

DECEMBER 2025
ISSUE

Rechi

SUNDAY GOSPEL REFLECTIONS
& CATECHESSES



DOMINICAN NOVITIATE OF THE ANNUNCIATION
Manaoag, Pangasinan

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BINHI is the official monthly publication of the novices of the Dominican Novitiate of the Annunciation at the Minor Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary of Manaoag. Featured in it are the reflections of the novices on the Sunday Gospels of the current month, short catechesis regarding our faith and the lives of saints.

Catechism of the Month



Solemnity of the Nativit y of Our Lord Jesus Christ

EMMANUEL: GOD IS WITH US
DECEMBER 25, 2025

“Each Christmas renews the promise that
God’s love is stronger than
fear, sin, and death.”

By: Br. Yoga Dwi Kaswara

My brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ, today the Holy Mother Church celebrates the Solemnity of the Nativity of Jesus Christ or Christmas. It is one of the greatest feasts in the Catholic Church. On this day, we honor the moment when God chose to enter the world as a small child in Bethlehem. Jesus was not born in wealth or comfort, but in a simple manger. God shows us that his love is humble and close to everyone. His coming reminds us that God wants to dwell with us, not remain distant. His salvation is for everyone.

This feast proclaims that Jesus is Emmanuel, meaning “God with us.”

He came to share our human life so that we might share in His divine life. In a world often filled with darkness, His birth shines as a light that no darkness can overcome. The shepherds who first heard the angels' song remind us that the Good News is for all people, especially the poor and forgotten. Christmas is not only a memory of long ago—it is a living truth that God continues to be present with us today. God always watches over us, little people.

The Nativity also invites us to respond with faith, joy, and love. By means of this “fiat”, Mary and Joseph trusted God's plan. We are called to do the same. The shepherds hurried to adore the Child. We too are invited to worship Him with glad hearts. The angels sang of peace. We are sent to bring peace and kindness to others. **Each Christmas renews the promise that God's love is stronger than fear, sin, and death. It marks the beginning of our salvation and reminds us that God's love is always with us.**

MALIGAYANG PASKO SA ATING LAHAT!



DECEMBER

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Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand!

REFLECTION on the 2nd Sunday of Advent (Matthew 3:1-12)

by Br. Kodikara Arachchige Tahan Sampath Sri Dalas Perera

In today's Gospel, John the Baptist brings an important message about repentance and change. He tells the people to "repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." This isn't just about following religious rules, but about a real change in the heart. John tells the crowds that being descendants of Abraham isn't enough. True repentance means changing our life, not just doing rituals. This reminds us that God wants us to be genuine and sincere, not just put on an act.

John's baptism is a way to prepare the people for Jesus. John baptizes with water, but he tells them that Jesus will baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire. This means that Jesus will bring an even deeper change to people's lives. The fire symbolizes both purification and judgment. It reminds us that Jesus will offer salvation, but He will also bring judgment, separating those who follow Him from those who don't.

John's message is a mix of hope and warning. He urges people to repent and warns that judgment is coming. But he also points to the grace that Jesus will bring. The fire represents God's judgment, but also a chance for renewal and a fresh start. This passage challenges us today to look at our hearts and lives. **We are called to be ready for Jesus to work in us, knowing that true change comes through the power of the Holy Spirit, not just our own efforts.**



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The Immaculate Conception: God's Profound Mystery of Mercy

CATECHISM on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception

of the Blessed Virgin Mary

by Br. Jim Mark G. Orlan

The Immaculate Conception is a key teaching in the Catholic Church about Mary, the mother of Jesus. From the very first moment of her life, even when she was still in her mother's womb, God kept Mary free from

original sin. This special favor made her "full of grace," pure and ready to welcome God's Son into the world (CCC 508). The Church teaches this as a truth of faith, defined by Pope Pius IX in 1854 in the document *Ineffabilis Deus*. Mary did not earn this on her own; it was God's gift, showing His power to save us even before we are born. This doctrine highlights Mary's role as the perfect vessel for the Incarnation, where God became human in Jesus, who is also without sin (CCC 2853).

God chose Mary in this way because she was meant to be the mother of His only Son. Jesus, being fully God and fully human, needed a sinless mother to enter the world without any stain of sin blocking the way. Her immaculate state was a sign of God's favor and prepared her for the great work of salvation (CCC 508; 1426). ***This grace did not make Mary a goddess but showed how God's mercy works ahead of time, anticipating Jesus' victory over sin on the cross.*** As the early Church



As the early Church fathers and councils explained, Mary's purity fits with the whole plan of redemption, where Christ redeems us from original sin (Denzinger 2015). It reminds us that holiness is possible through God's help, not just our efforts.

