

*2022 Advent Reflections from
the Villanova Community*





It is the hour now for you to awake from sleep. (Rom 13:11)

November 27, 2022

IS 2:1-5

SEE PS 122

ROM 13:11-14

MT 24:37-44

The first Sunday of Advent provides us with an opportunity to begin again. We can start a new or different prayer routine, or the ritual of lighting new candles on an Advent wreath, or the opening of secret doors and windows on an Advent calendar. These ways of marking the liturgical season point to the coming of Christ at Christmas and to his Second Coming. Whatever we find ourselves doing, the goal is to prepare ourselves.

The Second Reading for today's liturgy, from chapter 13 of St. Paul's Letter to the Romans, had a significant role in the conversion of St. Augustine. He read these lines after he heard the voice calling to him, "*Tolle lege*" ("Take up and read"). As we begin this season of preparation, let us take some time to reflect on this line: "It is now the hour for you to wake from sleep" (Rom 13:11).

—The Rev. **Joseph Farrell**, OSA, '85 VSB,
the Vicar General of the Augustinian Order

Is there an aspect in my life where I am being called to wake up, change and begin anew?

FIRST SUNDAY
OF ADVENT



The LORD's glory will be shelter and protection. (Is 4:6)

November 28, 2022

IS 4:2-6

SEE PS 122

MT 8:5-11

Worthiness is my goal in all I do, penetrating the way I pursue my grades and give of myself to friendships and family life. Usually, this desire is fruitful; however, having an unattainable standard of what it means to be worthy is not healthy. I am bound to sin, and when my end goal is being worthy, I am left feeling like a failure.

Today's Gospel from Matthew teaches us that true intimacy with Christ does not stem from our own worthiness at all. In fact, the Lord uses our inadequacy as an opportunity to show us just how much he loves us and desires to heal us. We must pray for the fortitude to approach Jesus rather than scorn ourselves amid personal failures, affirming, "Lord, I am not worthy" (8:8), while trusting that God will heal. It is this humble surrender, not our own worthiness, that defines faith.

—**Madison Matella** '25 FCN

MONDAY OF

THE FIRST WEEK

The next time you feel as though you are not good enough, will you cast out hope or turn to God with a humble heart, opening yourself to his love and mercy?



Blessed are the eyes that see what you see. (Lk 10:23)

November 29, 2022

IS 11:1–10

SEE PS 72

LK 10:21–24

In the turbulent times of the Assyrian threat to the nation of Israel, the prophet Isaiah speaks of a new Davidic leader upon whom “the Spirit of the LORD shall rest” (11:2). Embodying the seven traits of an ideal ruler—including wisdom, understanding and strength—this new representative of God will be an instrument of divine justice and blessing: “Justice shall flourish in his time, and fullness of peace forever” (see Ps 72:7).

While the prophecy of Isaiah provided hope to the nation of Israel, today it foretells the arrival of the Messiah, who personifies justice and faithfulness.

—**Ken Fleischer** ’13 MA, adjunct faculty,
Theology and Religious Studies

As we prepare for the celebration of the birth of Jesus, will we have the eyes to see what the disciples saw and the ears to hear what they heard?

TUESDAY OF

THE FIRST WEEK



The same Lord is Lord of all, enriching all who call upon him. (Rom 10:12)

November 30, 2022

ROM 10:9–18

SEE PS 19

MT 4:18–22

In today's Gospel, we learn that Andrew and Peter left their nets "at once" and followed Jesus. Likewise, James and John "immediately" left their boat and their father and followed him (Mt 4:20, 22). These disciples were open to receiving Jesus, and just at seeing him and hearing his simple invitation, they chose to follow him. They did not deliberate. They did not delay. They saw, they heard, they responded. Such was the strength of their faith and the power of their hope that Jesus would be their salvation.

As we enter into another Advent season, may we manifest the same spirit as Andrew, Peter, James and John by being attentive to Jesus' presence in our lives, by being receptive to his call and by living as people of hope, confident that, by following Jesus, we will have eternal life.

