

AFRICA

Living with Christ

GROWING UP DAILY WITH THE GOOD NEWS

Weekly LWCA

2nd Week
of Advent

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Liturgical texts:

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On our cover: Two candles lit.

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Editorial

December 2023



Rev. Fr. Walter C. Ihejirika, Nigeria

Mary Mother of the Poor

Within this liturgical week, we celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Patroness of the Americas. Mary appeared to Juan Diego and showed herself as a tender and compassionate Mother strengthening the faith of poor in Jesus Christ. She is able to do this, because she is ‘full of grace’ (Lk 1:26-38).

There are people who suffer abject poverty. They lack basic necessities of life. Others suffer due to natural disasters or conflicts. At times, poverty persists across generations within a family.

As our catechism notes, the Church’s love for the poor is a part of her constant tradition. This love is inspired by the Gospel of the Beatitudes, of the poverty of Jesus, and of his concern for the poor. Those who are oppressed by poverty are the object of a preferential love on the part of the Church which, since her origin and in spite of the failings of many of her members, has not ceased to work for their relief, defense, and liberation.” (CCC 2444) Like Mary, we called to share Jesus’ joy and peace.



The Pope's Prayer Intention

For persons with disabilities : We pray that people living with disabilities may be at the center of attention in society, and that institutions may offer inclusive programs which value their active participation.

Other papal intentions and videos can be found on: <http://apostleshipofprayer.org/>

Liturgical Symbols (II)

In this article, we continue to focus on some liturgical symbols used in the Eucharistic celebration. These symbols find their origin in the Bible as it is the first source of Liturgy.

Incense

According to the Roman Missal, incensation is an expression of reverence and prayer. When we read the Sacred Scriptures, there are many verses that talk about incense. For instance, Psalm 140, 2: **«Accept my prayer as incense offered to you, and my upraised hands as an evening offering»**; Revelation 8,3: **«Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all God's people, on the golden altar in front of the throne»**. During incensation, the smoke goes up. It symbolizes the prayer of the faithful that ascends to God who dwells in heaven.

The Roman Missal states that incense can be used optionally in any form of Mass. It is used during the

entrance procession, at the beginning of Mass to incense the cross and the altar, at the procession before the Gospel and the proclamation of the Gospel, after the bread and the chalice have been placed on the altar, to incense the offerings, the cross, and the altar as well as the priest and the people; and finally at the elevation of the host and the chalice after the Consecration.

The ambo

During the Eucharistic celebration, the ambo is the place from which the word of God is read and explained. It is the table of the Word. The first reading, the second reading and the Gospel are read from the ambo. The responsorial psalm may be sung also from the ambo since it is part of God's Word. The homily is given from the ambo. The ambo can be considered as the place of proclamation of Jesus' resurrection. This can be clearly seen on Holy Saturday when the deacon or the priest sings the **Alleluia** three times before reading the Gospel.

The Altar

The Altar is the center of the Eucharistic Celebration. It symbolizes Jesus Christ himself who, according to

the fifth preface of Easter, is the Priest, the Altar and the Lamb of sacrifice. Therefore, the Altar is not a geographical center but a theological one. The Altar is also referred to as the Table of the Eucharist.

During the Eucharistic celebration, the significance of the altar is clearly seen through all the signs and events that take place on it. The priest kisses the Altar at the beginning and at the end of the Holy Mass, it is while standing at the Altar that the priest recites some prayers in a low voice, the priest incenses it during the offertory, it is on it that the bread becomes the body of Christ and the wine becomes the blood of Christ.

The Table of the Word (ambo) and the Table of the Eucharist (Altar) are indissolubly connected. In fact, the Word that the faithful hear in the first part of the Eucharistic celebration is the same Word that becomes flesh in the second part.

