

The Congregation at Prayer

A Guide for Daily Meditation and Prayer

For the Week of the Fourth Sunday in Advent and the Nativity of Our Lord

December 18 through December 25, 2022

Catechesis Notes for the Week — Advent Meditations: St. Thomas, Apostle – As we begin our final week of Advent, looking toward the celebration of the birth of the Son of God in human flesh, we hear the detailed testimony from the evangelists St. Matthew and St. Luke in the Bible Stories. Listen carefully how the evangelists cite the Old Testament Scriptures which are being fulfilled in Jesus’ birth. **Christ’s Birth Is Foretold to Joseph** is anchored in the promise of the Virgin birth from the prophet Isaiah. The **Nativity of Our Lord** and the **Birth of Christ Is Announced to Shepherds** shows the connection between the presence of the Lord in the glory-cloud that was suspended between the cherubim above the mercy-seat in the Old Testament and the fulness of that glory in Jesus that shone around the shepherds as the Angel of the Lord announced His birth. Against the backdrop of Scripture fulfilled in the birth of Christ stands the **Feast of St. Thomas, Apostle**, on December 21. Thomas, together with his fellow apostles, witnessed the fulfillment of the entirety of the Old Testament Scriptures in everything that Jesus said and did. Thomas’ insistence that he must see the resurrected Lord was proper. As an Apostle, he could not bear witness to that which he had not seen. This teaches us that everything recorded in the Apostolic witness of the New Testament is what the Apostles heard and saw from Jesus in fulfillment of the Scriptures.

The Order of Meditation and Prayer

Pray and confess out loud as much from the order of meditation and prayer as you are able, or as your family size and ages dictate. Learn by heart the verse, catechism, and hymn of the week.

Theme: Let the Clouds Rain Down Righteousness!

Invocation

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Apostles’ Creed

Verse: John 1:14

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Psalm 111 and/or the appointed daily psalms listed below.

Prayer on the Psalm: Most merciful God and Father, through the works of Your Son, Jesus Christ our Savior, we come to know Your heart of love for us and the truths of eternal salvation in Jesus. Give us a fervent love for our Savior, that loving Him and delighting in His works for us, we might know the comfort of Your love and abide in His Word and works all the days of our lives, through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Daily Psalms	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Morning	24	122	33	50	18:1-20	102	19	2
Evening	25, 110	40, 67	85, 91	14, 16	126, 62	130, 16	132, 114	98, 96

Bible Readings for the Week:

	Bible Narrative	Second Reading
Sunday	Advent 4: John Prepares for the Redeemer—John 1:19-28	
Monday	Christ’s Birth Is Foretold to Joseph—Matthew 1:18-25	Isaiah 7:10-14
Tuesday	The Nativity of Our Lord—Luke 2:1-7	Isaiah 9:2-7
Wednesday	Midweek: St. Thomas, Apostle —John 20:24-29	Ephesians 4:7, 11-16
Thursday	The Birth of Christ Is Announced to Shepherds—Luke 2:8-14	Isaiah 62:10-12
Friday	The Shepherds Visit Bethlehem—Luke 2:15-20	Isaiah 52:6-10
Saturday	Christmas Eve —Luke 2:1-20	Titus 2:11-14

The Catechism: The Second Article

What is the Second Article of the Creed?

And [I believe] in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord...

What does this mean?

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death,

Preschool +

First Grade +

That I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom
and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness,
Just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity.
This is most certainly true.

Second Grade +

Prayers: Catechism Prayers, the Collects for the Week, and In Our Prayers at Peace,

Prayer on the Second Article

Heavenly Father, You have given us Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary to redeem us from sin, death, and the power of the devil. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried, taking all of the punishment that we deserved for our sin upon Himself. He descended into hell, proclaiming His victory over the devil; and on the third day He rose again from the dead, preaching the forgiveness of sins and the promise of eternal life in His name to the whole world. We give thanks to You for all that Your Son has done for us. Help us to know and believe in Jesus. He has now ascended into heaven and sits at Your right hand as our Savior and Lord. All the enemies of sin, death, and hell have been placed under His feet and He now rules over all things for the sake of His Church. Give us fervent faith in Jesus and the blessed hope that He will come again to judge the living and the dead, giving the gift of eternal salvation to all who believe in Him; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

In Our Prayers this Week (include the petitions below followed by the Lord's Prayer)

Baptismal Anniversaries: Chuck Hartwig (12/19), Ashley Swiskoski (12/21).

The Sick: Rev. Jon Leider hospitalized with pneumonia; Bob Piper hospitalized with a head injury following a fall. Nicola Giordano's paternal grandmother who is hospitalized. Cyndi Ruhnau recovering from hip replacement; Mary Boehringer, suffering the effects of cancer treatment; Bob Rothe, Peyton Locklair, Jamilyn Martin, Kathy Miller, Heather Peters, and Josiah Boehringer in cancer treatment.

Hospice Care: Rev. DuWayne Schneider (friend of the Koplings).

For Those Who Mourn: family and friends of Russell Seifferlein, father of Rev. Christopher Seifferlein.

Collect for the week of the Fourth Sunday in Advent: (for December 19 through the morning of December 24)

Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come and help us by Your might, that the sins which weigh us down may be quickly lifted by Your grace and mercy; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

Collect for St. Thomas, Apostle (December 21)

Almighty and ever-living God, You strengthened Your apostle Thomas with firm and certain faith in the resurrection of Your Son. Grant us such faith in Jesus Christ, our Lord and our God, that we may never be found wanting in Your sight; through the same Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Collect for the Nativity of Our Lord (Christmas Eve)

O God, You make this most holy night to shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that as we have known the mysteries of that Light on earth we may also come to the fullness of His joys in heaven; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Collect for the Nativity of Our Lord (Christmas Day)

Almighty God, grant that the birth of Your only-begotten Son in the flesh may set us free from the bondage of our sin; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Lord's Prayer and Morning or Evening Prayer from the Catechism.

Hymn of the Week

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

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Looking forward to Christmas Day

December 25, 2022

Hymns: 380, TLH81, 624, 384, 379, 375, 361, 387, 382, 373

Exodus 40:17-21, 34-38: A tabernacle is a dwelling place. The Old Testament tabernacle was the place where the Lord dwelt with His people for their salvation. They gathered at the tabernacle of Yahweh to receive the Lord's service. The Old Testament tabernacle prefigured the true and eternal tabernacle of the Lord, our Lord Jesus Christ. The Gospel for Christmas day declares that "the Word became flesh and 'tabernacled' among us." The Old Testament tabernacle was a place where God provided the sacrifices for the salvation of His people. Those gifts are fulfilled in Jesus whose sacrifice for us is the fountain and source of eternal life and salvation. In Jesus we behold the glory of God and His eternal grace and truth.

Titus 3:4-7: The kindness and love of God is demonstrated in the fact that He saved us in His Son, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but by the gift of His grace. In Holy Baptism the Father pours out His Spirit on us through His Son, Jesus Christ our Savior, so that we might be justified by His grace and obtain the inheritance of eternal life.

John 1:1-18: Never doubt God's love for you! He, through whom God the Father created and sustains all things, the eternal Word of the Father—the Son of God, became one with our flesh and blood to redeem us from all sin and every evil. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." The glory of God is manifested in the gift of His only Son for our redemption. Though He came to His own and His own did not receive Him, but resisted His grace, still He continued His work for the world's salvation. But to "as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become the children of God, even to those who believe in His name."