—**Sheila Williams** '91 CLAS, '95 JD

Can we allow the anticipation of Jesus' birth to inspire us to readily "lay down our nets" and heed his call?

FEAST OF

ST. ANDREW,

APOSTLE



The LORD is God, and he has given us light. (Ps 118:27)

December 1, 2022

IS 26:1-6

SEE PS 118

MT 7:21, 24-27

Jesus tells us in today's Gospel that we must do more than just listen to his words. We must act on his words and do the "will of my Father in heaven" (Mt 7:21).

He uses an analogy between a person "who built his house on sand" (v. 26) and someone "who built his house on rock" (v. 24) to illustrate his point. If we merely listen to Jesus' words without acting on them, we're just as foolish as one who builds a house on sand. We would be wise, then, to act on Jesus' words—a foundation of rock that supports us and enables us to withstand the rain, floods and winds that challenge us throughout our lives.

May we always remember and be confident that, as the prophet Isaiah says, "The LORD is an eternal Rock" (Is 26:4).

—**Gerald Dierkes**, Access and Collections Coordinator,
Falvey Memorial Library

THURSDAY OF

THE FIRST WEEK

How can I, with God's help, hear and act on the words of Jesus today?



Wait for the LORD with courage. (Ps 27:14)

December 2, 2022

IS 29:17–24

SEE PS 27

MT 9:27–31

The Gospel reading today is the simple story of Jesus' healing two people who are blind. They call out for Jesus' mercy and affirm their belief that he can heal them. With Jesus' touch, their eyes are opened. And though Jesus warns them to keep silent, they cannot help celebrating the good news of their healing and extolling the name of their healer.

Taken together with Psalm 27 and the verses from Isaiah 29, the Gospel reminds us that Advent—this season of watching and waiting—is also a time for new seeing. We are called to gaze on God's loveliness and to celebrate God's bounty. And this seeing is not just a spiritual gift, but an invitation to participate in God's work in our midst—the ending of tyranny, arrogance and shame—so that all people may find joy in God and dwell “in the land of the living” (Ps 27:13).

—The Rev. **Julia Sheetz**, PhD, Director of Multifaith Ministry

What am I being called to see in a new way in this Advent season?

FRIDAY OF

THE FIRST WEEK



Ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest. (Mt 9:38)

December 3, 2022

IS 30:19–21,
23–26

SEE PS 147

MT 9:35–10:1,
5A, 6–8

One need not look far to observe the burden of illness. In today's Gospel, Jesus cures the sick, giving us tangible, relatable evidence of his divinity. He is doing much more than curing the individual; he is healing the masses. To cure means to eradicate disease; to heal means a transfiguration of mind, body and soul to a state of improved being.

As physicians, we encounter incurable disease—ALS, Alzheimer's, glioblastoma. However, we play an important role by healing—imparting hope, understanding, support and care, all qualities that Jesus the Divine Physician embodied. Each of us can be a healer in our daily lives. By listening to a friend, sharing a meal with an older person living alone or being with someone in their time of need, we are healing more than any physician can cure. Let us be like Jesus, the Divine Physician, and be healers of our community.

—**Brian Emmert, MD, '15 CLAS**

What can you do today to heal someone? Where do you need healing in your life?

SATURDAY OF
THE FIRST WEEK

UNIVERSITY



May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to think in harmony. (Rom 15:5)

December 4, 2022

IS 11:1–10

SEE PS 72

ROM 15:4–9

MT 3:1–12

The birth of Christ was foretold by Isaiah, the psalmist and John the Baptist. Jesus is greater than any prophet. He is God, the Messiah who has come to judge with fairness and truth. His rule is like no other; only he can be the perfectly fair judge.

How blessed are we that we have a God who does not judge by appearance or hearsay, but with justice and faithfulness! But how often do we judge others in the same way? Can we be merciful as our God is merciful?

Christ models for us the way we are to treat others. As we come to know Christ and his attitude of love, we can ask for his grace to adopt this attitude as well. If we open our hearts to Jesus, then we can become more like him, as peace will reign in our hearts.

—**Melissa D. Gerding**, PMP, Director of Technology and Business Analysis, Enrollment Management

Whom do I need to see with eyes of mercy rather than judgment?

