



NOVENA OF PREPARATION
FOR *Christmas*

with
ST. HANNIBAL MARY DI FRANCIA





Imprimi Potest:

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Rogationists of the Heart of Jesus - St. Matthew Province

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O God-child,
Your sons and daughters on their part
Offer you a crown
along with their heart
And the flowers of the town.
Kneeling at your feet,
Your blessing they entreat.

- St. Hannibal Mary Di Francia
“Prayer to the Child Jesus”



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FOREWORD

“... Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means “God is with us.”

- Matthew 1:22-23

May the Christ Child be born in our hearts!

Whenever we look upon a Nativity scene, it evokes within us how God wishes to stay with us. Christ’s Incarnation was possible because of God’s love. This is where we remember our identity and dignity, especially whenever we find ourselves lost and confused. In Christ’s birth, we proclaim our faith that we have a God who continues to reach out to us and not to leave us alone.

Fall in love with Christ – this is one of the greatest wisdoms that St. Hannibal Mary Di Francia handed on to us his spiritual sons and daughters. Everything must begin with and culminate in Christ. Our lives must have Christ as the center and reference. This is where we properly grow as persons.

Because of this, St. Hannibal was inspired to write one of his precious “spiritual industries” that the Rogate Family practices today. The “Novena of Preparation for Christmas” reimagines a preparation of Christ’s birth through the help of symbolisms that reminds us of the power of Christ’s presence into our lives. Our resolve to be holy and genuinely happy.

I am happy that the Provincial Rogate Vocation Center was able to prepare a New Edition for all of us to use especially in preparation for Christmas. May it be of great help for you, your families, and friends, as St. Hannibal accompanies us to receive Jesus Christ who was born in the manger, and who will be born into our hearts.

Cordially, in Christ Child,

FR. ORVILLE R. CAJIGAL, RCJ

Provincial Superior

Rogationists of the Heart of Jesus – St. Matthew Province





Introduction

Father Hannibal was very tender toward the child Jesus. In Christmas time, when we went to visit the baby Jesus in the manger, (which he wanted in each house), he joined us. Then we had to sing the song by Saint Alphonus: "I love you so much." His voice sprang from his heart without respecting the value and the tune, because his poetic ear is so sensitive to poetry that it had no gift for song.

At the end of the Christmas feasts, on February 2, he carried the baby Jesus in procession and in between prayers and songs he cheered him with acclamations such as these: "*Long live the baby Jesus... the incarnate word of the Father... the son of Immaculate Mary... the delight of our hearts... the lover of our hearts...*" The string of acclamations was more or less long and all the people repeated them, clapping their hands.

Fr. Hannibal conceived a special novena for the preparation of Christmas. On the morning of December 16, we were awakened

by the sound of the harmonium and, when possible, of bagpipes, intoning at once the “You are descending from the stars” while the sacristan was busy preparing the lamps: it was called the “novena of the nine lamps”.

During the novena the poor were remembered in a particular way. Therefore, during the meals, everyone used to renounce all or part of his fruits, which were gathered and distributed to the poor on Christmas eve.

Then there are items to be prepared; the cradle, the little mattresses, the little pillow, etc. Perhaps this preparation was traditional in Sicily, because I found, many years ago, an old booklet of prayers, dating back to the first half of the last century, which dealt precisely with similar preparations.

But the Father impressed the mark of his geniality upon them. He was not contented, for example, with the cradle; he intended it in a particular manner: it should be made of wood so pleasing to Jesus taken partially from the olive tree of Gethsemane, and partially from the tree to be used for the altar of Christ’s sacrifice and of our salvation.

There were, then, the special practices to do; a prayer, a penance, a good work, etc. Each day had its Saint protector and an invocation to be repeated at every community act.

On Christmas night we used also to make a threefold offering to the Child Jesus:

1. All the items for the stable of Bethlehem, prepared during the novena, to comfort the sufferings of the Child Jesus.
2. Our hearts – we used to prepare many paper hearts on which we wrote our affections, resolutions, requests for graces, etc. – so

that the little Child would place them within his most gentle Heart and wound them with eternal love for Him.

3. A new corporal, – imploring the Child to make our heart pure and bright like the sacred linen, limpid and clean from any stain, so that He could find in our hearts the perfume of his virtues and his dwelling.

- A Testimony by Fr. Teodoro Tusino, RCJ
The Father's Soul, pp. 237-238





Preparation for the Birth of the Child Jesus

We will fly back, in our mind, on the wings of the immense virtue of faith, to the time when nine days were lacking for the Word Incarnate to be born on earth. We will do as if at that time we would have had already the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ that we have today.

We will hasten to visit the stable of Bethlehem, where Jesus is going to be born. Seeing it so inadequately furnished, and considering the suffering and poverty in which the Son of God would have to be born for love of us, we will hasten to prepare the things He would mostly need, so that in being born He would have not to suffer, but be comforted by our pious care and love, though shabby they may be.

We will do all these preparations, beseeching Him that, when He is going to be born, He may be born from the immaculate womb of His Mother not only in the manger of Bethlehem, but also in our hearts. Therefore, in this novena we will have to prepare our hearts for Him by purifying them of all sin, adorning them with beautiful flowers through these and other exercises of piety, especially with fervent acts of love and with daily Holy Communion.

These preparations are to be done with living faith and devotion, so that items prepared for the little Child-God may be perfect, and he may not find them incomplete and uncomfortable, worse than the stable He experienced. We will pray the Most Holy Virgin and the Patriarch St. Joseph to help us in accomplishing successfully these works and in making these devout preparations in a holy manner.



1st day The Promise



GREETINGS AND WELCOME

Celebrant: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit

All: Amen.

Celebrant: Let us give thanks to God Almighty who was, who
is and who is to come. Peace be to you who wait
for his salvation in Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: Dear brothers, we are here to prepare ourselves
to welcome Christ who is coming. We wait for Him
in fervent prayer. His coming has been announced
to us by God the Father through the prophets,
whose voice has resounded along the ages.
Let us listen to this message, let us open
our hearts to the greatest hope.

CANTICLE OF THE PROPHECIES

Refrain: Come, let us adore Christ the Savior
 Rise, daughter of Zion,
 shout for joy, daughter of Jerusalem!

Soon your Lord will come,
a bright light will dawn,
the mountains will give forth sweetness
for the great prophet will come to us to renew Jerusalem.
(Refrain)

Soon God will come among his own:
a man of the house of David will mount his throne.
You will see him, and your hearts will overflow with joy.
(Refrain)

Soon the Lord will come,
our shield, the Holy One of Israel;
the crown of his kingdom will be on his head.
He will extend his dominion from sea to sea,
from the great river to the ends of the earth.
(Refrain)

The Lord God will descend like dew upon the fleece;
in his days justice will triumph and infinite peace.
All the kings of the earth will come to adore him,
all the peoples will serve him alone.
(Refrain)

From you, Bethlehem, city of God most High,
from you will come the Ruler of the Israel.
He will spring from the eternal God
and show his glory all over the earth.
his coming will set forth peace among us forever.
(Refrain)

ANTIPHONS, PSALMS, AND CANTICLE OF THE DAY

LITURGY OF THE LIGHT

The first light of the nine lamps is lit, to indicate “vigilance in waiting” (Mt. 25:1-12) while the following song, or similar one is sung: *A light is about to shine for us on earth, soon Jesus will come among us. Be awoken, the spouse will not delay, if you are ready, he will open to you. Joyfully sing glory to the Lord! The Redeemer will be born for us!*

FIRST READING

From the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah (31:7-9):

For thus says the Lord: Shout with joy for Jacob, exult at the head of the nations; proclaim your praise and say: The Lord has delivered his people, the remnant of Israel. Behold, I will bring them back from the land of the north; I will gather them from the ends of the world, with the blind and the lame in their midst, the mothers and those with child; they shall return as an immense throng. They departed in tears, but I will console them and guide them; I will lead them to brooks of water, on a level road, so that none shall stumble. For I am a father to Israel, Ephraim is my first-born.

SONG OF MEDITATION

SECOND READING

From the Gospel according to St. Luke (4:16-21):

Jesus came to Nazareth where he had been reared, and entering the synagogue on the sabbath as he was in the habit of doing, he stood up to do the reading. When the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed him, he unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written: “The spirit of the Lord is upon me; therefore he has anointed me. He has sent me to bring glad tidings to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives, recovery of sight to the blind and release to prisoners, to announce a year of favor from the Lord.” Rolling up the scroll he gave it back to the assistant and sat down. All in the synagogue had their eyes fixed on him. Then he began by saying to them, “Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.”