*Rev. Fr. Jérôme K. M. Kombi,
Kinshasa, D.R. Congo*



Sunday December 10

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

*Isaiah 40:1-5.9-11/ Psalm 85:8ab and 9.10-11.12-13./
2 Peter 3:8-14./ Mark 1:1-8.*



"I baptized you with water; he will baptize you in the Holy Spirit."
(Mark 1:8)



Look in the Mirror

Today is the second Sunday of Advent. St. Mark begins his account of the gospel by saying, ‘the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the son of God’ (Mk. 1:1). Of the four evangelists, Mark is the only one who begins his account of the gospel by telling us that what he is writing is the Gospel. The word Gospel comes from the Greek word, ‘evangelion’ which means Good News. As at the time Mark was writing, the word ‘evangelion’ was used in a different sense. It was used to announce the birth of the emperor and also used to announce the news of victory by the emperor. Such news brought hope, peace, well-being and happiness. St. Mark used the word to draw our attention to the fact that, the real well-being, the real peace, the real happiness comes not from the emperor’s birth or victories. The real Good News is the Good News of Salvation proclaimed by Jesus Christ.

The season of Advent prepares us to welcome this Good News personified in Jesus Christ. The prophecy of Isaiah in today’s first reading, finds fulfilment in John the Baptist who invites us to the wilderness. He invites us to shun



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all distractions and instead prepare for the coming of the Messiah born on Christmas day.

The word of God must work on us and gain deep roots first before we can propagate it to others. Today, John the Baptist is inviting us to take a break from focusing on other people and focus on ourselves. He challenges us to be better members of our families, our communities and better persons in this world. This is indeed the importance of the season of Advent. We find qualities in John the Baptist which we should emulate as we prepare for the coming of our Lord at Christmas. In John the Baptist, we see a good example of humility. A kind of humility that challenges us to acknowledge our unworthiness and to journey towards holiness. A kind of humility that eschews pride, ego and unholy ambitions.

Rev. Fr. Winfred Tawiah, Ghana



Entrance Antiphon (*Is 30:19.30*)

O people of Zion, behold, the Lord will come to save the nations, and the Lord will make the glory of his voice heard in the joy of your heart.

The Gloria in excelsis (*Glory to God in the highest*) **is not said**

Collect

Almighty and merciful God, may no earthly undertaking hinder those who set out in haste to meet your Son, but may our learning of heavenly wisdom gain us admittance to his company. Who lives and reigns with you. **Amen.**

First Reading (*Isaiah 40:1-5.9-11*)

A reading from the Book of Isaiah

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough



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places a plain. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.” Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings, lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, “Behold your God!” Behold, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will feed his flock like a shepherd, he will gather the lambs in his arms, he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Responsorial Psalm —————
(Psalm (84) 85:8ab and 9.10.11-12 -13)

Show us your stead-fast love, O Lord, and
grant us your sal - va - tion.

R. Let us see, O Lord, your mercy
and grant us your salvation.



I will hear what the Lord God speaks;
he speaks of peace for his people and his faithful,
His salvation is near for those who fear him,
and his glory will dwell in our land. R.

Merciful love and faithfulness have met;
justice and peace have kissed.
Faithfulness shall spring from the earth,
and justice look down from heaven. R.

Also the Lord will bestow his bounty,
and our earth shall yield its increase.
Justice will march before him,
and guide his steps on the way. R.

Second Reading (2 Peter 3:8-14)—————

A reading from the second Letter of Saint Peter

Do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow about his promise as some count slowness, but is forbearing towards you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be



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dissolved with fire, and the earth and the works that are upon it will be burnt up. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of persons ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be kindled and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire! But according to his promise we wait for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you wait for these, be zealous to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Acclamation (*Luke 3:4.6*)

Alleluia. Alleluia. Prepare the way for the Lord, make his paths straight; all flesh shall see the salvation of God.
Alleluia.

Gospel (*Mark 1:1-8*)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, "Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who shall prepare your way; the voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." John the Baptist appeared in



the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And there went out to him all the country of Judea, and all the people of Jerusalem; and they were baptised by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, and had a leather belt around his waist, and ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, "After me comes he who is mightier than I, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I have baptised you with water; but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit."