SECOND SUNDAY
OF ADVENT



They will meet with joy and gladness, sorrow and mourning will flee. (Is 35:10)

December 5, 2022

IS 35:1-10

SEE PS 85

LK 5:17-26

We are all waiting for something: A new job, the love of our life, a check to come in the mail. Or we hear people say, “I don’t know what I’m waiting for. I’m just ready for my life to start.” This deep hoping seems to align with a period of darkness in our lives. But the prophet tells us to “be strong, fear not! Here is your God ...; with divine recompense he comes to save you” (Is 35:4). He strengthens weak hands, opens the eyes of the blind and heals the land.

The world could use some saving right now. This wonderful reading reminds us that putting our faith in the Lord is the key to our salvation and eternal joy. I pray we all turn to the Lord in times of uncertainty and trust that He knows our hearts and will guide us to what is right.

—**Kenzie Gentile** '21 CLAS

How can you recommit to your faith this Advent? How can you show others the Lord’s great power and love?

MONDAY OF THE
SECOND WEEK



Though the grass withers and the flower wilts, the word of our God stands forever. (Is 40:8)

December 6, 2022

IS 40:1-11

SEE PS 96

MT 18:12-14

We know the usual metaphor of the parable of the Lost Sheep. God is the shepherd. We are the wayward sheep. He finds us, forgives us and brings us back. Rejoicing ensues. But what if there's another metaphor hiding in this story? What if instead we are the shepherd, managing a hundred things. What's the one thing that gets lost?

I think my lost sheep is prayer. It's easy for prayer to be ignored and neglected and lost among the other 99 things in my life that I think are important and need my attention.

We must be willing to make the choice to "leave the 99" to pray. To find a quiet place where the connection to God can happen. To rejoice at the reconnection that prayer creates. And to bring prayer back into the hundred things of the flock that is our life.

—**Michael Knab** '93 CLAS

TUESDAY OF THE
SECOND WEEK

What is the one thing getting lost in your life? How can you bring it back into the fold?



They that hope in the LORD will renew their strength. (Is 40:31)

December 7, 2022

IS 40:25-31

SEE PS 103

MT 11:28-30

In today's Gospel Jesus says to the crowds: "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest" (Mt 11:28).

How many of us are looking for "rest"? Stress is around us every day. Perhaps you have two exams this week, a lab report due and the onset of strep throat. Or you are managing young children, developing teenagers or aging parents. Maybe it's from the demands of the job, a troubled relationship or an endless to-do list. The stress is real, and we are "burdened."

It's easy to lose sight of Jesus' message: "Take my yoke upon you, ... and you will find rest for yourselves" (v. 29). I suggest you find a beautiful place to rest. (I find myself unburdened at the daily Mass in Corr Chapel.) Put this at the top of your list, and it will help with all your other tasks.

—**David W. Dinehart**, PhD, Professor,
Civil and Environmental Engineering

MEMORIAL,
ST. AMBROSE,
BISHOP

When life is causing you stress, can you find rest in Jesus?



*He chose us in him, before the foundation of the world,
to be holy and without blemish. (Eph 1:4)*

December 8, 2022

GN 3:9–15, 20

SEE PS 98

EPH 1:3–6, 11–12

LK 1:26–38

The angel Gabriel appears infrequently in the Bible but is clearly a powerful messenger. He comes to Mary and tells her, “Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus” (Lk 1:31).

Mary is confused and troubled by Gabriel’s words, as she is only betrothed to Joseph and not yet having relations with him. But Gabriel explains that she will conceive by the Holy Spirit and her role in salvation history is essential. Despite the heartaches that Mary could experience from being young, poor and pregnant out of wedlock, she responds yes to Gabriel’s message.

Today we might reflect upon the huge challenges Mary accepted. How can we be there for pregnant women and others in need? How can we ensure that all children are valued, protected and nurtured? If Mary could say yes, we, too, can say yes to the most vulnerable.

—**Dennis C. McAndrews**, Esq., ’75 CLAS, ’78 JD

To what is God inviting you to say yes?