CHRISTMAS PREPARATION

A *cradle* is carried to the altar, while singing a Christmas song.

All: O Immaculate Virgin Mary, O venerable Saint Joseph, we beg your help in preparing all the items needed for the nearing natal day of the Incarnate Word in the stable of Bethlehem. He desires to find hearts which welcome, clothe, warm and comfort Him.

In the stable of Bethlehem we plan to prepare a cradle, made of the wood of the olive trees of Gethsemane, and of the tree that will later be used in making the altar of Christ's sacrifice for our salvation.

Lector: The cradle will be prepared in this way: by making a corporal penance, through uniformity to the will of God in the unfavorable events of the day; and by reciting a prayer to Jesus Crucified.

PROTECTOR SAINT

Lector: St. John the Baptist,
All: pray for us.

INVOCATION

Come to our hearts, Child Jesus, we long for you.

Homily of the Celebrant, when it is possible.

CANTICLE OF MARY

Antiphon: O Lord of earth and peoples,
come, break the yoke of our ancient slavery.

INTERCESSIONS

Celebrant: Let us direct our prayer to the Father who from all eternity has prepared a plan of salvation for us. Let us ask Him to fulfill also today His promise through the work of his Son Jesus:

We beseech you, hear us, O Lord.

+ That the Gospel be announced to all men; may they know that God loves them and that Jesus came to bring salvation, we pray:

+ For Christians, and all men of good will, that they may always be ready and available to accomplish the works of salvation which manifest the goodness of the Father to the world, we pray:

+ For us present here, that we may know how to recognize the signs of the coming of the Lord in our midst, and to welcome them as the fulfillment of His promises, we pray:

OUR FATHER

PRAYER

Lord our God, manifest your power and help us with Your strength; may Your love conquer our sinful resistance and hasten the moment of salvation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING WITH THE HOLY BIBLE

Celebrant: May the serene countenance of the heavenly grace descend upon you, and the coming of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, enlighten you.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: Christ wanted to be born of the Virgin Mary. May he never leave your hearts.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: May the Lord Jesus dwell always in your heart with the Father and Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: And may the blessing of the Almighty God, the Father, the Son + and the Holy Spirit, descend upon you, and remain with you forever.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: Go in peace.

All: Thanks be to God.

FINAL SONG



2nd day

The Expectation



GREETINGS AND WELCOME

Celebrant: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit

All: Amen.

Celebrant: Let us give thanks to God Almighty who was, who
is and who is to come. Peace be to you who wait
for his salvation in Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: Dear brothers, the day is approaching,
when the Father, faithful to his promises,
is going to give us the Savior.
Though we became sinners in Adam,
we will be readmitted among the people of God.
Let us open our hearts to receive
the joyful announcement of the coming of Jesus.

CANTICLE OF THE PROPHECIES

Refrain: Come, let us adore Christ the Savior
 Rise, daughter of Zion,
 shout for joy, daughter of Jerusalem!

Soon your Lord will come,
a bright light will dawn,
the mountains will give forth sweetness
for the great prophet will come to us to renew Jerusalem.
(Refrain)

Soon God will come among his own:
a man of the house of David will mount his throne.
You will see him, and your hearts will overflow with joy.
(Refrain)

Soon the Lord will come,
our shield, the Holy One of Israel;
the crown of his kingdom will be on his head.
He will extend his dominion from sea to sea,
from the great river to the ends of the earth.
(Refrain)

The Lord God will descend like dew upon the fleece;
in his days justice will triumph and infinite peace.
All the kings of the earth will come to adore him,
all the peoples will serve him alone.
(Refrain)

From you, Bethlehem, city of God most High,
from you will come the Ruler of the Israel.
He will spring from the eternal God
and show his glory all over the earth.
his coming will set forth peace among us forever.
(Refrain)

ANTIPHONS, PSALMS, AND CANTICLE OF THE DAY

LITURGY OF THE LIGHT

The second of the nine lamps is lit, to indicate “vigilance in waiting”(Mt. 25:1-12) while the following song, or similar one is sung: *A light is about to shine for us on earth, soon Jesus will come among us. Be awoken, the spouse will not delay, if you are ready, he will open to you. Joyfully sing glory to the Lord! The Redeemer will be born for us!*

FIRST READING

From the book of the Prophet Isaiah (64:2-4; 6b; 7-8a)

While you wrought awesome deeds we could not hope for, such as they had not heard from of old. No ear has ever heard, no eye has ever seen, any God but you doing such deeds for those who wait for him. Would that you might meet us doing right, that we were mindful of you in our ways! Behold, you are angry, and we are sinful. For you have hidden your face from us and have delivered us up to our guilt. Yet, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay and you are the potter: we are all the work of your hands. Be not so very angry, Lord, keep not our guilt forever in mind.

SONG OF MEDITATION

SECOND READING

From the first letter to the Corinthians (1:4-9)

I continually thank my God for you because of the favor he has bestowed on you in Christ Jesus, in whom you have been richly endowed with every gift of speech and knowledge. Likewise, the witness I bore to Christ has been so confirmed among you that you lack no spiritual gift as you wait for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will strengthen you to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus [Christ]. God is faithful, and it was he who called you to fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

CHRISTMAS PREPARATION

A *little mattress* is brought to the altar, while singing a Christmas song.

All: O Immaculate Virgin Mary, O venerable Saint Joseph, we beg your help in preparing all the items needed for the nearing natal day of the Incarnate Word in the stable of Bethlehem. He desires to find hearts which welcome, clothe, warm and comfort Him.

In the stable of Bethlehem we plan to prepare a little mattress, made of the purest wool of lambs without blemish.

Lector: The little mattress will be prepared with an act of contrition and with the renewal of the Baptismal promises.

PROTECTOR SAINT

Lector: St. Gabriel the Archangel,
All: pray for us.

INVOCATION

O divine Child, may we realize how much you love us.

Homily of the Celebrant, when it is possible.

CANTICLE OF MARY

Antiphon: O Wisdom, O holy Word of God, you govern all creation with your strong yet tender care.
Come and show your people the way to salvation.

INTERCESSIONS

Celebrant: While ardently awaiting the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ, let us implore insistently His mercy. May He who is faithful to His promises, save those who await Him today. Let us say with faith: *May your Kingdom come, O Lord.*

+ That the Church may always be a faithful dispenser of the gifts of the Word, Sacraments and evangelical witness, so as to support the fidelity of the Christians, let us pray:

+ For all men and women searching for God with sincere hearts: may their waiting for the manifestation of the Lord give sense to their life, let us pray:

+ For us present here, that we may not remain indifferent to the listening to the Word of God, but accept it as a gift to be lived in our life, let us pray:

OUR FATHER

PRAYER

Lord, our God help us to be ready in waiting Christ, Your Son: when He comes and knocks at our door, may He find us vigilant in prayer and joyful in praise. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING WITH THE HOLY BIBLE

Celebrant: With the mystery of His incarnation the Lord Jesus showed the glory of His divinity to the world.
May His coming restore us to life.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: The Lord took upon Himself our infirmities.
May He grant us His mercy.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: With this His coming in humility the Lord redeems us from sin. May He keep us immune from all guilt for His final coming.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: And may the blessing of the Almighty God, the Father, the Son + and the Holy Spirit, descend upon you, and remain with you forever.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: Go in peace.

All: Thanks be to God.

FINAL SONG



3rd day
*From Darkness
into Light*



GREETINGS AND WELCOME

Celebrant: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit

All: Amen.

Celebrant: May the Lord who is coming to visit his people in
peace, be with you all.

All: And with your spirit.

Celebrant: Brothers, in these days the Savior is knocking at the
door of all the souls, at times in a sensible way
and at times in a hidden one. On the first Christmas
of history Christ was not received by His own
people. Urged by His infinite love, He returns also
today knocking and asking us a place for Him.

CANTICLE OF THE PROPHECIES

Refrain: Come, let us adore Christ the Savior
 Rise, daughter of Zion,
 shout for joy, daughter of Jerusalem!