The Gospel of Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Prayer of the Faithful

The following intentions are suggestions only.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

For the Church, courageously open to inner and outer transformation by the Holy Spirit, we pray to the Lord: R.

For the leaders of nations and communities, striving to build a society of righteousness, peace and justice, we pray to the Lord: R.



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For the poor, the weak and the helpless, we pray to the Lord: *R.*

For this community, open to conversion and forgiveness, we pray to the Lord: *R.*

Prayer over the Offerings

Be pleased with our humble prayers and offerings, O Lord, we pray, and since we have no merits to plead our cause, come to our rescue with the protection of your mercy. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon (*Bar 5:5;4:36*)

Jerusalem, arise and stand upon the heights, and behold the joy which comes to you from God.

Prayer after Communion

Replenished by the food of spiritual nourishment, we humbly beseech you, O Lord, that, through our partaking in this mystery, you may teach us to judge wisely the things of earth and hold firm to the things of heaven. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



Monday December 11

2nd Week of Advent

Ferial

Or: **Saint Damasua I** (*optional memorial*)

Entrance Antiphon

(*Jer. 31:10; Is 35:4*) **Hear the word of the Lord, O nations; declare it to the distant lands: Behold, our Saviour will come; you need no longer fear.**

Collect

May our prayer of petition rise before you, we pray, O Lord, that, with purity unblemished, we, your servants may come, as we desire, to celebrate the great mystery of the Incarnation of your Only-Begotten Son.

Who lives and reigns with you. **Amen.**

Reading ————— (*Isaiah 35:1-10*)

A reading from the Book of Isaiah

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the lily it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall



see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God. Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are of a fearful heart, “Be strong, fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you.” Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. And a highway shall be there, and it shall

be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not pass over it, and fools shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

***Responsorial Psalm—
(Psalm (84) 85:9ab and
10.11-12.13-14)***

R. Our God will come and save us!

I will hear what the Lord God speaks; he speaks of



peace for his people and his faithful. His salvation is near for those who fear him, and his glory will dwell in our land. *R.*

Merciful love and faithfulness have met; justice and peace have kissed. Faithfulness shall spring from the earth, and justice look down from heaven. *R.*

Also the Lord will bestow his bounty, and our earth shall yield its increase. Justice will march before him, and guide his steps on the way. *R.*

Acclamation

Alleluia. Alleluia. Behold, the King is coming, the Lord of the earth, and he shall remove the yoke of our captivity. **Alleluia.**

Gospel ————— *(Luke 5:17-26)*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

On one of those days, as Jesus was teaching, there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem; and the power of the Lord was with him to heal. And behold, men were bringing on a bed a man who was paralyzed, and they sought to bring him in and lay him before Jesus; but finding no way to bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down with his bed through the tiles into their midst before Jesus. And when he saw their faith



he said, “Man, your sins are forgiven you.” And the scribes and the Pharisees began to question, saying, “Who is this that speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only?” When Jesus perceived their questionings, he answered them, “Why do you question in your hearts? Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Rise and walk’? But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins”— he said to the man who was paralyzed— “I say to you, rise, take up your bed and go home.” And immediately he rose before them, and took up that on which he lay, and went home, glorifying God. And amazement seized them

all, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, “We have seen strange things today.”
The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer over the Offerings

Accept, we pray, O Lord, these offerings we make, gathered from among your gifts to us, and may what you grant us to celebrate devoutly here below, gain for us the prize of eternal redemption. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon

(Ps (105) 106:4-5; Is 38:3)
Come, O Lord, visit us in peace, that we may rejoice before you with a blameless heart.



Prayer after Communion

May these mysteries, O Lord, in which we have participated, profit us, we pray, for even now, as we walk amid passing things,

you teach us by them to love the things of heaven and hold fast to what endures. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Love and Faith

Commentary

Luke 5:17-26

Makes sacrifices. The Psalmist says, 'Our God will come to save us, we, as Christians, created in the image and likeness of God should make His salvation known and available to others. The gospel makes this clear through the action of the men who brought the paralysed man before Jesus. These faithful men removed every obstacle on their way to reach to Jesus. Our acts of love and faith should bring liberation to others.