SOLEMNITY OF

THE IMMACULATE

CONCEPTION



I, the LORD, your God, teach you what is for your good. (Is 48:17)

December 9, 2022

IS 48:17–19

SEE PS 1

MT 11:16–19

“If you could be like anyone, who would it be?” When asked this as a young child, I probably said a superhero. When I was a teenager, my answer might have been a famous singer. Now, my final answer is Jesus Christ. He came to show us how to live, how to serve and the way to God. To incorporate this goal into my daily life, I do three simple things.

Every morning, as soon as I open my eyes, I give thanks to our Heavenly Father for a new day filled with endless possibilities. Then, I ask for guidance during my day, saying, “Lord, lead the way.” Apparently, my way starts by taking out my eagerly awaiting dog. Finally, after we step out in the early morning breeze, among the trees and birds, I place my day in the hands of God by asking, “How may I serve today?”

—**Marlene Steuber**, Parent

FRIDAY OF THE
SECOND WEEK

How can you configure yourself to be more like Jesus today?



Like a fire there appeared the prophet Elijah whose words were as a flaming furnace. (Sir 48:1)

December 10, 2022

SIR 48:1-4, 9-11

SEE PS 80

MT 17:9A, 10-13

Today we hear about the prophet Elijah. The readings tell us that Elijah's "words were as a flaming furnace" (Sir 48:1). He used his words and performed "wondrous deeds" (v. 4) to spread God's message and to reveal God's might. God empowered him to be a prophet who practiced what he preached.

The symbol of fire, with its properties of light, heat and energy, is used throughout the Bible. When I read about Elijah, I think about how I can be a prophet of God—a positive energy in the lives of others. Advent is the perfect time for us to find ways to share God's message. Perhaps we can drop off canned goods at a food pantry or shovel snow for a neighbor. We are challenged and called to be God's prophetic messengers, whose actions and deeds will speak for themselves.

—Yolanda Semelsberger '96

SATURDAY OF THE
SECOND WEEK

How can you be a "fire" and spread God's message?



Make your hearts firm, because the coming of the Lord is at hand. (Jas 5:8)

December 11, 2022

IS 35:1-6A, 10

SEE PS 146

JAS 5:7-10

MT 11:2-11

The images of renewal in today's readings remind me of my experiences of family in 2022. My wife and I have a daughter, born prematurely, who is "the splendor of our God" (Is 35:2). She is seven months old, growing at her own pace in the way God deems it necessary for her happiness.

My mom and dad shed light, positivity and wisdom on their kids and grandchildren. Just as God sustains the fatherless and the widow (Ps 146:9), so my parents always offer hope.

My sister and brother-in-law show how to live by certain principles: Open your heart, and let faith win over fear. Lead by example. Be patient and have faith that fruit is growing, just as "the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth" (Jas 5:7).

These are the blessings, "the works of Christ" (Mt 11:2), that today's Gospel asks me to share with others.

—**Carmine Attanasio** '06 VSB

Where in your life have you seen the parched desert bloom (Is 35:1)?

THIRD SUNDAY
OF ADVENT



The power of the Most High will overshadow you. (Lk 1:35)

December 12, 2022

ZEC 2:14–17

SEE JDT 13

LK 1:26–38

God chose solidarity, opted to become one with us, to join us on the way to our destiny. God chose Mary, in her weakness and humility, having nothing to recommend her but her faith. Mary, in the eyes of many, was a “nobody.” Yet we honor her today as one who recognized her own dignity and respected the dignity of others.

Pride contradicts our call and mission to be God’s image and likeness. God came to Mary as one who proposes, not imposes. God is at our service, not at our throat. Jesus lived that way; he learned it from his mother.

No one enjoys the company of arrogant people who “know it all” and impose their points of view. Soon we will celebrate the great gift of God-with-us. Let us draw near in solidarity to all, with great humility, reaching out to those who have been left out.

—The Rev. **Arthur Purcaro**, OSA, PhD, ’72 CLAS,
Assistant Vice President, Mission and Ministry

Do you sometimes claim to know it all? How can you live with greater humility?

