of sin. Grant that the birth of your only Son, so long awaited, yet always new, may deliver us and set us free.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever.
All –**Amen!**

LITURGY OF THE WORD



1st 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 Israelites 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 Ps 72

R –Justice shall flourish in his time, and fullness of peace for ever!

R. M. Velez

* **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. Amen! Amen!** **R.**

Gospel Acclamation

All—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 fulfill 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!

Homily

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, make us obedient to You!

C –For all Christians of all denominations: As we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus, may we ever more concentrate on what unites rather than on what divides us. Let us pray! **R.**

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, in the name of Jesus, the Lord.
All—Amen!

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST 

Preparation of the Gifts

P –Pray, brethren . . .
All—May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands, for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offerings

P –O Lord, let the sacrifice to be offered to your name make us acceptable to you, that we may share in the immortal life of your Son, who healed our mortal nature by his death.

Grant this through Jesus Christ our Lord.
All—Amen!

Preface of Advent II

P –The Lord be with you!
All—And with your spirit!
P –Lift up your hearts!
All—We lift them up to the Lord!

P –Let us give thanks to the Lord our God!
All—It is right and just!

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

For all the oracles of the prophets foretold him, the Virgin Mother longed for him with love beyond all telling, John the Baptist spoke of his coming and proclaimed his presence when he came.

It is by his gift that already we rejoice at the mystery of his Nativity, so that he may find us watchful in prayer and exultant in his praise.

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

All—Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest!

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!

Memorial Acclamation

P –The mystery of faith!
All—When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again!

COMMUNION RITE 

All—Our Father . . .
P –Deliver us, Lord . . .
All—For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever.

Sign of Peace

Breaking of the Bread

All—Lamb of God, you take away the sins of world: have mercy on us. (2x)
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: grant us peace.

Communion

P –Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the Supper of the Lamb.
All—Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon
(To be recited only when no Communion Hymn is sung.)
His name will be called Emmanuel, which means God-with-us.

Prayer after Communion

P –In this gathering of your Church, the living temple of your presence, may we find in your mercy, Lord, and so approach with fitting reverence the coming feast of our redemption.

Grant this in the name of Jesus our Lord.
All—Amen!

CONCLUDING RITES



P –The Lord be with you.
All—And with your spirit!
P –Bow your heads and pray for God’s blessing.
(Pause)
 May the Lord bless and protect in a special manner all the husbands and fathers here present. May they be a source of strength and unity for the entire family.

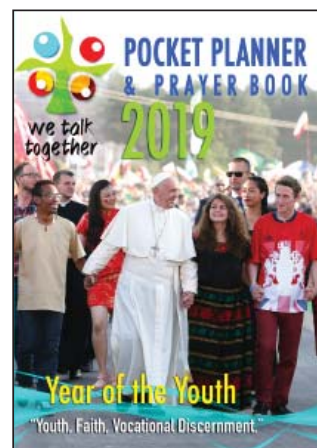
All—Amen!
P –May He keep all of you under His care.

All—Amen!
P –May He brighten your days with the splendor of His presence.

All—Amen!
P –May almighty God bless you: the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

All—Amen!
P –Go in peace to love and obey the Lord as St. Joseph did.
All—Thanks be to God!

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JOSEPH, A MAN OF FAITH

A dark cloud had brought trouble into the tranquil life of **Joseph**, the carpenter of Nazareth who was betrothed to Mary, the prettiest girl in the village. He had not yet taken her into his house, so the would-be bridegroom **was thrown into a deep crisis by the unexpected pregnancy of his fiancée**. For weeks he was torn between his love for Mary and the temptation to accuse her of infidelity and thereby see her condemned to be stoned, according to the provision of the Law. (See *Dt 23:24-25*.) He just could not understand how that “terrible thing” could have happened, nor was he able to come up with a quick-fix satisfactory solution.

Others would simply have gone ahead with a strict application of what the law mandated on the matter. Thus their wounded pride would have been avenged and other girls would have thought twice before betraying their fiancé But **Joseph was a considerate and wise person**. For sure, he prayed a lot. In the end he came up with what seemed to be the best solution, under the circumstances. **He** would neither marry nor accuse Mary, but **would simply dissolve his engagement “quietly,”** without stating the reason in public. He thought that such a solution was the least painful for all concerned.

But **God had a different plan** and brought it to the knowledge of the troubled young man through a dream: Joseph should not hesitate to

take Mary as his wife and to officially recognize the child as his own, for the baby she had conceived was the work of the Holy Spirit, and not of a man. (See *Mt 1:20-21*.) That entailed quite a change of plans!

Others would simply have ignored such a “dream.” Yet, **Joseph did not ask for further explanations. He did not ask for “a sign”** that might prove the divine origin of such an order. **In his deep faith, he said “Yes!” readily and immediately. He sacrificed his own plan, in order to embrace God’s plan.** He thereby became the husband of the holiest and most loving of all wives, and enjoyed the unique privilege of being called “Daddy” by the very Son of God!

We, too, may be troubled sometimes and experience a painful uncertainty as to what to do. We devise solutions which are not what God wants That’s the time for us to **pray for enlightenment**, as Joseph surely did. And we may be sure that the Lord will find ways and means to lead us to understand what He wants of us. Then it will be our turn to **humbly submit to His plan**, forgetting our own short-sighted solutions, and to **accept the role God has assigned to us** in His all-wise and saving plan. “You will never regret it!” Joseph assures us, and with very good reasons

Jess P. Balon

Advent/Christmas Trivia

SENDING CHRISTMAS CARDS

The custom of sending Christmas cards originated in **England** in the middle of the nineteenth century. Two individuals are credited with this “invention.” According to some, it was **William Egley**, an English artist who, in 1842, had the bright idea of designing a card to be sent to his friends on the occasion of Christmas. Others claim that the first one who made a Christmas Card was **John C. Horsely**, at the request of Sir Henry Cole, in 1846.

Whoever the originator, the use of such cards remained for many years a very limited pre-Christmas act of courtesy to communicate a Bible-inspired greeting among friends. The practice made a “quality leap” in 1875 when **Louis Prang**, a German printer who had migrated to the United States, decided to introduce the custom of sending Christmas cards to the American people. The idea caught fire immedi-

ately and in a short span of time assumed “American proportions,” till it became a worldwide phenomenon – the pre-Christmas feverish activity that we know. It has been computed that in the USA alone, every year an average of three billion Christmas cards are sent!

The preparation of Christmas cards is one of those seasonal activities that has stimulated the creativity of innumerable artists. A good number of them are real masterpieces and they do contain authentic religious messages. Many others, however, are just a reflection of the consumerist and hedonistic environment in which we live, and bear no reference to Christ’s birth, except in the greeting “Merry Christmas.”

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