Rev. Fr. Winfred Tawiah, Ghana



Tuesday December 12

2nd Week of Advent

Ferial

Or: Our Lady of Guadalupe (optional memorial)

Entrance Antiphon

(Zec 14:5-7) **Behold, the Lord will come, and all his holy ones with him; and on that day there will be a great light.**

Collect

O God, who have shown forth your salvation to all the ends of the earth, grant, we pray, that we may look forward in joy to the glorious Nativity of Christ. Who lives and reigns with you. **Amen.**

Reading

(Isaiah 40:1-11)

A reading from the Book of Isaiah

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for



our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." A voice says, "Cry!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people is grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand for ever. Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength,

O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!" Behold, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will feed his flock like a shepherd, he will gather the lambs in his arms, he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young. The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm —
*(Psalm (95) 96:1-2.3 and
10ac.11-12a.12b-13)*

**R. The Lord our God
comes with might.**

O sing a new song to the Lord; sing to the Lord, all the earth. O sing to the Lord; bless his name. Proclaim his salvation day by day. R.

Tell among the nations his glory, and his wonders among all the peoples. Say to the nations, “The Lord is king.” he will judge the peoples in fairness. R.

Let the heavens rejoice and earth be glad; let the sea and all within it thunder praise. Let the land and all it bears rejoice. R.

Then will all the trees of the wood shout for joy; at the presence of the Lord, for he comes, he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world with justice; he will govern the peoples with his truth. R.

Acclamation (*John 14:23*)
Alleluia. Alleluia. The day of the Lord is near; behold, he shall come to save us.
Alleluia.

Gospel —————
(Matthew 18:12-14)
**A reading from the holy
Gospel according to Mat-
thew**

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples, “What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does

he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go in search of the one that went astray? And if he finds it, truly, I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.” The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Prayer over the Offerings

Be pleased with our humble prayers and offerings, O Lord, we pray, and since we have no merits to plead our cause, come to our rescue with the protection of your mercy. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon

(Cf. 2 Tm 4:8) **The Just Judge will bestow a crown of righteousness on those who eagerly await his coming.**

Prayer after Communion

Replenished by the food of spiritual nourishment, we humbly beseech you, O Lord, that, through our partaking in this mystery,

you may teach us to judge wisely the things of earth and hold firm to the things of heaven. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Commentary

Drawing all to Jesus

Isaiah 40:1-11/ Matthew
18:12-14

'...He will feed His flock like a shepherd, He will gather the lambs in His arms, He will carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those that are with young' (Isaiah. 40:11). Jesus Christ longs to draw all men to Himself and that is what Christmas is all about. In the gospel, He assures us that, even the least among men is of great importance to Him. As we prepare for Christmas, may our lives as Christians draw many others to Jesus Christ so that there shall be one-fold and one Shepherd.

Rev. Fr. Winfred Tawiah, Ghana



Wednesday December 13

2nd Week of Advent

Memorial

Saint Lucy, virgin and martyr

Entrance Antiphon

(Hb 2:3; 1 Cor. 4:5) **The Lord will come and he will not delay. He will illumine what is hidden in darkness and reveal himself to all the nations.**

Collect

May the glorious intercession of the Virgin and Martyr Saint Lucy give us new heart, we pray, O Lord, so that we may celebrate her heavenly birthday in this present age and so behold things

eternal. Through our Lord... **Amen.**

Reading

(Isaiah 40:25-31)

A reading from the Book of Isaiah

To whom will you compare me, that I should be like him? says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these? He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name; by the greatness of his might, and because

he is strong in power not one is missing. Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, “My way is hidden from the Lord, and my right is disregarded by my God”? Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary, his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

***Responsorial Psalm —
(Psalm ⁽¹⁰²⁾ 103:1-2.3-4.8
and 10)***

R. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all within me, his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and never forget all his benefits. R.