Soon your Lord will come,
a bright light will dawn,
the mountains will give forth sweetness
for the great prophet will come to us to renew Jerusalem.
(*Refrain*)

Soon God will come among his own:
a man of the house of David will mount his throne.
You will see him, and your hearts will overflow with joy.
(*Refrain*)

Soon the Lord will come,
our shield, the Holy One of Israel;
the crown of his kingdom will be on his head.
He will extend his dominion from sea to sea,
from the great river to the ends of the earth.
(*Refrain*)

The Lord God will descend like dew upon the fleece;
in his days justice will triumph and infinite peace.
All the kings of the earth will come to adore him,
all the peoples will serve him alone.
(*Refrain*)

From you, Bethlehem, city of God most High,
from you will come the Ruler of the Israel.
He will spring from the eternal God
and show his glory all over the earth.
his coming will set forth peace among us forever.
(*Refrain*)

ANTIPHONS, PSALMS, AND CANTICLE OF THE DAY

LITURGY OF THE LIGHT

The third of the nine lamps is lit, to indicate “vigilance in waiting” (Mt. 25:1-12) while the following song, or similar one is sung: *A light is about to shine for us on earth, soon Jesus will come among us. Be awoken, the spouse will not delay, if you are ready, he will open to you. Joyfully sing glory to the Lord! The Redeemer will be born for us!*

FIRST READING

From the book of the Prophet Isaiah (9:1-2, 5-6)

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone. You have brought them abundant joy and great rejoicing, as they rejoice before you as at the harvest, as men make merry when dividing spoils. For a child is born to us, a son is given us; upon his shoulder dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace. His dominion is vast and forever peaceful, from David’s throne, and over his kingdom which he confirms and sustains by judgment and justice, both now and forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this!

SONG OF MEDITATION

SECOND READING

From the letter of St. Paul to the Romans (13:11b-14)

It is now the hour for you to wake from sleep, for our salvation is closer than when we first accepted the faith. The night is far spent; the day draws near. Let us cast off deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us live honorably as in daylight; not in carousing and in drunkenness, not in sexual excess and lust, not in quarreling and jealousy. Rather, put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the desires of the flesh.

CHRISTMAS PREPARATION

A *small pillow* is brought to the altar, while singing a Christmas song.

All: O Immaculate Virgin Mary, O venerable Saint Joseph, we beg your help in preparing all the items needed for the nearing natal day of the Incarnate Word in the stable of Bethlehem. He desires to find hearts which welcome, clothe, warm and comfort Him.

In the stable of Bethlehem we plan to prepare a small pillow made of the purest wool of lambs without blemish.

Lector: The small pillow will be prepared by reciting a homage and the consecration to the Heart of Jesus.

PROTECTOR SAINT

Lector: St. Simeon,

All: pray for us.

INVOCATION

O Jesus, our dearest love, come at once and take our hearts.

Homily of the Celebrant, when it is possible.

CANTICLE OF MARY

Antiphon: O sacred Lord of ancient Israel, who showed yourself to Moses in the burning bush, who gave him the holy law on Sinai Mountains: come stretch out your mighty hand to set us free.

INTERCESSIONS

Celebrant: While waiting for his birth, the Lord calls us to awake from sleep, and to be converted to him with all our hearts. Accepting this invitation, let us ask the Lord for his help, so that we may be light of the world, like him and with him. Let us say:

Come, Lord Jesus.

+ That all Christian communities may be a light, a manifestation and a witness of Jesus the Savior, let us pray:

+ For all men; that the darkness of selfishness, fear and mutual mistrust may not prevail in them; instead, may courage, altruism, trust and honesty of life shine forth, let us pray:

+ For us here present; may we recognize the luminous face of the Lord who is coming, in the face of every brother, especially the weakest and the poor, let us pray:

OUR FATHER

PRAYER

God, Father of goodness and mercy, in your Son Jesus you called us from darkness into light. Grant us, your sons, the grace to wake up again from the sleep of selfishness and sin, to meet Christ, your Son and our Lord. He lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit one God forever and ever. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING WITH THE HOLY BIBLE

Celebrant: The Lamb of God came to take away the sins of the world. May He take away also our sins.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: The Lord came to save what was lost. In his new coming may he not punish those whom he redeemed.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: May we find lasting joy in the Lord who is coming, and to those who address our faith.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: And may the blessing of the Almighty God, the Father, the Son + and the Holy Spirit, descend upon you, and remain with you forever.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: Go in peace.

All: Thanks be to God.

FINAL SONG

4th day

Jesus the Savior
Brings Peace



GREETINGS AND WELCOME

Celebrant: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit

All: Amen.

Celebrant: May the Lord who is coming to visit his people in
peace, be with you all.

All: And with your spirit.

Celebrant: Dear brothers, we are the new people of God.
Therefore in the spirit of the ancient patriarchs
and prophets and in harmony with the pressing
prayers of the chosen people of Israel, let us
repeat untiringly the grief-stricken cry:
"Come, Lord do not delay."

CANTICLE OF THE PROPHECIES

Refrain: Come, let us adore Christ the Savior
 Rise, daughter of Zion,
 shout for joy, daughter of Jerusalem!

Soon your Lord will come,
a bright light will dawn,
the mountains will give forth sweetness
for the great prophet will come to us to renew Jerusalem.
(Refrain)

Soon God will come among his own:
a man of the house of David will mount his throne.
You will see him, and your hearts will overflow with joy.
(Refrain)

Soon the Lord will come,
our shield, the Holy One of Israel;
the crown of his kingdom will be on his head.
He will extend his dominion from sea to sea,
from the great river to the ends of the earth.
(Refrain)

The Lord God will descend like dew upon the fleece;
in his days justice will triumph and infinite peace.
All the kings of the earth will come to adore him,
all the peoples will serve him alone.
(Refrain)

From you, Bethlehem, city of God most High,
from you will come the Ruler of the Israel.
He will spring from the eternal God
and show his glory all over the earth.
his coming will set forth peace among us forever.
(Refrain)

ANTIPHONS, PSALMS, AND CANTICLE OF THE DAY

LITURGY OF THE LIGHT

The fourth of the nine lamps is lit, to indicate “vigilance in waiting” (Mt. 25:1-12) while the following song, or similar one is sung: *A light is about to shine for us on earth, soon Jesus will come among us. Be awoken, the spouse will not delay, if you are ready, he will open to you. Joyfully sing glory to the Lord! The Redeemer will be born for us!*

FIRST READING

From the book of the Prophet Isaiah (11:1-5)

But a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom. The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: a spirit of wisdom and of understanding, a spirit of counsel and of strength, a spirit of knowledge and of fear of the Lord, and his delight shall be the fear of the Lord. Not by appearance shall he judge, nor by hearsay shall he decide, but he shall judge the poor with justice, and decide aright for the afflicted land. He shall strike the ruthless with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked. Justice shall be the band around his waist, and faithfulness a belt upon his hips.

SONG OF MEDITATION

SECOND READING

From the Letter to the Ephesians (2:13-18)

Brought near through the blood of Christ. It is he who is our peace, and who made the two of us one by breaking down the barrier of hostility that kept us apart. In His own flesh he abolished the law with its commands and precepts, to create in himself one new man from us who had been two and to make peace, reconciling both of us to God in one body through his cross, which put that enmity to death. He came and “announced the good news of peace to you who were far off, and to those who were near;” through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

CHRISTMAS PREPARATION

A *small blanket* is brought to the altar, while singing a Christmas song.

All: O Immaculate Virgin Mary, O venerable Saint Joseph, we beg your help in preparing all the items needed for the nearing natal day of the Incarnate Word in the stable of Bethlehem. He desires to find hearts which welcome, clothe, warm and comfort Him.

In the stable of Bethlehem we plan to prepare a small blanket adequately warm, made of the feathers of doves.

Lector: The little blanket will be prepared in this way: by reciting the aspirations to the Eucharistic Jesus.

PROTECTOR SAINT

Lector: The Holy Shepherds,

All: pray for us.

INVOCATION

Our Mother Mary, help us to love Jesus with you.

Homily of the Celebrant, when it is possible.

CANTICLE OF MARY

Antiphon: O Flower of Jesse's stem, you have been raised up as a sign for all peoples; kings stand silent in your presence; the nations bow down in worship before you. Come, let nothing keep you from coming to our aid.