FEAST OF

OUR LADY OF

GUADALUPE



Look to him that you may be radiant with joy. (Ps 34:6)

December 13, 2022

ZEP 3:1–2, 9–13

SEE PS 34

MT 21:28–32

From today's readings we learn that God is always present in our lives and always transforming us. Often God is changing us from being conceited to being humble, reminding us that we are not the center of our world but, rather, one small part of it. "For then will I remove from your midst the proud braggarts. ... But I will leave as a remnant in your midst a people humble and lowly" (Zep 3:11).

Throughout our lives, God is listening to us. "When the poor one called out, the LORD heard, and from all his distress he saved him" (Ps 34:7). He is always there for us. We just have to open our hearts to hear Him.

—**Joyce E. A. Russell**, PhD, The Helen and William O'Toole Dean,
Villanova School of Business

TUESDAY OF THE
THIRD WEEK

Will you hear the Word of God and agree to serve Him? Are you tempted to listen only when it serves your personal interests?



Let the earth open and salvation bud forth. (Is 45:8)

December 14, 2022

IS 45:6C–8,
18, 21C–25

SEE PS 85

LK 7:18B–23

In the courtroom of my soul, I think of God as the just and merciful judge, and even as an advocate. But in today’s First Reading, God takes on the role of the witness, insistently presenting testimony that “I am God; there is no other!” (Is 45:22). The evidence of this divine sovereignty is all that God has created.

Jesus, too, must make his case when John the Baptist sends investigators to ask, “Are you the one who is to come?” (7:19). Rather than offer his own testimony, Jesus tells the emissaries to report what they have seen and heard—in short, to be his witnesses.

Today, may we see and bear witness to the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth: “There is no just and saving God but me” (Is 45:21).

—**Suzi Wentzel** ’14 MA, Director of Communication,
Mission and Ministry

Do others see you as a credible witness to God’s saving works?

WEDNESDAY OF
THE THIRD WEEK



You changed my mourning into dancing. (Ps 30:12)

December 15, 2022

IS 54:1-10

SEE PS 30

LK 7:24-30

Today's Gospel, which relates how "Jesus began to speak to the crowds" about their expectations around John the Baptist (Lk 7:24), has a powerful message that reminds me that sometimes I anticipate an experience or outcome that is the opposite of what reality is.

During Christmas, for example, I may find myself trying to figure out what the right gift will be for a family member or co-worker to show my appreciation. Perhaps, instead of getting myself caught up in buying the next shiny new object, being a loyal and caring friend, father and husband could be the great gifts I give others, not just during the Christmas season but throughout the year.

Jesus calls us to spread our gift of love to others. He is always there to take us back if we accept his invitation of love—a love that God assures us "shall never leave you" (Is 54:10).

—**Jerry Quinn '87** VSB

Do you allow the reality of God's unconditional love to shape your expectations?

THURSDAY OF
THE THIRD WEEK



Them I will bring to my holy mountain and make joyful in my house of prayer. (Is 56:7)

December 16, 2022

IS 56:1-3A, 6-8

SEE PS 67

JN 5:33-36

With each year that passes, I sometimes feel like it's impossible to change an aspect of myself that I wish were a little different. It's almost as if these habits become so solid that I conclude that "it just is what it is." And yet, I have also recognized that when I take the time to reframe that thinking a little differently to offer myself some glimmer of hope, it is then that I realize I can change at any age and at any time, especially with a support group around me.

Today's readings remind me not to shy away from whispering words of encouragement to myself and to others in an effort to be more present, understanding and hopeful. They remind me not to not let my worry be louder than my worship. And most important, they remind me that my actions will still speak louder than my words.

—**Patrick J. Gallagher** '06 VSB, Senior Director of Development,
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

FRIDAY OF THE

THIRD WEEK

How has God ignited you so that you could move through a rut? How can you create that same spark in others?



Of her was born Jesus who is called the Christ. (Mt: 1:16)

December 17, 2022

GN 49:2, 8–10

SEE PS 72

MT 1:1–17

Ancestry, tradition, and the power of names: Our readings today detail the hopes and blessings for future generations and the written history of lineage. Just as the line of Abraham is documented through fourteen generations, so too are we alive today through those that came before.

