

## INTRODUCTION

In the past weeks, we entered in a personal journey of advent – a hopeful and joyful expectation for the promise of God to be fulfilled in our lives. In the process, we experience joy because we see signs of God’s presence.

However, the journey is long and sometimes we find ourselves lost-wandering. Lost because we have allowed ourselves to be guided by our own selfish interests, unawareness and sin. The vision of the promise of God has been impaired and the heart has hardened to its sensitivity of God’s Divine Presence.

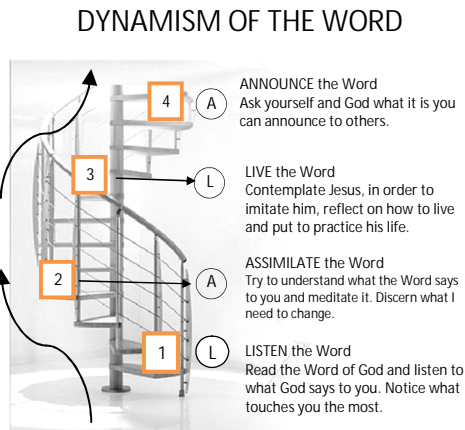
In this Advent season, the Church has begun the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy and how fitting it is to enter once more in the joy of being reconciled with God. A God who waits, welcomes and carries us when we can no longer walk because we have wandered quite far. We ask God once more to create a pure heart in us.

In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus said, “there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine respectable people who do not need to repent” (Luke 15:7). God knows how weak and susceptible we are to sin but how great is His joy when we seek His

forgiveness and be reconciled with Him.

He only desires that we cry out, humble ourselves and recognize our constant need of His mercy. The Sacrament of Reconciliation allows us to experience in a tangible way, the mercy of God. We turn to our patient God who untiringly forgives us endlessly and wants to return to us the primary joy of his forgiveness.

Our experience of His mercy cleanses our hearts once more and in a concrete way reconciles us with our brothers, sisters and with ourselves. We become a people whose hearts are pure and joyfully continuing the journey of hopeful expectation.



## MONDAY

Be Merciful to Me

Be merciful to me, O God,  
because of your constant love.  
Because of your great mercy

## TUESDAY

There will be more joy in heaven  
over one sinner who repents

One day when many tax collectors and other outcasts came to listen to Jesus, <sup>2</sup> the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law started grumbling, “This man welcomes outcasts and even eats with them!” <sup>3</sup> So Jesus told them this parable:

<sup>4</sup> “Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them—what do you do? You leave the other ninety-nine sheep in the pasture and go looking for the one that got lost until you find it. <sup>5</sup> When you find it, you are so happy that you put it on your shoulders <sup>6</sup> and carry it back home. Then you call your friends and neighbors together and say to them, ‘I am so happy I found my lost sheep. Let us celebrate!’ <sup>7</sup> In the same way, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine respectable people who do not need to repent. (Luke 15:1-7)

God is a merciful God who loves us so much and willing to risk everything for us to return home. His joy is so great that our reconciliation with Him is a reason for celebration.

wipe away my sins!  
<sup>2</sup> Wash away all my evil  
and make me clean from my sin!

<sup>3</sup> I recognize my faults;  
I am always conscious of my sins.  
<sup>4</sup> I have sinned against you—only  
against you—  
and done what you consider evil.  
So you are right in judging me;  
you are justified in condemning  
me.

<sup>5</sup> I have been evil from the day I was  
born;  
from the time I was conceived, I  
have been sinful.

<sup>6</sup> Sincerity and truth are what you  
require;  
fill my mind with your wisdom.  
<sup>7</sup> Remove my sin, and I will be clean;  
wash me, and I will be whiter than  
snow.

<sup>8</sup> Let me hear the sounds of joy and  
gladness;  
and though you have crushed me  
and broken me,  
I will be happy once again. (Psalm  
51:1-8)

In our hopeful expectation, sometimes we lose our vision of God’s promise because our heart is hardened by our weaknesses. This calls us for a change of heart, to seek once more of His merciful love.

## WEDNESDAY

Sacrament of Reconciliation is a tangible way of expressing the mercy of God

"Those who approach the sacrament of Penance obtain pardon from God's mercy for the offense committed against him, and are, at the same time, reconciled with the Church which they have wounded by their sins and which by charity, by example, and by prayer labors for their conversion (CCC #1422)

In this Advent season, the Church opens the way for us to experience the mercy of God through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Am I sensitive with the cry of my heart to approach to Him with sincerity and contriteness of heart?

## THURSDAY

Happy are the pure in heart;  
they will see God!

"Happy are those who know they are spiritually poor;  
the Kingdom of heaven belongs to them!

<sup>4</sup> "Happy are those who mourn;  
God will comfort them!

<sup>5</sup> "Happy are those who are humble;  
they will receive what God has promised!

<sup>6</sup> "Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do what God requires;  
God will satisfy them fully!

<sup>7</sup> "Happy are those who are merciful to others;  
God will be merciful to them!

<sup>8</sup> "Happy are the pure in heart;  
they will see God!

<sup>9</sup> "Happy are those who work for peace;

God will call them his children!

<sup>10</sup> "Happy are those who are persecuted because they do what God requires;  
the Kingdom of heaven belongs to them! (Matthew 5:3-10)

When we experience the mercy of God, our blurred vision is cleared and our heart is cleansed. We enter in true experience of joy – the joy of reconciliation.

## FRIDAY

Being reconciled with God leads us to be reconciled with our brothers and sisters

<sup>22</sup> But now I tell you: if you are angry with your brother you will be brought to trial, if you call your brother 'You good-for-nothing!' you will be brought before the Council, and if you call your brother a worthless fool you will be in danger of going to the fire of hell. <sup>23</sup> So if you are about to offer your gift to God at the altar and there you remember that your brother has something against you, <sup>24</sup> leave your gift there in front of the altar, go at once and make peace with your brother, and then come back and offer your gift to God. (Matthew 5:22-24)

The joy of reconciliation with God leads us to leave peaceably with our brothers and sisters. A contrite heart is willing to accept the fault, forgive, reconcile and open the way for a renewed relationship. What is the step that God is asking you to experience a deeper joy this advent?

## SATURDAY

I make all things new!

"Now God's home is with people! He will live with them, and they shall be his people. God himself will be with them, and he will be their God. <sup>4</sup> He will wipe away all tears from their eyes. There will be no more death, no more grief or crying or pain. The old things have disappeared."

<sup>5</sup> Then the one who sits on the throne said, "And now I make all things new!" He also said to me, "Write this, because these words are true and can be trusted."

As we continue to wait for the promise of God to be fulfilled, the joy that reconciliation brings in our lives renews our vision to the ways of God.

## SUNDAY

4th Sunday of Advent

1<sup>st</sup> Reading: *Micah 5:1-4*

Responsorial Psalm:

*Ps 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19*

2<sup>nd</sup> Reading: *Hebrews 10:5-10*

Gospel: *Luke 1:39-45*

# Verbum Dei

## GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER

## Happy are the pure in heart

(Matthew 5:8)

December 14 –20, 2015

General Objective: To enter in a personal experience of Advent



Objective of the week:

To enter in the joy of reconciliation