We honor the Immaculate Conception on December 8, a holy day of obligation, by going to Mass and praying the Rosary, or simply saying the Hail Mary. This feast teaches us to seek Mary's prayers and strive for our own purity through the sacraments and daily love for God and others (CCC 2676; 148). ***Mary's example inspires us to open our hearts to grace, living as children of God in a world full of challenges. Let her spotless life guide every one of us to embrace God's forgiving love every day.***



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Why Pink???: *Gaudete, Joy* *Manifested in the Work of Christ*

REFLECTION on the 3rd Sunday of Advent

(Matthew 11:2-11)

by Br. Cherwi Jonatan

The Third Sunday of Advent has a beautiful name: Gaudete Sunday. This name, which means "Rejoice!", is a call that breaks the silence and penitential tone of the Advent season that we have already begun to feel over the past two weeks. In the midst of the purple color that symbolizes

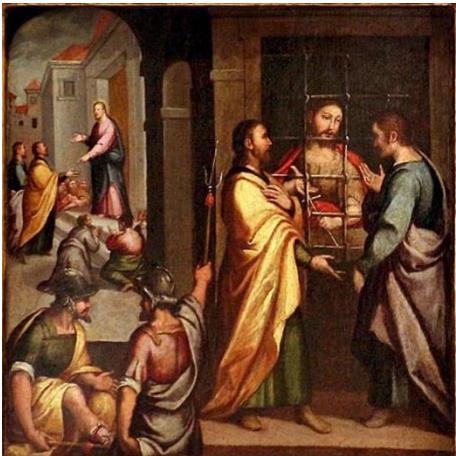
waiting and preparation, the liturgy on this day allows the use of the color pink (rose). This rose color is not merely decoration, but a temporary suspension—a joyful pause—that reminds us that even though we are still in the time of waiting, the reason for hope and joy is already very near. This color symbolizes a “quietly joyful” spirit that pierces through the seriousness of preparation.

So, what is the basis of this urgent joy? The answer lies in today’s Gospel, Matthew 11:2-11. This story brings us to John the Baptist, who is in prison. Although he had been the voice crying out in the wilderness, he is now in doubt and waiting. He sends his disciples to Jesus with a deeply profound question at that moment: “Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?” John’s question reflects the waiting of all humanity. Is Jesus truly the Savior? Will God’s promises be fulfilled? Jesus does not give a direct answer of political or titular nature. Instead, He directs John’s disciples to the real works happening before them:

“Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor.”

The miracles performed by Jesus were not ordinary events. Each healing, each restoration, and each proclamation of good news was a tangible sign that the prophecies awaited for centuries were being fulfilled. His presence shows that the Messiah has truly come and is carrying out the work of salvation. ***That is why we rejoice: because through the works of Christ we see that God is truly near.*** This closeness is not mere words, but a real experience—the sick are healed, the outcasts are restored, and the poor receive good news. The Gospel brought by Christ is the source of true joy, for in it there is liberation, consolation, and new hope for those in despair.

Thus, when we celebrate Gaudete Sunday with the color pink, we are reminded that our joy is not because Christmas has already arrived, but because we have witnessed the signs of the Messiah’s presence among us. This joy is born of faith that sees God’s promises being fulfilled, and that faith leads us with hope toward the celebration of Christmas.



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PASENSYA + PAGTITIWALA = GRASYA

ISANG PAGNINILAY para sa Ika-Apat na Linggo ng Adbiyento

(Mateo 1:18-24)

by Br. Lawrence J. Pacatang

Sino ba sa atin ang aayaw sa grasya o biyayang galing sa Diyos? Wala naman siguro, diba? Lahat tayo, gustong makatanggap ng mga biyaya sa ating pang-araw-araw na buhay. Ngunit paano nga ba? Maaaring ang iniisip po ninyo ngayon ay: una, sa pamamagitan ng pagiging madasalin, o di kaya naman, sa pagiging mabuting tao. Lahat ng ito ay tama naman, pero hindi po sa mga ito nagtatapos ang lahat.



mangyari bago natin matanggap ang grasya, at pagtitiwala sa Diyos na ano man ang mangyari, hindi Niya tayo pababayaan at kalilimutan.

Maaaring maging madasalin at mabuti ang isang tao, pero pwede pa rin siyang maging makulit at apurado. Dahil kulang siya sa pasensya at tiwala, na para bagang walang bilib sa Diyos. Kapag tayo ay makulit at apurado, dalawang bagay lang ang pwedeng mangyari. Kung hindi man natin napangungunahan ang Diyos sa kanyang plano, maaaring mabilis tayong sumuko at mawalan ng pag-asa, lalo na kung hindi agad-agad natutupad ang ating mga kahilingan.