It is the Lord who forgives all your sins, who heals every one of your ills, who redeems your life from the grave, who crowns you with mercy and compassion. R.

The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and rich in mercy. He does not treat us according to our

sins, nor repay us according to our faults. *R.*

Acclamation

Alleluia. Alleluia. Behold, the Lord is coming to save his people; blessed are those who are ready to meet him. **Alleluia.**

Gospel ————— **(Matthew 11:28-30)**

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

At that time: Jesus said, "Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer over the Offerings

May the offerings we bring in celebration of blessed Saint Lucy win your gracious acceptance, O Lord, we pray, just as the struggle of her suffering and passion was pleasing to you. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Communion Antiphon

(Rv 7:17) **The Lamb who is at the centre of the throne will lead them to the springs of the waters of life (E.T. alleluia).**

Prayer after Communion

O God, who bestowed on blessed Saint Lucy a crown among the Saints

for her twofold triumph of every evil, we may attain
virginity and martyrdom, the glory of heaven.
grant, we pray, through the Through Christ our Lord.
power of this Sacrament, **Amen.**
that bravely overcoming

Casting Our Burdens to Jesus

Commentary

**Isaiah 40:25-31/ Matthew
11:28-30**

Prophet Isaiah reminds us of how great and powerful God is. Our appreciation and acknowledgement of God gives us the courage to respond confidently to the invitation of Jesus Christ in the gospel reading. Total surrender to God's providence is the faith we must express to God. This season of Advent gives us the opportunity to cast our burdens of sin to Jesus. Jesus assures us that his yoke is easy, and his burden light. May we find rest in our Lord Jesus when He comes at Christmas.

Rev. Fr. Winfred Tawiah, Ghana



Thursday December 14

2nd Week of Advent

Memorial

Saint John of the Cross, priest and doctor

Entrance Antiphon

(Gal 6:14) **May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.**

your glory. Through our Lord... **Amen.**

Reading —————
(Isaiah 41:13-20)

A reading from the Book of Isaiah

Collect

O God, who gave the Priest Saint John an outstanding dedication to perfect self-denial and love of the Cross, grant that, by imitating him closely at all times, we may come to contemplate for eternity

I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, "Fear not, I will help you." Fear not, you worm Jacob, you men of Israel! I will help you, says the Lord; your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel. Behold, I will make of

you a threshing sledge, new, sharp, and having teeth; you shall thresh the mountains and crush them, and you shall make the hills like chaff; you shall winnow them and the wind shall carry them away, and the tempest shall scatter them. And you shall rejoice in the Lord; in the Holy One of Israel you shall glory. When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue is parched with thirst, I the Lord will answer them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers on the bare heights, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. I will put in the wilderness the cedar, the

acacia, the myrtle, and the olive; I will set in the desert the cypress, the plane and the pine together; that men may see and know, may consider and understand together, that the hand of the Lord has done this, the Holy One of Israel has created it.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

***Responsorial Psalm —
(Psalm ⁽¹⁴⁴⁾ 145:1 and
9.10-11.12-13ab)***

***R. FThe Lord is kind and
full of compassion, slow to
anger, abounding in mercy.***

I will extol you, my God and king, and bless your name for ever and ever. How good is the Lord to



all, compassionate to all his creatures. R.

All your works shall thank you, O Lord, and all your faithful ones bless you. They shall speak of the glory of your reign, and declare your mighty deeds. R.

They shall make known your might to the children of men, and the glorious splendour of your reign. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; your rule endures for all generations. R.

Acclamation (*Isaiah 45:8*)

Alleluia. Alleluia.

Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the skies rain down the Just One; let the earth open, that it may bring forth the Saviour. **Alleluia.**

Gospel —————
(*Matthew 11:11-15*)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

At that time: Jesus said to the crowds, “Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and men of violence take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John; and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer over the Offerings

Look upon the sacrificial gifts we offer, almighty God, in commemoration of Saint John of the Cross and grant that we who celebrate the mysteries of the Lord's Passion, may imitate what we now enact. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon

(Mt 16:24) **Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me, says the Lord.**

Prayer after Communion

O God, who in Saint John have wonderfully made known the mystery of the Cross, graciously grant that, drawing strength from this sacrifice, we may



cling faithfully to Christ and labour in the Church for the salvation of all.

Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

God's Promises

Commentary

Isaiah 41:13-20/ Ps. 145:1 &
9, 10-13

Today's first reading is loaded with a number of interesting themes or descriptions. The whole people of God (Israelites) are likened to a worm- a weak and insignificant creature. Despite this weakness which is evident in the individual members, we hear some rather reassuring messages from God. God promises to help his people. He adds that he will renew them, make them sharp and the likes. Having enjoyed such gracious benefits from God, we should, like the Psalmist, extol our king and God.

Rev. Fr. Winfred Tawiah, Ghana



Friday December 15

2nd Week of Advent

Entrance Antiphon

Behold, the Lord will come descending with splendour to visit his people with peace, and he will bestow on them eternal life.

Collect

Grant that your people, we pray, almighty God, may be ever watchful for the coming of your Only-Begotten Son, that, as the author of our salvation himself has taught us, we may hasten, alert and with lighted lamps, to meet him when he comes. Who lives and reigns with you.

Amen.

Reading ---

(Isaiah 48:17-19)

A reading from the Book of Isaiah

Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: “I am the Lord your God, who teaches you to profit, who leads you in the way you should go. O that you had listened to my commandments! Then your peace would have been like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea; your offspring would have been like the sand, and your descendants like its grains;

their name would never be cut off or destroyed from before me.”

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

***Responsorial Psalm
(Psalm 1:1-2.3.4 and 6)***

**R. He who follows you,
Lord, will have the light of
life.**

Blessed indeed is the man who follows not the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the path with sinners, nor abides in the company of scorners, but whose delight is the law of the Lord, and who ponders his law day and night. R.

He is like a tree that is planted beside the flowing waters, that yields its fruit in due season, and whose leaves shall never fade;

and all that he does shall prosper. R.

Not so are the wicked, not so! For they, like winnowed chaff, shall be driven away by the wind. For the Lord knows the way of the just, but the way of the wicked will perish. R.

Acclamation

Alleluia. Alleluia. The Lord is coming, run out to meet him; he is the prince of peace. **Alleluia.**

Gospel —————
(Matthew 11:16-19)

A reading from holy Gospel according to Matthew

At that time: Jesus said to the crowds, “To what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting

in the market places and calling to their playmates, “We piped to you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn.’ For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon’; the Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Behold, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds.”

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer over the Offerings

Be pleased with our humble prayers and offerings, O Lord, we pray, and since we have no merits to plead our cause, come to our rescue with the protection of your mercy. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon

(Phil 3:20-21) **We await a saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our mortal bodies, to conform with his glorified body.**

Prayer after Communion

Replenished by the food of spiritual nourishment, we humbly beseech you, O Lord, that, through our partaking in this mystery,

you may teach us to judge wisely the things of earth and hold firm to the things of heaven. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Following God's
Commandments****Commentary****Isaiah 48:17-19**

In your will is our peace! As we continue with our preparations during this advent season, we are reminded by today's first reading on what true peace consists of. While in this vale of tears, our misery is nothing but our refusal to live according to the commands of God. Sin banishes us and makes us empty. But in very refreshing way, God is inviting us to begin to live according to his commandments, to have him alone for our leader and guide. Only then will we be deemed blessed.