INTERCESSIONS

Celebrant: The savior who is coming, not only brings peace, but he himself is our peace, so that the world may have his gift of lasting peace, let us address confidently to him our prayer: Lord, *may your Kingdom come.*

+ That the Church may be enriched with the gifts of the Spirit, like the Sprout of Jesse, and always be an announcer of justice and of peace in the world, let us pray:

+ For all who have responsibilities in the government; may they seek always the ways of peace with sincerity and conviction in solving situations of tension and conflict among peoples, let us pray:

+ For us gathered here: may we be involved in Christ's plan of peace for humanity, and realize it in our daily choices, let us pray:

OUR FATHER

PRAYER

God, good and Almighty Father, hear our prayers. In your Son you have given us peace; grant us also the grace today to be builders of peace so as to implement your plan of salvation. We ask you this through Christ, your Son and our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING WITH THE HOLY BIBLE

Celebrant: May the Lord console you with his coming, and enlighten always your hearts with the grace of his divinity.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: May the Lord sanctify your desires with the gift of his presence, and accept graciously your devotion.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: May your hearts be always fervent in the Lord's love, so as not to fear him when he comes to judge your merits.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: And may the blessing of the Almighty God, the Father, the Son + and the Holy Spirit, descend upon you, and remain with you forever.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: Go in peace.

All: Thanks be to God.

FINAL SONG



5th day

Jesus the Savior
Brings Freedom



GREETINGS AND WELCOME

Celebrant: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit

All: Amen.

Celebrant: May the Lord who is coming to visit his people in
peace, be with you all.

All: And with your spirit.

Celebrant: Brothers, the birth of Christ is the greatest proof
of the love of God for us. Jesus becomes man
so we may become sons of God.
His goodness requires us to reciprocate
with complete trust in Him.

CANTICLE OF THE PROPHECIES

Refrain: Come, let us adore Christ the Savior
 Rise, daughter of Zion,
 shout for joy, daughter of Jerusalem!

Soon your Lord will come,
a bright light will dawn,
the mountains will give forth sweetness
for the great prophet will come to us to renew Jerusalem.
(Refrain)

Soon God will come among his own:
a man of the house of David will mount his throne.
You will see him, and your hearts will overflow with joy.
(Refrain)

Soon the Lord will come,
our shield, the Holy One of Israel;
the crown of his kingdom will be on his head.
He will extend his dominion from sea to sea,
from the great river to the ends of the earth.
(Refrain)

The Lord God will descend like dew upon the fleece;
in his days justice will triumph and infinite peace.
All the kings of the earth will come to adore him,
all the peoples will serve him alone.
(Refrain)

From you, Bethlehem, city of God most High,
from you will come the Ruler of the Israel.
He will spring from the eternal God
and show his glory all over the earth.
his coming will set forth peace among us forever.
(Refrain)

ANTIPHONS, PSALMS, AND CANTICLE OF THE DAY

LITURGY OF THE LIGHT

The fifth of the nine lamps is lit, to indicate “vigilance in waiting” (Mt. 25:1-12) while the following song, or similar one is sung: *A light is about to shine for us on earth, soon Jesus will come among us. Be awoken, the spouse will not delay, if you are ready, he will open to you. Joyfully sing glory to the Lord! The Redeemer will be born for us!*

FIRST READING

From the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah (23:5-8)

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 lands to which I banished them; they shall again live on their own land.

SONG OF MEDITATION

SECOND READING

From the letter of St. Paul to the Galatians (4:1-7)

Brothers, as long as a designated heir is not of age his condition is no different from that of a slave, even though in name he is master of all his possessions; for he is under the supervision of guardians and administrators until the time set by his father. In the same way, while we were not yet of age we were like slaves subordinated to the elements of the world; but when the designated time had come, God sent forth his Son born of a woman, born under the law, to deliver from the law those who were subjected to it, so that we may receive our status as adopted sons. The proof that you are sons is the fact that God has sent forth into our hearts the spirit of his Son which cries out “Abba!” (“Father!”) You are no longer a slave but a son! And the fact that you are a son makes you *an heir, by God’s design.*

CHRISTMAS PREPARATION

The *swaddling clothes* are brought to the altar, while singing a Christmas song.

All: O Immaculate Virgin Mary, O venerable Saint Joseph, we beg your help in preparing all the items needed for the nearing natal day of the Incarnate Word in the stable of Bethlehem. He desires to find hearts which welcome, clothe, warm and comfort Him.

In the stable of Bethlehem we plan to prepare the swaddling clothes made of the purest linen, finely prepared and woven, to tighten gently the loving God, born a child.

Lector: The swaddling clothes will be prepared by patience in all encounters; meditation on the scourging of our Lord Jesus Christ ; the recitation of the "I confess" and a "Hail, Holy Queen" for the suffering.

PROTECTOR SAINT

Lector: The Holy Three Kings,
All: pray for us.

INVOCATION

Dear Child Jesus, you are our God, our Lord and King..

Homily of the Celebrant, when it is possible.

CANTICLE OF MARY

Antiphon: O key of David, O royal Power of Israel controlling at your will the gate of heaven: come, break down the prison walls of death for those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death; and lead your captive people into freedom.

INTERCESSIONS

Celebrant: In the fullness of time God sent his Son for our

salvation; he freed men from the slavery of evil and sin. With filial hearts let us pray that this freedom may never fail: *We beseech you, hear us, O Lord.*

+ For the holy Church of God: may she proclaim the freedom given by Christ to the entire world, we pray:

+ For all Christians; may they find true freedom of the sons of God in listening to and implementing the Word, we pray:

+ For infidels and sinners; may they listen to the Word of the Gospel which gives true freedom, we pray:

OUR FATHER

PRAYER

O God, oppressed under the yoke of sin, we await with faith the new birth of your only Son. May his coming free us from the ancient slavery. We ask this through Christ, your Son and our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING WITH THE HOLY BIBLE

Celebrant: The only begotten Son of God was born from the Father and Incarnated in the womb of the Virgin. May he free us from all that is corrupt in our human nature.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: The Lord assumed a truly human body in a mystery that transcends our mind. May he take away every evil from our fragile nature.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: The Lord is the Life that endured death. May he grant us the grace of never experiencing the danger of eternal death.

All: Amen.

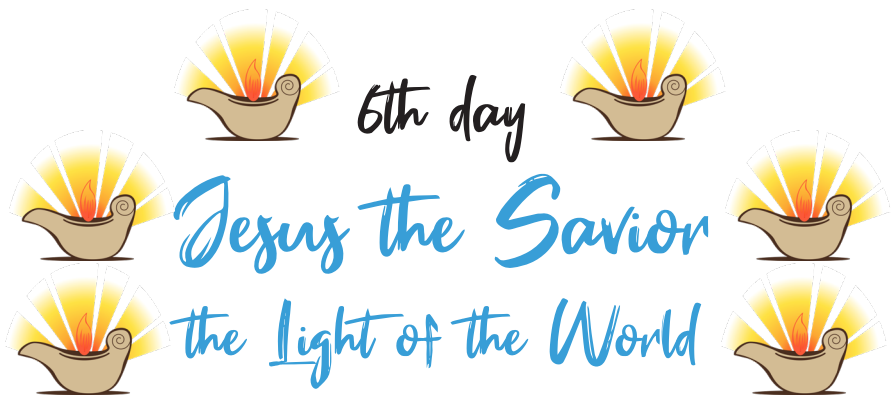
Celebrant: And may the blessing of the Almighty God, the Father, the Son + and the Holy Spirit, descend upon you, and remain with you forever.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: Go in peace.

All: Thanks be to God.

FINAL SONG



GREETINGS AND WELCOME

Celebrant: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit

All: Amen.

Celebrant: May the Lord who is coming to visit his people in
peace, be with you all.

All: And with your spirit.

Celebrant: Dear Brothers, while the world around us is agitated
by the craving for freedom from hunger,
war and oppression, we are watchful and ready
to discern the signs of the time, so as to
acknowledge Him who is about to come
and who alone can give salvation.

CANTICLE OF THE PROPHECIES

Refrain: Come, let us adore Christ the Savior
 Rise, daughter of Zion,
 shout for joy, daughter of Jerusalem!

