

INTRODUCTION

As we have pondered in our personal journey of Advent, we have seen how God has worked in all our experiences. Some experiences brought us joy, tears and some even caught us by surprise as they come as blessings in disguise. In the process of fulfilling His promise, He heals our brokenness, opened way to new relationships, changed our perspective of life, expanded our hearts to love deeply and most importantly has drawn us to a personal encounter with Him. With all these, we experience a profound sense of gratitude and joy to the great things that the Lord has done in your life this year?

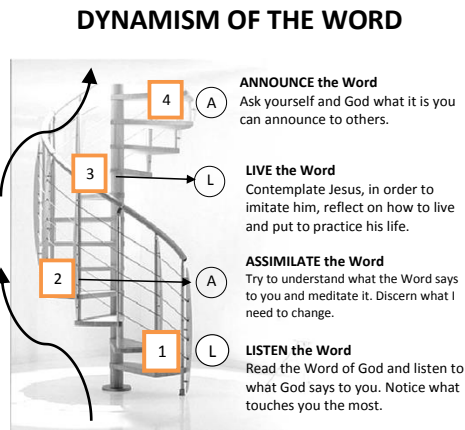
In the same way, we ponder, "How can I express back to God this joy that I have experienced?" Like John the Baptist, we are invited that the best way to express our gratitude is to open the way for others to prepare for His coming. A change of heart from what we are accustomed to.

In this season of preparing for Christmas, the society around us clearly highlights that material things are the best sources of joy. Yet, how beautiful that the best joy that we can give to someone is the Word of God that comforts the weak, gives courage to the fearful and healing for the sick. The power that the Word of God brings lasting smiles that comes for free!

To share the Word of God can often cost our time, effort and change our plans. How willing are we to take the risk of sharing our joy?

May we imitate our Mother Mary as someone who has risked and proclaimed through her life the coming of Jesus and has radiated her joy to the people God brought to her and even to unborn child.

May by sharing the Word of God give a lasting joy as we celebrate our personal journey of Advent 2015.



MONDAY

"The Lord did great things!"

When the LORD brought us back to Jerusalem, it was like a dream! ²How we laughed, how we sang for joy! Then the other nations said about us, "**The LORD did great things for them.**"³Indeed he did great things for us; how happy we were!⁴LORD, make us prosperous again, just as the rain brings water back to dry riverbeds. ⁵Let those who wept as they planted their crops, gather the harvest with

joy!⁶Those who wept as they went out carrying the seed will come back singing for joy, as they bring in the harvest. (Psalm 126:1-6)

In this season of Advent, we ponder on the great things that the Lord has done. In our life, oftentimes we look for it in big extravagant events but if we look closely, the greatness are oftentimes revealed in the simple, in the ordinary and tough situations. Do I recognize this? What is the greatness of God in my life that I personally experienced this year?

TUESDAY

The Lord is With You

Sing and shout for joy, people of Israel! Rejoice with all your heart, Jerusalem! ¹⁵The LORD has stopped your punishment; he has removed all your enemies. **The LORD, the king of Israel, is with you;** there is no reason now to be afraid.¹⁶ The time is coming when they will say to Jerusalem,

"Do not be afraid, city of Zion! Do not let your hands hang limp!¹⁷ The LORD your God is with you; his power gives you victory. The LORD will take delight in you, and in his love he will give you new life. He will sing and be joyful over you,¹⁸ as joyful as people at a festival. (Zephaniah 3:14-18)

One of the great things that the Lord has done in our personal journey of Advent is to recognize how He has always

accompanied us. He clearly manifests His presence in the Word of God, in the Holy Eucharist and through human ties. With Him, our joy is intact even in times of seemingly insurmountable challenges.

WEDNESDAY

Get the Road Ready for the Lord

At that time the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the desert. ³So John went throughout the whole territory of the Jordan River, preaching, "Turn away from your sins and be baptized, and God will forgive your sins." ⁴As it is written in the book of the prophet Isaiah:

"Someone is shouting in the desert: 'Get the road ready for the Lord; make a straight path for him to travel!'⁵ Every valley must be filled up, every hill and mountain leveled off. The winding roads must be made straight, and the rough paths made smooth.⁶ The whole human race will see God's salvation!" (Luke 3:2-6)

In gratitude to all the amazing blessings that He has done, like John the Baptist, we too are invited to open the way for others to prepare for His coming. We need to be the voice that cries out in the midst of the desert of our time. A voice that cries out for change of heart. What risks are willing to take to make His Word be heard?

THURSDAY

Tell Everyone...

The desert will rejoice, and flowers will bloom in the wastelands.²The desert will sing and shout for joy; it will be as beautiful as the Lebanon Mountains and as fertile as the fields of Carmel and Sharon. Everyone will see The LORD's splendor, see his greatness and power.³Give strength to hands that are tired and to knees that tremble with weakness.⁴**Tell everyone who is discouraged, "Be strong and don't be afraid! God is coming to your rescue, coming to punish your enemies."**⁵**The blind will be able to see, and the deaf will hear.**⁶**The lame will leap and dance, and those who cannot speak will shout for joy. Streams of water will flow through the desert;**⁷ the burning sand will become a lake, and dry land will be filled with springs. Where jackals used to live, marsh grass and reeds will grow.⁸There will be a highway there, called "The Road of Holiness."No sinner will ever travel that road; no fools will mislead those who follow it.⁹No lions will be there; no fierce animals will pass that way. Those whom the LORD has rescued will travel home by that road.¹⁰They will reach Jerusalem with gladness, singing and shouting for joy. They will be happy

forever, forever free from sorrow and grief. (Isaiah 35:1-10)

We are a people who desires to make our loved ones happy especially this Christmas season. We buy gifts with a hope that they smile with delight as they open it. However, this time is the best opportunity to bring a lasting joy to the human heart – the Word of God? In where I am, what is the creativity that God is calling me to make His Word accessible to all?

FRIDAY

As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.

³⁹At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea,⁴⁰ where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth.⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.⁴²In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear!"⁴³But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?⁴⁴**As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.**⁴⁵Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!" (Luke 1:39-44)

Mother Mary is the perfect example who by her presence and simple greetings, she brought joy to a loved one, to a family and even to an unborn child. May we ask the intercession of Mother Mary to pray for us that we too may allow God to make us His instruments that our words and way of life speak the joy of the Gospel.

SATURDAY

May you always be joyful

May you always be joyful in your union with the Lord. I say it again: rejoice!⁵Show a gentle attitude toward everyone. The Lord is coming soon.⁶**Don't worry about anything, but in all your prayers ask God for what you need, always asking him with a thankful heart.**⁷And God's peace, which is far beyond human understanding, will keep your hearts and minds safe in union with Christ Jesus. (Phil 4:4-7)

A grateful heart is always joyful. May we find the strongest reason of our joy that never fades.

SUNDAY

3rd Sunday of Advent

1st Reading: Zephaniah 3:14-18

Responsorial Psalm: Isaiah 12:2-6

2nd Reading: Philippians 4:4-7

Gospel: Luke 3:10-18

Verbum Dei

GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER

Rejoice!

December 7-13, 2015

General Theme: Expectant and joyful waiting for the Lord
General Objective: To enter in a personal experience of Advent



Objective of the week:

To express with joy and gratitude the wonders the Lord has done.