The culture of the holiday season finds us joining together with friends and family, yet it is through the traditions passed down that we bring all generations into the present. At the age of five, as I jubilantly ate my flounder during our Seven Fishes celebration on Christmas Eve, I learned how my sister's middle name and my own were crafted in homage to our two great-grandmothers. Not only do our holiday traditions hold special links to the past, but those around our table hold keys as well. We still pass along our hopes and prayers, as well as our names, to future generations.

—**Madeline A. Reynolds** '12 CLAS, Associate Director,
Honors Program

If you have family gatherings, how many generations are present? Can you name those who have gone before you? How have they allowed you to arrive at where you are now?

SATURDAY OF
THE THIRD WEEK



*The LORD's are the earth and its fullness; the world
and those who dwell in it. (Ps 24:1)*

December 18, 2022

IS 7:10-14

SEE PS 24

ROM 1:1-7

MT 1:18-24

Having hope is a lot harder than it seems. I often avoid talking to God about what is truly on my mind so that I won't get my hopes up and be disappointed. I see myself in Ahaz and his insistence that he does not want to bother God by asking for a sign. Masking his stubbornness with piety, Ahaz avoids vulnerability with God, opting instead to depend on himself.

Unlike Ahaz, Joseph has a simple yet profound faith. He trusts in a message he receives from God in a dream and responds to it. Even though he cannot see the full picture, Joseph is unafraid and believes that God is with him.

I am struck by what a simple thing it is to ask God about the hopes in my heart. Perhaps the most valuable thing I can do during Advent is to allow God to respond to these hopes.

—**Abigail Gorman**, Campus Minister
for Service and Justice Experiences

What hopes are you carrying? How might you invite God to respond to them?

FOURTH SUNDAY
OF ADVENT



On you I have depended since birth. (Ps 71:6)

December 19, 2022

JGS 13:2-7,
24-25A

SEE PS 71

LK 1:5-25

In both of today's readings, an angel announces that a barren woman will conceive a child (Samson and John the Baptist, respectively) who will be greatly blessed by God and who will play a significant part in God's plan of salvation. In both instances, God's goodness overflows—He offers more than what anyone could reasonably expect. God bestows fruitfulness and life where it seems none could be found. He confirms that these men, women and children have been individually chosen by Him to help Him complete His saving work.

These stories prepare us for the coming of Jesus—an unexpected child, the Son of God, destined to save us all from the darkness of sin.

—**Elizabeth-Jane McGuire**, PhD, Associate Teaching Professor,
Augustine and Culture Seminar Program

MONDAY OF THE
FOURTH WEEK

Do we recognize and rejoice that we are all personally chosen and blessed by God? Do we see God's individual love for each of us as a call to bring vitality and hope to those who seem to have none?



The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee. (Lk 1:26)

December 20, 2022

IS 7:10–14

SEE PS 24

LK 1:26–38

I think a lot about how we teach and learn in an era characterized by disruption and instability. Teaching and learning are intimate acts; they require us to give and receive from a place of trusted incompleteness. There is vulnerability in the taking in of something new, just as there is in the giving away of something sacred. To ask us to surrender our vulnerability when so much is unsettled can be, at best, challenging and, at worst, traumatic.

In today's Gospel, we see the pedagogy of surrender in the way Mary pauses, recognizes her feelings and engages her curiosity. We are given a road map that might help us as we strive to learn and live in our own disruptive era. It could teach us how to be open to each other while honoring our boundaries. In doing so, it might just prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ.

—**Lindsey B. Carfagna**, PhD, Director of Learning Experience Design, Office of Online Programs

TUESDAY OF THE
FOURTH WEEK

What do we gain by building space between the transmission and reception of the message? Where am I missing the message out of fear of violation or misuse?