Rev. Fr. Winfred Tawiah, Ghana



Saturday December 16

2nd Week of Advent

Entrance Antiphon

(Ps (79) 80:4.2) **Come and show us your face, O Lord, who are seated upon the cherubim, and we will be saved.**

Collect

May the splendour of your glory dawn in our hearts, we pray, almighty God, that all shadows of the night may be scattered and we may be shown to be children of light by the advent of your Only-Begotten Son. Who lives and reigns with you. **Amen.**

Reading ————— *(Sirach 48:1-4.9-11b)*

A reading from the Book of Sirach

In those days: Then the prophet Elijah arose like a fire, and his word burned like a torch. He brought a famine upon them, and by his zeal he made them few in number. By the word of the Lord he shut up the heavens, and also three times brought down fire. How glorious you were, O Elijah, in your wondrous deeds! And who has the right to boast which you

have? You who were taken up by a whirlwind of fire, in a chariot with horses of fire; you who are ready at the appointed time, it is written, to calm the wrath of God before it breaks out in fury, to turn the heart of the father to the son, and to restore the tribes of Jacob. Blessed are those who saw you, and those who have fallen asleep in your love. The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

***Responsorial Psalm —
 (Psalm (79) 80:2ac and
 3b.15-16a.18-19)***

***℟. O God, bring us back;
 let your face shine on us,
 and we shall be saved.***

O shepherd of Israel,
 hear us, enthroned on the

cherubim, shine forth. Rouse up your might and come to save us. *℟.*

God of hosts, turn again, we implore; look down from heaven and see. Visit this vine and protect it, the vine your right hand has planted. *℟.*

May your hand be on the man at your right hand, the son of man you have confirmed as your own. And we shall never forsake you again; give us life that we may call upon your name. *℟.*

***Acclamation
 (Luke 3:4.6)***

Alleluia. Alleluia. Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight; all flesh

shall see the salvation of God. **Alleluia.**

Gospel _____
(Matthew 17:9a.10-13)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

As they were coming down the mountain, the disciples asked Jesus, “Then why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?” He replied, “Elijah does come, and he is to restore all things; but I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not know him, but did to him whatever they pleased. So also the Son of man will suffer at their hands.” Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer over the Offerings

May the sacrifice of our worship, Lord, we pray, be offered to you unceasingly, to complete what was begun in sacred mystery and powerfully accomplish for us your saving work. Through Christ Our Lord. **Amen.**

Communion Antiphon

(Rv 22:12) **Behold, I am coming soon and my recompense is with me, says the Lord, to bestow a reward according to the deeds of each.**

Prayer after Communion

We implore your mercy, Lord, that this divine

sustenance may cleanse us of our faults and prepare us for the coming feasts.

Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Don't Miss

Commentary

Sirach 48:1-4, 9-11 / Mt.
17:10-13

Have you ever longed to meet someone only to miss the person the moment he or she came? What might have caused the miss, we may ask? The Jews knew that Elijah was to come and restore all things. Yet, he came as John the Baptist, and they did not know him. Similarly, they would also miss the coming of Jesus, the Messiah and not know him. What divine moments of transformation have possibly passed us by simply because we were distracted? Let us be alert and attentive so we don't miss Jesus' coming at Christmas.

Rev. Fr. Winfred Tawiah, Ghana



Publisher: Cédric BLOQUET
Publishing & Development Manager
Editor in Chief: Rev. Fr. François NZANZU a.a.
Assistant: Rev. Fr. Jean-Claude DIWEDIGA a.a.
Editorial Secretary: Virginia KABUGU
Graphic designer: Naomi SAWADOGO

Ghana Coordinator: Rev. Fr. Dennis OPOKU;
Associate Publishers: Fr. Walter Ihejirika, Regional Coordinator, LWC
Nigeria,
Other Contributors:
Rev. Fr. Jérôme K. M. KOMBI; Rev. Fr. Winfred TAWIAH

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ISSN: 2424-7464; **Contact:** Living With Christ
Rue E104, Lot 1076 Ilot 116 - Cocody Riviera 3 Abidjan , Côte d'Ivoire
Address: P.O. BOX 08 BP 2469 Abidjan 08 -
Phone number: (+225) 25 22 02 11 11 -
E-mail: info@livingwithchrist-africa.com





 WhatsApp : **+225 05 94 79 75 68 / +254727074304**

 Website : **[https:// www.livingwithchrist.africa](https://www.livingwithchrist.africa)**

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Growing up Daily with the Good News