Soon your Lord will come,
a bright light will dawn,
the mountains will give forth sweetness
for the great prophet will come to us to renew Jerusalem.
(Refrain)

Soon God will come among his own:
a man of the house of David will mount his throne.
You will see him, and your hearts will overflow with joy.
(Refrain)

Soon the Lord will come,
our shield, the Holy One of Israel;
the crown of his kingdom will be on his head.
He will extend his dominion from sea to sea,
from the great river to the ends of the earth.
(Refrain)

The Lord God will descend like dew upon the fleece;
in his days justice will triumph and infinite peace.
All the kings of the earth will come to adore him,
all the peoples will serve him alone.
(Refrain)

From you, Bethlehem, city of God most High,
from you will come the Ruler of the Israel.
He will spring from the eternal God
and show his glory all over the earth.
his coming will set forth peace among us forever.
(Refrain)

ANTIPHONS, PSALMS, AND CANTICLE OF THE DAY

LITURGY OF THE LIGHT

The sixth of the nine lamps is lit, to indicate “vigilance in waiting” (Mt. 25:1-12) while the following song, or similar one is sung: *A light is about to shine for us on earth, soon Jesus will come among us. Be awoken, the spouse will not delay, if you are ready, he will open to you. Joyfully sing glory to the Lord! The Redeemer will be born for us!*

FIRST READING

From the Book of the Prophet Isaiah (60:1-5)

Rise up in splendor! Your light has come, the glory of the Lord shines upon you. See, darkness covers the earth, and thick clouds covers the people; 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 the nations shall be brought to you.

SONG OF MEDITATION

SECOND READING

From the Gospel according to Luke (1:67-79)

Then Zechariah, John’s father, was filled with the Holy Spirit, uttered this prophecy: “Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel because he has visited and ransomed his people. He has raised a horn of saving strength for us in the house of David his servant, as he promised through the mouths of his holy ones, the prophets of ancient times: salvation from our enemies and from the hands of all our foes. He has dealt mercifully with our fathers and remembered the holy covenant he made, the oath he swore to Abraham our father he would grant us: that, rid of fear and delivered from the enemy, we should serve him devoutly and through all our days be holy in his sight. And you,

O child, shall be called prophet of the Most High; for you shall go before the Lord to prepare straight paths for him, giving his people a knowledge of salvation in freedom from their sins, all this is the work of the kindness of our God; he, the Dayspring, shall visit us in his mercy to shine on those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

CHRISTMAS PREPARATION

The '*fire and light*' are brought to the altar, while singing a Christmas song.

All: O Immaculate Virgin Mary, O venerable Saint Joseph, we beg your help in preparing all the items needed for the nearing natal day of the Incarnate Word in the stable of Bethlehem. He desires to find hearts which welcome, clothe, warm and comfort Him.

We plan to prepare the fire and the light for the stable of Bethlehem.

The coal for the fire will be made of the same wood of the cradle; the light will be fed with oil from the olive trees of Gethsemane.

Both will be lit with live, well stroked flint.

Lector: The fire and the light will be prepared by mortification in eating and drinking; an act of humility and a "Hail Mary" to the Most Holy Virgin Mary so that we may obtain humility.

PROTECTOR SAINT

Lector: The Angels chanting the "Gloria" at Bethlehem,

All: pray for us.

INVOCATION

Dear Jesus, it would be our joy to give our life for you!

Homily of the Celebrant, when it is possible.

CANTICLE OF MARY

Antiphon: O Radiant Dawn, splendor of the eternal light, sun of justice, come, shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death.

INTERCESSIONS

Celebrant: The true light that enlightens every man is coming into the world. Let us ask the Lord to welcome it and to be enlightened by Him so as to make his light shine in our life and in the world. Let us say with confidence:

Come, Lord Jesus, light of the world.

+ For the Church of God: as the new Jerusalem radiant with light, may she be a lighthouse of salvation for all men, we pray:

+ For the Pope, bishops and priests: may they be faithful to the message of God to enlighten our mind and heart, we pray:

+ For men and women, who do not know yet the joy of faith: may they be enlightened by the light of Christ and initiate their journey to him, we pray:

OUR FATHER

PRAYER

God Almighty Father, flooded by the new light of your word that has become man, we pray to you: may the mystery that glows in our spirit through our faith, shine also in our works, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING WITH THE HOLY BIBLE

Celebrant: God's only-begotten Son, by becoming man,
has given light to the eyes of the blind.
May he give spiritual intelligence to your hearts.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: The Lord Jesus, by being born of the Virgin,
brought to completion the ancient promises.
May He grant you the fullness of His graces.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: Through the mercy of our God, who is blessed,
may you merit, without being confused,
to see the face of Him whose Incarnation
you celebrate with love.

All: Amen.

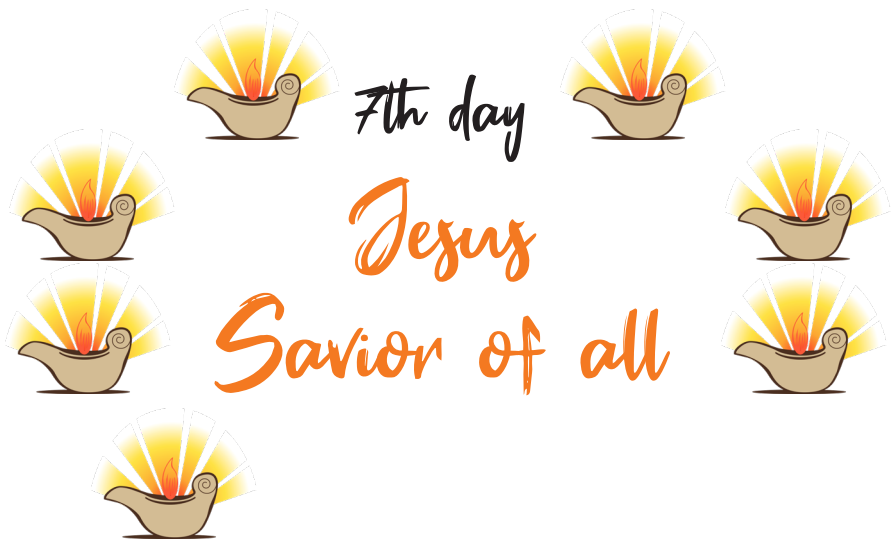
Celebrant: And may the blessing of the Almighty God,
the Father, the Son + and the Holy Spirit,
descend upon you, and remain with you forever.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: Go in peace.

All: Thanks be to God.

FINAL SONG



GREETINGS AND WELCOME

Celebrant: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit

All: Amen.

Celebrant: The grace and peace of God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

All: And with your spirit.

Celebrant: Dear Brothers, let us go in hope so as to enjoy
the God of peace who is coming. Let us keep
ourselves wide awake in waiting, so that when
Christ comes he will find us ready to meet him.

CANTICLE OF THE PROPHECIES

Refrain: Come, let us adore Christ the Savior
 Rise, daughter of Zion,
 shout for joy, daughter of Jerusalem!

Soon your Lord will come,
a bright light will dawn,
the mountains will give forth sweetness
for the great prophet will come to us to renew Jerusalem.
(Refrain)

Soon God will come among his own:
a man of the house of David will mount his throne.
You will see him, and your hearts will overflow with joy.
(Refrain)

Soon the Lord will come,
our shield, the Holy One of Israel;
the crown of his kingdom will be on his head.
He will extend his dominion from sea to sea,
from the great river to the ends of the earth.
(Refrain)

The Lord God will descend like dew upon the fleece;
in his days justice will triumph and infinite peace.
All the kings of the earth will come to adore him,
all the peoples will serve him alone.
(Refrain)

From you, Bethlehem, city of God most High,
from you will come the Ruler of the Israel.
He will spring from the eternal God
and show his glory all over the earth.
his coming will set forth peace among us forever.
(Refrain)

ANTIPHONS, PSALMS, AND CANTICLE OF THE DAY

LITURGY OF THE LIGHT

The seventh of the nine lamps is lit, to indicate “vigilance in waiting”(Mt. 25:1-12) while the following song, or similar one is sung: *A light is about to shine for us on earth, soon Jesus will come among us. Be awoken, the spouse will not delay, if you are ready, he will open to you. Joyfully sing glory to the Lord! The Redeemer will be born for us!*

FIRST READING

From the Book of the Prophet Isaiah (2:2-3)

In days to come, the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established as the highest mountain and raised above the hills. All nations shall stream toward it; many people shall come and say: “Come, let us climb the Lord’s mountain, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may instruct us in his ways, and we may walk in his paths.” For from Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

SONG OF MEDITATION

SECOND READING

From the letter of St. Paul to Titus (2:11-15)

The grace of God has appeared, offering salvation to all men. It trains us to reject godless ways and worldly desires, and live temperately, justly, and devoutly in this age as we await our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of the great God and of our Savior Christ Jesus. It was he who sacrificed himself for us, to redeem from all unrighteousness and to cleanse for himself a people of his own, eager to do what is right. These are the things you are to say. Make our appeals and corrections with the authority of command. Let no one look down on you.”

