

# The Congregation at Prayer

A Guide for Daily Meditation and Prayer  
 For the Week of the Fourth Sunday in Advent/the Nativity of Our Lord  
 December 24 through December 31, 2023

**Catechesis Notes for the Week — Though He Was Rich, He Became Poor for Us** — “Every Christian ‘knows the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ’ because it is proclaimed to us in the Gospel. It is the pure, undeserved, sacrificial love of Jesus that moved Him to become one with our flesh and weakness, and to suffer and die for our sins. We know and believe in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation. It is this grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that moved Him to do what he did for us—to become man, to humble Himself, to suffer and to die for the unworthy and the undeserving. Though he was “rich”—the holy, eternal, omnipotent Son of God who shared in the Father’s glory from eternity and through whom the Father made all things—yet for our sakes He became “poor.” This is love. He set aside His power and glory as the eternal Son of God and became man, humbling Himself to the point of bearing the sin of the whole world in His own body upon the cross and dying for us that we through His poverty...might become rich, partakers of His divine life. To become rich in Christ is to share eternally in the grace of God and to become partakers with Jesus of the immortal and incorruptible life that He won for us in His humiliation, suffering, and death.” (Excerpt from LC)

## 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: The Son of God Is Born for Us!

### Invocation

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

### Apostles’ Creed

Verse: Titus 3:4-5a

When the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared,  
 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us.

Psalm 96 and/or the appointed daily psalms listed below.

**Prayer on the Psalm:** O Lord God, our heavenly Father, who of Your great goodness and mercy has caused Your only-begotten Son to become incarnate, that we through Him might be redeemed from sin and everlasting death; we pray You, enlighten our hearts that we may be truly thankful for His gracious incarnation and birth, that we may be comforted by the same in all time of tribulation and temptation, and in the end receive Your everlasting salvation; through Your dear Son 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	19	2	116	34	2	96	93	98
Evening	132, 114	98, 96	119:1-24, 27	19, 121	110, 111	132, 97	89:1-18, 19-52	45, 96

### Bible Readings for the Week:

	Bible Narrative	Second Reading
Sunday	<b>Advent 4: Mary Visits Elizabeth—Luke 1:39-56</b>	Titus 2:11-14
Monday	<b>Christmas Day: The Word Became Flesh—John 1:1-18</b>	Titus 3:4-7
Tuesday	<b>St. Stephen, Martyr: Acts 6:8—7:60</b>	Matthew 23:34-39
Wednesday	<b>St. John, Apostle and Evangelist: John 21:20-25</b>	1 John 1:1—2:2
Thursday	<b>Holy Innocents, Martyrs: Matthew 2:13-18</b>	Jeremiah 31:10-17
Friday	The Rest in Returning to the Lord—Isaiah 30:8-17	Romans 8:31b-39
Saturday	The Spirit of the Lord Shall Rest Upon Him—Isaiah 11:1-5	Galatians 4:1-7

### The Catechism: The Creed— The Second Article

What is the Second Article of the Creed? <b>And [I believe] in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord...</b>	Preschool +
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,	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: Collects for the Week, Daily Themes for Prayer, In Our Prayers at Peace**

**Collect for the Nativity of Our Lord**

Almighty God, grant that the birth of Your only-begotten Son in the flesh may set us free from the bondage of sin; through 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 Feast of St. Stephen, Martyr (December 26)**

Heavenly Father, in the midst of our sufferings for the sake of Christ grant us grace to follow the example of the first martyr, Stephen, that we also may look to the One who suffered and was crucified on our behalf and pray for those who do us wrong; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**Collect for the Feast of St. John, Apostle and Evangelist (December 27)**

Merciful Lord, cast the bright beams of Your light upon Your Church that we, being instructed in the doctrine of Your blessed apostle and evangelist John, may come to the light of everlasting life; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**Collect for the Feast of The Holy Innocents, Martyrs (December 28)**

Almighty God, the martyred innocents of Bethlehem showed forth Your praise not by speaking but by dying. Put to death in us all that is in conflict with Your will that our lives may bear witness to the faith we profess with our lips; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**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:** Marc Schneider, Magdalena Gehlbach (12/25), Angie Clark, Lee Neujahr (12/27), David Steinhilb, Eunice Neujahr (12/28), Andrew Schneider (12/30). **Wedding Anniversaries:** Paul and Judith Woehrmann (12/27).

**The Sick:** Rev. Dr. John Wille, Rev. Luke Boehringer, Jean Reuss, Gabby Hartwig, and Michael, in cancer treatment; Sue Everhardt (Gil Leon’s family friend); Karen (Mark Thoni’s aunt) in hospice. **Those Who Mourn:** family & friends of Lyle Wollin.

**Lord’s Prayer and Morning or Evening Prayer from the Catechism.**

**Hymn of the Week**

**“Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming” (stanzas 1-2)**

**359**

**Looking forward to the First Sunday after Christmas**

**December 31, 2023**

**Hymns: 367, 389, 519, 358, 938, 937**

**Isaiah 11:1-5:** Jesus’ human lineage is from the stock of Jesse, the father of King David. Isaiah proclaims the work of the Triune God that surrounds the incarnation and ministry of the Son of God. The Holy Spirit from the Father will rest upon Him and enable Him to be faithful and to delight in performing the work of righteousness for our salvation.

**Galatians 4:1-7:** Paul declares that the birth of Christ came about according to the Scriptures “in the fullness of the times.” God had directed all things in the history of the world so that His Son was born at just the right time for the salvation of the world. He was born under the obligations of God’s Law in order to do for us what we were unable to do for ourselves. By His perfect obedience to the Law, Christ Jesus secures our redemption from sin, death, and the power of Satan.

**Luke 2:22-40:** Forty days after our Lord’s birth He was presented in the temple at the time of Mary’s purification from childbirth. At this visit the holy family meets the aged Simeon who prophesies that having received the Lord’s Christ he is now able to depart this life in peace. Simeon speaks of Christ’s death when he tells Mary that a sword will pierce through her own soul. Simeon’s song, the *Nunc Dimittis*, is sung by us at the conclusion of the reception of the Lord’s Supper. As Simeon received the Lord Jesus at His presentation in the temple, so we receive the Lord Jesus in the Lord’s Supper and are prepared to “depart this life” according to God’s will with the full assurance of sins forgiven “for [our] eyes have seen the Lord’s salvation.” The aged woman Anna, who had engaged in humble service in the temple for years, also rejoiced in the Lord’s presentation and confessed Him to all who longed for redemption and salvation. Simeon and Anna give us a picture of what it is to be a Christian. We cling to Christ for salvation and boldly confess Him to the world in our vocation.