Give thanks to the LORD on the harp. (Ps 33:2)

December 21, 2022

SG 2:8–14

SEE PS 33

LK 1:39–45

In the First Reading, a curious (and confident) character beckons another to come out from behind self-constructed and imposed barriers. Today’s alternative reading (Zep 3:14-18a) reminds us that when we heed such a call—when, for love, we risk even physical safety—we step away from judgment and fear and into freedom. Mary made this choice, and today’s Gospel highlights the first gift of safety and acceptance she experienced in a time when she was greatly troubled.

Overwhelmingly, these readings engage our experience of embodiment, highlighting the power of the human voice and demonstrating our need for the support, acceptance and love found in community. One of the most unique gifts given to humanity is our ability to intentionally make music. Thank God we are able to respond to the Incarnation in such a way and to “sing to him a new song” (Ps 33:3)!

—**Sean McElwee** ’15 MA, Campus Minister for Liturgical Music

How am I being called to make “new” the song I sing this day?

WEDNESDAY OF
THE FOURTH WEEK



The Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name. (Lk 1:49)

December 22, 2022

1 SM 1:24–28

SEE 1 SM 2

LK 1:46–56

Today we encounter stories of rejoicing in the goodness of God. Beginning with Hannah, we see a mother giving back to God the child for whom she has prayed ardently, celebrating the gift of her son, Samuel. Our responsorial continues with Hannah's words, praising the goodness of the Lord. These words are then echoed in our Gospel, through Mary's Magnificat.

This set of readings almost seems counterintuitive. When we receive a gift, we expect to keep it. It's ours, after all! But the responses of Hannah and Mary show what we ought to do when blessed: Share that gift with the world. Samuel and Jesus each carried out his mission. Through Samuel, the reign of David came to be. Through Christ, salvation came to be.

In this season of giving gifts, we should remember the ways in which God blesses us each day and share those blessings with the world.

—**Dane Litchfield**, Graduate Student, Theological Studies

How can you put forth and share with the world the blessings you have received?

THURSDAY OF THE
FOURTH WEEK



He guides the humble to justice. (Ps 25:9)

December 23, 2022

MAL 3:1-4,
23-24

SEE PS 25

LK 1:57-66

When I was a Boy Scout, I remember my scoutmaster reinforcing our motto: Be prepared.

Today's readings remind us of the need to prepare our hearts for Christ, even if Christmas is just two days away. Just as John the Baptist came to prepare the Jewish people for the Messiah, Advent offers us the time to prepare for Christ to come more deeply into our souls. We need to use these last days of Advent to focus on that preparation. The prophet Malachi speaks of the "great and terrible day" when the Lord will come (3:23). Christ is waiting for us to be ready. The Responsorial Psalm exhorts us all: "Lift up your heads and see; your redemption is near at hand."

Let us today be prepared for Christ. He is ready to enter our hearts. May we be ready and open our all to Christ.

—**Matthew Nawn** '26 COE

If Christ were to come into my midst today, would I be ready? How can I seriously prepare myself for Christ, even during the chaos leading up to Christmas?

FRIDAY OF THE
FOURTH WEEK



He has raised up for us a mighty Savior, born of the house of his servant David. (Lk 1: 69)

December 24, 2022

2 SM 7:1-5,
8B-12, 14A, 16

SEE PS 89

LK 1:67-79

King David opens today's passage with an exclamation: "Here I am living in a house of cedar, while the ark of God dwells in a tent!" (2 Sm 7:2). With God's help, David has brought order to Israel and "settled into his palace" (v. 1), enjoying all the comforts that come with it. His next concern is providing that same comfort to God's own self. God, unconcerned with earthly homes, responds by promising David that "your house ... shall endure forever" (v. 16).

What kind of home is "good enough" for God's divine presence? Any home. Every home. No house is too dark, too empty or too cold for God's presence. In fact, God sends us to those neighbors among whom we would never think to venture ourselves and charges us to love them, regardless of their earthly homes. And wherever love dwells, it is there we will find God.

—**Liz Remelius**, Program Coordinator,
College of Professional Studies

How welcoming is your heart as a home in which God can dwell?

SATURDAY OF THE
FOURTH WEEK

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone. (Is 9:1)



Merry Christmas!

**MISSION &
MINISTRY**