CHRISTMAS PREPARATION

A procession enters with flutes or other musical instruments while singing a Christmas song.

All: O Immaculate Virgin Mary, O venerable Saint Joseph, we beg your help in preparing all the items needed for the nearing natal day of the Incarnate Word in the stable of Bethlehem. He desires to find hearts which welcome, clothe, warm and comfort Him.

We plan to prepare the music for the stable of Bethlehem. It will be a simple and loving music pleasing the God of simplicity and love. It will be played, therefore, with whistles and flutes of cane that will be taken from the reed thicket from where a scepter of love will be procured for Jesus on the day of his eternal nuptials, the day of joy for his heart..

Lector: The music is prepared through the recitation of the litany of the Name of Jesus and a meditation on the last judgment.

PROTECTOR SAINT

Lector: The Holy Innocents,
All: pray for us.

INVOCATION

Our gentle little Child, take our hearts and give us yours!

Homily of the Celebrant, when it is possible.

CANTICLE OF MARY

Antiphon: O King of the nations, the only joy of every human heart; O Keystone of the mighty arch of man: come, and save the creature you fashioned from the dust.

INTERCESSIONS

Celebrant: Let us invoke the coming of Jesus into this world still torn by hatred and dissension. May the Savior of all reunite the human family in the love and faith that saves. Let us address our prayer to him: *Come, O Lord, Savior of the world.*

+ May the Church be the new Jerusalem to whom all the peoples hasten so as to form God's People, well disposed to do his will, let us pray:

+ That non-believers, atheists and indifferent people may discover in their life the signs of the presence and love of God who saves; let us pray:

+ For those who are suffering and experiencing difficulties, may they find strength and hope in the Lord, let us pray:

+ For our Christian community: may it be a sign leading to the Lord through her living and consistent witness, let us pray:

OUR FATHER

PRAYER

Good and merciful God, look with benevolence to your people, and hear our prayers. Send Jesus, your Son to manifest salvation to all men so that they may unflinchingly acknowledge you and faithfully love you. We ask this through Christ, your Son and our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING WITH THE HOLY BIBLE

Celebrant: Our Lord is coming, may he grant you happiness and peace.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: Our Lord came to share his mercy. May he take away your sins.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: May the Lord save you and keep you blameless for the day of the last judgment.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: And may the blessing of the Almighty God, the Father, the Son + and the Holy Spirit, descend upon you, and remain with you forever.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: Go in peace.

All: Thanks be to God.

FINAL SONG



GREETINGS AND WELCOME

Celebrant: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit

All: Amen.

Celebrant: Let us give thanks to the Almighty God who was,
who is and who is coming. Peace to you who await
his salvation in Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: Dear Brothers, in the imminence of Christmas
let us ask the Most Holy Virgin to share her
very sentiments to us, so that we may receive Jesus
the Savior in the most worthy way.

CANTICLE OF THE PROPHECIES

Refrain: Come, let us adore Christ the Savior
 Rise, daughter of Zion,
 shout for joy, daughter of Jerusalem!

Soon your Lord will come,
a bright light will dawn,
the mountains will give forth sweetness
for the great prophet will come to us to renew Jerusalem.
(*Refrain*)

Soon God will come among his own:
a man of the house of David will mount his throne.
You will see him, and your hearts will overflow with joy.
(*Refrain*)

Soon the Lord will come,
our shield, the Holy One of Israel;
the crown of his kingdom will be on his head.
He will extend his dominion from sea to sea,
from the great river to the ends of the earth.
(*Refrain*)

The Lord God will descend like dew upon the fleece;
in his days justice will triumph and infinite peace.
All the kings of the earth will come to adore him,
all the peoples will serve him alone.
(*Refrain*)

From you, Bethlehem, city of God most High,
from you will come the Ruler of the Israel.
He will spring from the eternal God
and show his glory all over the earth.
his coming will set forth peace among us forever.
(*Refrain*)

ANTIPHONS, PSALMS, AND CANTICLE OF THE DAY

LITURGY OF THE LIGHT

The eighth of the nine lamps is lit, to indicate “vigilance in waiting” (Mt. 25:1-12) while the following song, or similar one is sung: *A light is about to shine for us on earth, soon Jesus will come among us. Be awoken, the spouse will not delay, if you are ready, he will open to you. Joyfully sing glory to the Lord! The Redeemer will be born for us!*

FIRST READING

From the Book of the Prophet Isaiah (7:10-15)

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz: “Ask for a sign from the Lord, your God; let it be deep as the nether world, or high as the sky!” But Ahaz answered, “I will not ask! I will not tempt the Lord!” Then he said: Listen, O house of David! Is it not enough for you to weary men, must you also weary my God? Therefore the Lord himself will give you this sign: The virgin shall be with child, and bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. He shall be living on curds and honey by the time he learns to reject the bad and choose the good.

SONG OF MEDITATION

SECOND READING

From the Gospel according to St. Luke (1:26-38)

In the sixth month, the Angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. Upon arriving, the angel said to her: “Rejoice, O highly favored daughter! The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women.” She was deeply troubled by his words, and wondered what his greeting meant. The angel went on to say to her: “Do not fear, Mary. You have found favored with God. You shall conceive and bear a son and give him the name Jesus. Great will be his dignity and he will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of David his father. He will rule over the house of Jacob forever and his reign will be without end.” Mary said to the angel, “How can this be since I do not know man?” The angel answered her: “The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; hence, the holy offspring to be born will be called Son of God.

Know that Elizabeth your kinswoman has conceived a son in her old age; she who was thought to be sterile is now in her sixth month, for nothing is impossible with God." Mary said: "I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be done to me as you say." With that the angel left her.

CHRISTMAS PREPARATION

A procession enters singing a Lullaby.

All: O Immaculate Virgin Mary, O venerable Saint Joseph, we beg your help in preparing all the items needed for the nearing natal day of the Incarnate Word in the stable of Bethlehem. He desires to find hearts which welcome, clothe, warm and comfort Him.

We plan to prepare the songs for the stable of Bethlehem. They should be as harmonious as a 'new song,' and imitate the voice of the little turtle-dove, and the singing of the Angels chanting their 'Gloria' over the stable.

Lector: The songs will be prepared by a visit to the Holy Eucharist.

PROTECTOR SAINT

Lector: Saint Anthony of Padua,
All: pray for us.

INVOCATION

O beloved Jesus, we no longer want to live, unless with your love!

Homily of the Celebrant, when it is possible.

CANTICLE OF MARY

Antiphon: O Emmanuel, King and Lawgiver, desire of the nations, Savior of all peoples come and set us free, Lord our God.

INTERCESSIONS

Celebrant: Let us give thanks to God the Father who, urged

by his merciful love, sent his Son into the world to be 'God-with-us.' Full of confidence in his goodness, let us address to him our prayer: *Come to save us, O Lord, our God.*

+ For the Pope, bishops and priests; may they be always faithful witnesses of the presence of Christ in the world, let us pray:

+ For Christians, may their faith in the presence of God in the world be strengthened, let us pray:

+ For all men and women whom God loves; may they not remain indifferent to the coming of Christ in their midst, let us pray:

OUR FATHER

PRAYER

Father of holiness and God of goodness and of mercy, you do not leave us alone in our journeying of life. You are alive and working in our midst, accompanying your pilgrim Church in the world. We pray: renew our hearts so that we may be ready to welcome the coming of your Son whom you have given to us as brother and redeemer. He is God, and lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING WITH THE HOLY BIBLE

Celebrant: May the Lord who is coming free us from all evils.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: May the Lord defend and guard the freedom granted to all he redeemed.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: The Lord came into the world as our Redeemer. May he lead his redeemed sons to heaven.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: And may the blessing of the Almighty God, the Father, the Son + and the Holy Spirit, descend upon you, and remain with you forever.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: Go in peace.

