

The Congregation at Prayer

A Guide for Daily Meditation and Prayer
For the Week of the Third Sunday in Advent
December 17 through December 24, 2023

Catechesis Notes for the Week — The Seed of the Woman — “He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel” (Genesis 3:15). “The suffering and death of the virgin-born Son of God, by which Satan would be robbed of his authority to condemn sinful man, is predicted by this riddle. This passage is often called the first promise of the Gospel. It promises redemption from the power of Satan (the serpent) by Jesus (the Seed of the Woman). How does one kill a serpent? By crushing its head. In the process, one’s heel is bruised. Jesus was bruised in His suffering and death, but by it He won the victory over Satan. The power of Satan was the power to condemn sinful man by the authority of God’s own word: “in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die” (Genesis 2:17). Since man rebelled and ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Satan had authority from God’s command to demand man’s death and separation from God. The Seed of the Woman (the Son of God becomes man to suffer and die according to the word of judgment attached to the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thereby bruising (or crushing) the serpent’s head (or Satan’s authority to condemn). Satan entered the creation in the form of a serpent to deceive and destroy; the Son of God entered into creation in the form of man to suffer man’s death, redeem the creation, and reconcile man to God.” (Excerpt from Lutheran Catechesis: Catechist Edition, p. 86b)

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: Rejoice in the Lord Always!

Invocation

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

Apostles’ Creed

Verse: Isaiah 40:11

He will feed His flock like a shepherd;
He will gather the lambs with His arm,
and gently lead those who are with young.

Psalm 85 and/or the appointed daily psalms listed below.

Prayer on the Psalm: O Lord Jesus Christ, at Your coming in the flesh You sent Your messenger to prepare Your way before You. Grant that the ministers and stewards of Your mysteries may likewise so prepare and make ready Your way, by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that at Your second coming, to judge the world, we may be found acceptable in Your sight; for You live and reign with the Father 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	90	19
Evening	25, 110	40, 67	85, 91	14, 16	126, 62	130, 16	80, 72	132, 114

Bible Readings for the Week:

	Bible Narrative	Second Reading
Sunday	“Go and Tell John What You Hear and See”—Matthew 11:2-11	
Monday	The Benedictus—Luke 1:67-80	Leviticus 26:40-45
Tuesday	Christ’s Birth Is Foretold to Joseph—Matthew 1:18-25	Isaiah 7:10-14
Wednesday	Advent: Jesus Heals the Deaf Mute —Mark 7:31-37/Third Article	
Thursday	St. Thomas, Apostle: John 20:24-29	Ephesians 4:7, 11-16
Friday	The Nativity of Our Lord—Luke 2:1-7	Ex. 40:1-3, 16-21, 34-38
Saturday	The Birth of Christ Is Announced to Shepherds—Luke 2:8-20	Isaiah 52:6-10

The Catechism: Table of Duties — To Husbands and To Wives

(Preschool children and everyone, review the primary texts of the fourth through tenth commandments.)

To Husbands

What does God’s Word say to husbands?

Husbands,
in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives,
and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life,
so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

First Grade +
1 Peter 3:7

Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

First Grade +
Colossians 3:19

To Wives

What does God's Word say of wives? Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord.	Third Grade + Ephesians 5:22
[This is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful.] They were submissive to their own husbands, like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.	First Grade + 1 Peter 3:5-6

Prayers: The Collects for the Week, Daily Themes for Prayer, and In Our Prayers at Peace

Collect for the Third Sunday in Advent

Lord Jesus Christ, we implore You to hear our prayers and to lighten the darkness of our hearts by Your gracious visitation; 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.

Daily Themes for Prayer — “Let us pray...”

- Sunday:** For the joy of the resurrection among us; for the fruit of faith nourished by the Word and Sacraments.
- Monday:** For faith to live in the promises of Holy Baptism; for one's calling and daily work; for the unemployed; for the salvation and well-being of our neighbors; for schools, colleges, and seminaries; for good government and for peace.
- Tuesday:** For deliverance against temptation and evil; for the addicted and despairing, the tortured and oppressed; for those struggling with besetting sins.
- Wednesday:** For marriage and family, that husbands and wives, parents and children live in ordered harmony according to the Word of God; for parents who must raise children alone; for our communities and neighborhoods.
- Thursday:** For the Church and her pastors; for teachers, deacons, deaconesses, and other church workers; for missionaries and for all who serve the Church; for fruitful and salutary use of the blessed sacrament of Christ's body and blood.
- Friday:** For the preaching of the holy cross of our Lord Jesus Christ and for the spread of His knowledge throughout the whole world; for the persecuted and oppressed; for the sick and dying.
- Saturday:** For faithfulness to the end; for the renewal of those who are withering in the faith or have fallen away; for receptive hearts and minds to God's Word on the Lord's Day; for pastors and people as they prepare to administer and receive Christ's holy gifts.

In Our Prayers this Week — “Let us pray for...”

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

The Sick: Mark Gretzinger recuperating from knee surgery; George Kaminski recovering from pneumonia; Anna Steinhilb recovering from colon surgery; Patty Rothe in rehab; Rev. Dr. John Wille, Rev. Luke Boehringer, Jean Reuss, Gabby Hartwig, and Michael, in cancer treatment; Lyle Wollin, Sue Everhardt (Gil Leon's family friend); Karen (Mark Thoni's aunt) in hospice.

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

Hymn of the Week

“When All the World Was Cursed” (stanzas 1-2)

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Looking forward to the Fourth Sunday in Advent and The Nativity of Our Lord

December 24, 2023

Hymns: 352, 385, 356, 362, 382, 353

Deuteronomy 18:15-19: Jesus is the Prophet greater than Moses for He is Himself the Word incarnate, the glory of God, full of grace and truth. He does not merely proclaim the Law and Promises of God. He is their fulfillment. He is salvation.

Philippians 4:4-7: Out of our faith in Christ we commend all of our needs, concerns, and anxieties to Him, knowing that we have the promise of full and complete salvation. Upon this promise our peace with God rests. The life of faith rejoices in all things, especially suffering, by which Christ is manifest in us. We rejoice in suffering because through the suffering of our Savior our life was reconciled to God.

Luke 1:39-56: This Sunday's Gospel is the story of the Visitation. After the angel Gabriel had announced to the Virgin Mary that she would be the mother of the Son of God and Jesus was conceived in her womb by the Holy Spirit, Mary departed from Nazareth to Judea to visit her cousin Elizabeth who was pregnant with John, the forerunner of the Christ. These two women give us an example of what it means to live humbly by faith in the Lord's Word. They were receivers! That's what a Christian is. We live from the Lord's Word. Faith receives what the Lord says and yields to His will: “Let it be to me according to Your Word.” The life of faith to which these two women were called would not be easy. Elizabeth was an older woman. Mary was young and bore the stigma of a suspicious pregnancy. They were each called to believe the Lord's word of grace in their unique offices as women and mothers. Instead of arguing and rebelling against the Lord for the inconvenience and hardship these children would bring into their lives, they accepted the Lord's will with joy and praise of the God who was so generous to them and to all people in fulfilling the promises of the Gospel. We who are called to live in our vocations by the grace of God in the Gospel of His Son can take up Mary's song, the Magnificat, and sing it as our own joyful confession of faith in Him: “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior... for He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name.”