**INTRODUCTION**

 Merry Christmas! We are grateful for your self-giving and prayers during this year. This is a season of great joy and rejoicing for God has come and lived among us. But how does He come to us? What does he look like? Does Jesus live up to your expectations?

 Let us celebrate by passing on the Good News, the truth of Jesus. “Anyone who has discovered Christ must lead others to Him. A great joy cannot be kept to oneself. It has to be passed on.” (Pope Benedict XVI). Let us also look to Mary for the best example on how to celebrate Jesus’ entry into the world. She as the first messenger with “beautiful feet’ who made the Good News known to all around her. Let us ask for her intercession. Mary, refuge of sinners, may the coming of Christ free us to love others, may His birth in our hearts break the chains that stop us reaching out to love others.

 Let us humbly accept that our lives are not perfect but that is precisely where God wants to enter. Let us recognize his knock and open the door to welcome Him joyfully. And may we not doubt that our lives will always be better when He is with us. Have a Blessed New Year!

**MONDAY**

***The Birth of Jesus***

***(Memorial of St. Stephen)***

**2**In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. **2**(This was the first census that took place while[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%202:1-4#fen-NIV-24976a)] Quirinius was governor of Syria.) **3**And everyone went to their own town to register.

**4**So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. ***(Luke 2:1-4)***

 *Rejoice! Jesus has been born. He is the solution to all our problems and the answer to all our longings. He has been born to take up our struggles, to fight our battles with us. Let us welcome our Saviour, Jesus as such that we will let Him live in us so that we can tell others about Him.*

**TUESDAY**

***The Visit of the Magi***

***(Memorial of St. John)***

**2**After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%202:1-12#fen-NIV-23171a)] from the east came to Jerusalem **2**and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”

**3**When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. **4**When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born.**5**“In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written:

**6**“‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
    are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for out of you will come a ruler
    who will shepherd my people Israel.’[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%202:1-12#fen-NIV-23176b)]”

**7**Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. **8**He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

**9**After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. **10**When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. **11**On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.**12**And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route. ***(Matthew 2: 1-12)***

 *After giving their gifts, the three Magi faded away quietly. The challenge in life is sometimes about how to do good things and exit, how to do our part and bow. That is how the Lord will notice our star when it has faded into the night. We can do things only by remembering that Jesus is the center, the reason, and the intention of all our being and doing. How much are you willing to give up so that you may find Christ?*

**WEDNESDAY**

***The Flight to Egypt***

***(the Holy Innocents)***

**13**When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up,” he said, “take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.”

**14**So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, **15**where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called my son.”[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mathew+2%3A+13-15%2C+19-23&version=NIV#fen-NIV-23185a)]

**19**After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt **20**and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child’s life are dead.”

**21**So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. **22**But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, **23**and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene.***(Mathew 2: 13-15, 19-23)***

 *The Lord reminds us to be vigilant for there are Herods that threaten relationships in the family ---- Herods of pride, jealousy, and ambition to name a few. These threaten the peace and harmony within the family. St. Paul urges us all to put on the armour of Christ to defend ourselves. A strong relationship with Jesus and the Holy Spirit will help us to be vigilant against the attack of the enemy --- the Herods in our life. What is the Herod that threatens my spiritual life?*

**THURSDAY**

***Jesus born of a Virgin Mother***

**18**This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%201:18-25#fen-NIV-23163a)]: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit.**19**Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%201:18-25#fen-NIV-23164b)] did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

**20**But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. **21**She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus,[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%201:18-25" \l "fen-NIV-23166c" \o "See footnote c)] because he will save his people from their sins.”

**22**All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: **23**“The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel”[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%201:18-25" \l "fen-NIV-23168d" \o "See footnote d)] (which means “God with us”).

**24**When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. **25**But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus. ***(Mathew 1: 18-25)***

 *Like Joseph, there are events in our life that are difficult to understand. Faith in God’s loving guidance can help us see the brighter side of life. God has sent us Jesus to save us from damnation. God assures us of His light through discernment, prayer, reflection on His Word, and advise of well-meaning people. Let us trust God at all times.*

**FRIDAY**

***The Presentation in the Temple***

***(Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph)***

**22**When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. **39**When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. **40**And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him.***(Luke 2:22,39-40)***

 *The Holy Family of Nazareth is a true model and source of comfort for all families of the world. It is so because “it underwent trials of poverty, persecution and exile.” (St. John Paul II). Belonging to the Verbum Dei family, you are encouraged to be faithful to the day-to-day duties, to bear the cares and tribulations of life, to be open and generous to the needs of others and to fulfill with joy the plan of the Father. Do you put your family in God’s hands?*

**SATURDAY**

***The Word***

**1**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2**He was with God in the beginning. **3**Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.**4**In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. **5**The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=john+1%3A+1-+18&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26050a)] it.

**6**There was a man sent from God whose name was John. **7**He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. **8**He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

**9**The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.**10**He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. **11**He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. **12**Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—**13**children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.

**14**The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

**15**(John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, “This is the one I spoke about when I said, ‘He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’”) **16**Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. **17**For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. **18**No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=john+1%3A+1-+18&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26063b)] is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known. ***(John 1: 1-18)***

 *Let us fill New Year’s Eve with Jesus. “In the beginning was the Word.” All things came to be through Jesus. He makes his dwelling place among us, to be with us, to make us God’s children, and then bring us back to the bosom of the Father. How do you welcome Jesus this New Year? How do you bring Jesus to others this coming Year?*

 **SUNDAY**

**Solemnity of Mary, Holy Mother of God**

**World Day of Prayer for Peace**

**1st Reading** – Numbers 6:22-27

**Responsorial Psalm** – Psalm 67

**2nd Reading** – Galatians 4:4-7

**Gospel** – Luke 2:16-21



**GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER**

***“Today, a Savior is born for you!”***

***(Luke 2:11)***

December 26, 2016 - January 1, 2017

**General Theme:** Eternity stepped into time.

**General Objectives:**

- to value the time given to us in the Church for the preparation and of change.

- to know more deeply who is the one coming.

- to celebrate with joy the mystery of Christmas.



**Objective of the week:**

To celebrate with Joy the birth of Jesus