All: Thanks be to God.

FINAL SONG



GREETINGS AND WELCOME

Celebrant: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit

All: Amen.

Celebrant: The Lord Jesus has conquered the darkness
of the world with the light of his coming.
May he look upon us with serenity
so that we may sing the glory of his birth.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: Dear brothers, from the high sea
we have finally reached the port, from the promise

we have come to the reward. In fact, this holy day is a day of grace and hope. Let us enter into the spirit of the Christmas liturgy and prepare ourselves with joy to meet the Savior who comes.

CANTICLE OF THE PROPHECIES

Refrain: Come, let us adore Christ the Savior
 Rise, daughter of Zion,
 shout for joy, daughter of Jerusalem!

Soon your Lord will come,
a bright light will dawn, the mountains will give forth sweetness
for the great prophet will come to us to renew Jerusalem.

(Refrain)

Soon God will come among his own:
a man of the house of David will mount his throne.
You will see him, and your hearts will overflow with joy.

(Refrain)

Soon the Lord will come, our shield, the Holy One of Israel;
the crown of his kingdom will be on his head.
He will extend his dominion from sea to sea,
from the great river to the ends of the earth.

(Refrain)

The Lord God will descend like dew upon the fleece;
in his days justice will triumph and infinite peace.
All the kings of the earth will come to adore him,
all the peoples will serve him alone.

(Refrain)

From you, Bethlehem, city of God most High,
from you will come the Ruler of the Israel.
He will spring from the eternal God
and show his glory all over the earth.
his coming will set forth peace among us forever.

(Refrain)

ANTIPHONS, PSALMS, AND CANTICLE OF THE DAY

LITURGY OF THE LIGHT

The last of the nine lamps is lit, to indicate “vigilance in waiting” (Mt. 25:1-12) while the following song, or similar one is sung: *A light is about to shine for us on earth, soon Jesus will come among us. Be awoken, the spouse will not delay, if you are ready, he will open to you. Joyfully sing glory to the Lord! The Redeemer will be born for us!*

FIRST READING

From the Book of the Prophet Isaiah (35:1-4)

The desert and the parched land will exult; the steppe will rejoice and bloom. They will bloom with abundant flowers, and rejoice with joyful song. The glory of Lebanon will be given to them, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon; they will see the glory of the Lord, the splendor of our God. Strengthen the hands that are feeble, make firm the knees that are weak, say to those whose hearts are frightened: Be strong, fear not! Here is your God, he comes with vindication; with divine recompense he comes to save you.

SONG OF MEDITATION

SECOND READING

From the Gospel according to St. Luke (2:8-20)

There were shepherds in that region, living in the fields and keeping night watch by turns over their flocks. The angel of the Lord appeared to them as the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were very much afraid. The angel said to them: “You have nothing to fear! I come to proclaim good news to you – tidings of great joy to be shared by the whole people. This day in David’s city a savior has been born to you; the Messiah and Lord. Let this be a sign to you: In a manger you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes.” Suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in high heaven, peace on earth to those on whom his favor rests.” When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to one another

“Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this event which the Lord has made known to us. They went in haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger; once they saw, they understood what had been told them concerning this child. All who heard of it were astonished at the report given them by the shepherds. Mary treasured all these things and reflected on them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, in accord with that had been told them.

CHRISTMAS PREPARATION

A procession enters bringing a basket of food for Mary and Joseph; while singing a Christmas song.

All: O Virgin of Nazareth, O most humble Virgin Spouse Joseph, may we be worthy to prepare some food for you, unknown travelers, going to Bethlehem for the census ordered by the emperor Caesar Augustus.

The food we are planning to prepare will be the true Bread of angels, of which the Manna was but a prefiguration; the living Bread from heaven; the Eucharistic Communion.

Lector: The food of our Lady and for Saint Joseph is prepared with fasting; with the recitation of the spiritual communion; and of nine ‘Hail Mary’ and ‘Glory be,’ for the nine months of Jesus in the most pure womb of Mary.

PROTECTOR SAINT

Lector: The Guardian Angels of Mary Most Holy and of Saint Joseph,

All: pray for us.

INVOCATION

If love for you means suffering, I love to suffer so as to love you!

CANTICLE OF MARY

Antiphon: Lord Jesus, you conquered the darkness
of the world with the light of your coming;
look upon us with serenity so that we may sing
the glory of your birth.

INTERCESSIONS

Celebrant: Jesus is coming again among us to bring joy to our hearts and so that our joy may be full. With the entire Church and with all those who await confidently his coming, let us invoke God's Kingdom:

Rise, O Lord, and save us in your mercy.

+ For all the members of the Church: may they be consistently committed to spread the joy of salvation announced at Bethlehem, let us pray:

+ For the poor, the suffering and the sick: may they receive the joyful news that a Savior is born also for them to console their afflicted hearts, let us pray:

+ For us gathered here: may we be open and available towards the brothers and sisters we encounter on our journey, let us pray:

OUR FATHER

PRAYER

O God, every year you gladden us with the expectation of Jesus the Savior. Grant us to welcome now your only Son with joy as our Redeemer, so as to see Him without fear, when He comes as a judge. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

FINAL BLESSING WITH THE HOLY BIBLE

Celebrant: Our Lord Jesus Christ appeared in the glory
of the manger to the shepherds.
May he bless you.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: In his mercy the Lord became a Child for us.
May He protect you and defend you.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: The Child is our Lord and our Redeemer.
May he persevere us always in his grace and love.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: And may the blessing of the Almighty God,
the Father, the Son + and the Holy Spirit,
descend upon you, and remain with you forever.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: Go in peace.

All: Thanks be to God.

FINAL SONG

*On the Solemnity of Christmas, for the Liturgy of the Hours
and Holy Mass: see the Proper in the Breviary and in the
Sacramentary.*



Spiritual Infancy

RESOLVES AND PRAYERS TO THE CHILD JESUS

A Meditation by St. Hannibal Mary Di Francia

O sweet Jesus, you exhorted us to become like children to be worth entering the kingdom of God. We make any resolve and effort to become children by innocence and simplicity. Please help us with your grace!

1. **Children believe everything.**

O my adorable child Jesus, I firmly believe what you have revealed and the holy Church teaches; I also believe the legitimate superiors and counselors that instruct and guide me. O Lord, confirm me in the simple, pure faith. Amen. Glory.

2. **Children keep no grudge.**

O my beloved child Jesus, I promise to never keep the least grudge or malevolence against those who displease, contradict, offend, trouble, oppose, or persecute me. On the contrary, on

occasion I will return good for evil. Please confirm me in this holy resolve! Amen. Glory.

3. Children do and think of what they are told.

O beloved child Jesus, I want to be docile and man-ageable like a child in the moves of your grace and in the inspirations of your divine will. I want to do quickly and docilely what I am told by those who direct and govern me in your name. Amen. Glory.

4. Children love very much their parents, brothers, and sisters.

O my beloved Jesus, according to your command I promise to love you with all my mind, with all my heart, and above all things, as well as my sweetest mother Mary, the angels, the saints, and my neighbor as myself. O Lord, infuse and increase this most holy love in me. Amen. Glory.

5. Children do not mind worldly matter.

O my divine savior, child Jesus, I declare that worldly matter, which concerns so much the mundane is as non-existent or like dissipating smoke for me; you alone are my treasure. My Jesus, let it be so for ever. Amen. Glory.

6. Children say things with simplicity and sincerity.

My beloved Jesus, I propose to never lie, to confess my faults candidly, and to conceal no wrong with excuses or deceit. O Lord, help me always to speak and work with simplicity. Amen. Glory.

7. Children forget insults.

O my Jesus, I promise to never remember any wrong that people can commit against me; when such a thought crosses my mind, I will drive it away immediately; furthermore, I will behave with the people who eventually wronged me as though they did nothing to me. Please confirm my resolve! Amen. Glory.

**8. When children are given gifts,
they rejoice innocently and are fond of the donors.**

O beloved Jesus, I promise to rejoice in you for any spiritual or temporal good given to me by your charity; I will seize this opportunity to love you more with perfect gratitude. My Jesus, let it be so! Amen. Glory.

**9. When children are attacked,
they rush to the bosom of their parents.**

O my adorable savior Jesus, I firmly resolve to appeal to your sweetest Heart and to our most holy mother Mary's Immaculate Heart when the hellish enemy assails me and when my soul runs any risk. My beloved Lord, help me keep my word. Amen. Glory.

10. Children cry when they do not see their parents.

My beloved sweetest Jesus, I will never stop crying for the least of my faults which take you away from me. Please return to me everytime I call upon you with contrition. Now I promise to do my best to let you always stay with me. Please help me to always do so! Amen. Glory.

11. When children see their parents crying, they too cry; when they see their parents rejoicing, they too rejoice.

O my supreme good, child Jesus, I wish my eyes were a fountain of tears to bewail together with you and with Our Lady in sorrow my sins, the sins of the whole world, and the ruin of so many souls! I want to feel no other joy in my heart but the joy because you are known and loved by all the hearts. Amen. Glory.

12. Children want to stay with their parents.

O my soul's love, I want to always stay with you and with your most holy mother, keeping and embracing you in pure faith; I also want to go with you and with the most holy Virgin to the places where you have been, beginning with Bethlehem up to the Calvary. I wish I were with you in all the tabernacles. Please accept such a company on earth in order that I may be always with you and with the divine mother in paradise. Amen. Glory.

13. Children imitate their parents.

O divine child Jesus, help me to imitate in everything your divine virtues, such as: humility, obedience, innocence, simplicity, charity, and your divine Heart's meekness. I promise to do it with all my heart, all life long. Please help it come true! Amen. Glory.

14. Children learn their father's language.

My beloved child Jesus, you and your most holy mother have always said holiest words. Your talk is truth and charity. I too want to speak according to truth and charity, but never against these divine virtues. O adorable Jesus, divine teacher, teach me

to always speak justly and rightly, especially when I meditate and pray before your divine majesty. Amen. Glory.

15. Children keep the baptismal innocence.

O child Jesus, I will never stop bewailing the loss of holy innocence you gave me in baptism. O divine child, please return it to me, because I am ready to do the sacramental penance and any other penance which is necessary to regain my lost innocence. Amen. Glory.

16. Children do not know worldly malice.

O most adorable child Jesus, I want to know nothing of the world's false allurements, nor of its foolish principles. O Lord, please root out of my mind, of my heart, and of my memory any worldly impression, or image, or imagination. Amen. Glory.

17. Children form no bad opinion of others because they are simple.

O child Jesus, only you may judge my heart, because you are the only one who knows the hearts; to tell the truth, I would deserve a sentence for several faults and for my bad innermost. I promise to form no bad opinion of the people, and when I am unable to excuse their actions, at least I will excuse their intention. Please help me keep my word! Amen. Glory.

18. Children do not speak ill of anyone.

Mysweetest child, I know that you are displeased when we speak ill of our neighbor and when we communicate our neighbor's defects. You are very strict about that. For this reason I want to keep silent about my neighbor's defects. I promise to keep my word with your grace. Amen. Glory.

19. Children sleep soundly in the bosom of their mother.

O my beloved child, please accept my protestation. From now on I surrender myself to your infinite goodness and to Immaculate Mary's sweetest protection. I will be confident and serene in any event and circumstance, because your mother is also my mother. Amen. Glory.

20. Children are not ambitious.

O my Lord and God, from now on I will choose the last place, because I do not want to be appreciated, nor preferred to others. My Jesus, let it be so. Amen. Glory.

21. When children are corrected of their natural defects, they amend quickly.

My worshiped child God, I bewail my disregard in amending my defects and bad inclinations in spite of so many admonitions, readings, preachings, inspirations, and warnings. My adorable child, please forgive me. I want to start a new life by promising to be most vigilant over myself, by striving to avoid the least defect, and by improving through your good inspirations and through the beneficial admonishments and corrections that I may receive. May your powerful help and the help of your most holy mother sustain me. Amen. Glory.

22. Children are docile, easily yielding to their parents' will.

O divine child, my Lord and God, forgive me for my opposing your divine will so many times! I am very, very sorry; I declare before heaven and earth to never do so again. May your divine will govern me; I hand over myself to you along with my past,

present, and future existence. O sweet, amiable child Jesus, help me keep my word for ever! Amen. Glory.

23. Children are endowed with a childish beauty and charm, which move the people to love them.

O most gracious child Jesus, I want to esteem nothing, but your divine grace; may it adorn and beautify my soul! Unfortunately, my soul has become ugly in your eyes for so many faults! O beloved Jesus, beautify me with your grace. Help me to achieve the most beautiful union of love with you for ever. Amen. Glory.

24. Children learn the prayers from their parents, and pray graciously in the morning and in the night.

O my adored child Jesus, I promise to never leave out my prayer in the morning and in the evening, as well as the other prayers along with the practices of piety. Please grant me true spirit of prayer and devotion so that I may please you! Amen. Glory.

25. Children kiss their parents tenderly, and like to be kissed and caressed.

O my sweetest child Jesus, please let me be a child, even though I do not deserve your caresses; but I would rather wish to share your pain and the hidden pleasure of your holy cross! Still I beg you, o my divine lover, to let me share the mystical kiss of the enamored bride of the Song of Solomon, which is your union of love through the perfect, loving transformation in your divine, most loving will. Amen. Glory.

APPENDIX

A. CANTICLE OF MARY (RECITED AFTER THE ANTIPHON)

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
My Spirit rejoices in God my Savior
For He has looked with favour on His lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed:
The Almighty has done great things for me,
And holy is His Name.

He has mercy on those who fear Him
In every generation.

He has shown the strength of His arm,
He has scattered the proud in their conceit.

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,
And has lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things,
And the rich He has sent away empty.

He has come to the help of His servant Israel
For He has remembered His promise of mercy,
The promise He made to our fathers,
To Abraham and his children for ever.

Glory to the Father,
and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning,
is now, and will be forever.

Amen.

B. RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL PROMISES

C: Most beloved brothers, having been made sharers in the mystery of the death and resurrection of Christ, during the commemoration of His Nativity, let us renew the promises of our baptism. Let us renounce Satan and his works, and be committed to serve God faithfully in his holy Catholic Church.

C: Do you reject sin, so as to live in the freedom of God's children?

A: I do.

C: Do you reject the glamour of evil, and refuse to be mastered by sin?

A: I do.

C: Do you reject Satan, father of sin and prince of darkness?

A: I do.

C: Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth?

A: I do.

C: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died and was buried, rose from the dead and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?

A: I do.

C: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting?

A: I do.

C: God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, has freed us from sin and has given us new birth by water and by the Holy Spirit. May he guard us with his grace in Jesus Christ our Lord.

A: Amen.



THE ROGATIONISTS

The Congregation of the Rogationists of the Heart of Jesus (RCJ), is a Religious Clerical Institute of apostolic life and pontifical right, which are composed of both priests and brothers.

With joy, zeal and dedication, they respond to the call to constantly become a living memory of the Lord Jesus Christ – his way of being and acting through the public profession of the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty, and obedience. Their goal is to grow in perfect charity, as Jesus himself taught his disciples.

Their Founder, St. Hannibal Mary Di Francia received a precious inspiration from the Holy Spirit, the Rogate; *“Pray (Rogate) therefore to the Lord of the harvest so that he may send out laborers into his harvest”* (Mt. 9:37-38, Lk. 10:2). That is why they devote themselves to a fourth vow, that is, the understanding of and zeal for the Rogate. It is in accordance to this charism that they live their consecration, and be dedicated to the building up of the Church and to the salvation of the world, at the service of

the Kingdom of God.

The religious family started as a “small caravan” on May 16, 1897 with the vesting of religious habit of the first three brothers. These were the first ones who wore the emblem sown on the cassock they received, which gave the distinguishing mark of this humble beginnings. On a cloth was printed a heart with the following inscription *“Rogate Ergo Dominum Messis Ut Mittat Operarios In Messem Suam”* (“Pray therefore to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest”). In these words, the Congregation finds its identity and spirituality. The Founder himself remindshis spiritual sons:

“Now, here is a new community just being born which comes forth in the Church...It needs intelligent generous people, who understand not only its sacred mission of charity towards the neighbor, like all the other modern institutions, but also of that divine holy word that makes it unique and special: Rogate ergo.” (St. Hannibal Mary Di Francia, Letters)



PROVINCIAL ROGATE VOCATION CENTER

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