Si San Jose ay isang mabuting tao at may takot sa Diyos. Ngunit kung ating pag-ninilay ang kanyang sitwasyon noon sa ordinaryong pananaw, hindi talaga natin masasabi na siya ay pinagpala. Bakit? Dalawang dahilan: una, nagdadalang tao si Maria sa isang bata na hindi naman kanya. Pangalawa, di tulad kay Maria na talagang pinakitaan ng isang anghel, nalaman lamang ni Jose ang kanyang gampanin sa isang panaginip. Kaya

Ang Ebanghelyo sa araw na ito na sinulat ni Mateo (1:18-24) — ay nagsasalysay sa sitwasyon ni San Jose noong pinagbubuntis na ni Maria ang ating Panginoong Jesus. Para bang nagsasabi sa ating hindi lang sa dasal at kabutihan bilang tao nagtatapos ang ating responsibilidad sa pagkamat ng grasya mula sa Panginoong Diyos. **Dapat ay mayroon din tayong pasensya at pagtitiwala. Pasensya sa kung ano pa man ang pwedeng**

maaring masabi na siguro ay naguluhan si Jose sa biglaang pagka-sangkot sa isang sitwasyong mahirap unawain, lalo na sa pananaw ng isang normal na tao.

Ngunit sa kabilang lahat ng ito, si Jose ay nanatiling masunurin sa Diyos. Hindi siya nagtanong sa Panginoon kung bakit siya nilagay sa sitwasyong iyon. Hindi niya sinabing, "Panginoon, naging mabuting tao naman ako, diba? Bakit mo ko sinusubok na ganito?" Hindi sumuko si San Jose. Hindi tumakas sa kanyang obligasyon bagamat gulong-gulo at hirap na hirap na siguro noong mag panahong iyon. ***Pinairal niya ang kanyang pasensya at tiwala, kalakip ng kanyang pananampalataya at takot sa Diyos.*** Kaya nang siya ay sinuklian ng Panginoon, ibinigay sa kanya ang pinaka-mabuti, pinaka-maganda, at pinaka-mataas na biyaya sa lahat - ang ating Panginoong Jesus.



Onward Sons and Daughters of St. Dominic!

CATECHISM on the Anniversary of the Approval of the Order of Friars Preachers
by Br. Francis Hyle M. De Leon

Laudare, Benedicere, Praedicare. To praise, to bless, to preach - this is the motto of the Order of Friars Preachers founded by St. Dominic de Guzman on December 22, 1216. Today, we celebrate its 809th anniversary. Since its foundation, the Order has continued to be true to its mission to preach the Gospel throughout the world for the salvation of souls. However, the beginning of the Order didn't arrive at that easily. In fact, St. Dominic did not want to establish a religious order in the first place.

Bishop Diego d'Acebes, a companion of St. Dominic, gave birth to an idea of a missionary activity to the North. Bishop Diego and St. Dominic went to Rome to ask Pope Innocent III regarding the former's resignation as a bishop of his diocese so that he could pursue his dream to go on a mission. However, the Pope rejected his resignation. This missionary activity, however, ignited a fire in St. Dominic's heart, and since then, this fire, this zeal for mission, never stopped blazing. Pope Innocent III, however, sent them to work among the Albigenses instead, hoping for their conversion. They were successful in converting many Albigenses, which included women who became the first members of St. Dominic's family. He established this community of nuns in the year 1206.

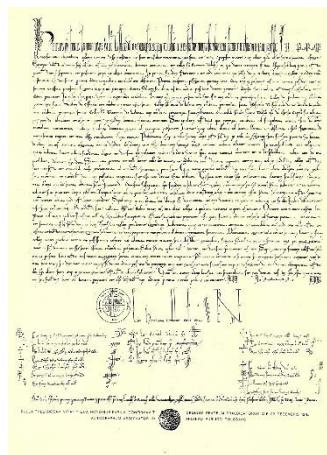
Bishop Diego died after his return to Spain. This, however, did not stop St. Dominic from preaching to the Albigenses. Together with a few companions, they persevered in preaching despite every discouragement. Gradually, St. Dominic realized that only a religious Order could give the

Church a continuous supply of trained preachers. The members of this Order would not only assume the usual obligations of religious but would systematically study the Scriptures, which St. Dominic did.

Another bishop came into the picture by the name of Bishop Fulk, who helped St. Dominic to establish his growing group of preaching friars. Bishop Fulk established them as a preaching brotherhood for his diocese. In the year 1215, they went to Rome to obtain a papal confirmation granting protection for this Order. However, because of the large number of Orders being formed during this century, Pope Innocent required them to choose an existing Rule. Only then would he confirm the Order. Since St. Dominic was a canon regular following the Rule of St. Augustine, he chose this Rule and framed statutes to supplement it. On December 22, 1216, with the bull titled "Religiosam Vitam," Pope Honorius III, granted the confirmation of the Order as a body of Canons Regulars. On January 21, 1217, the foundation of the Order of Preachers (or the Order of Friars Preachers) was approved, recognizing the novelty of St. Dominic's ideas.

As of the year 2020, there were 5,545 friars and 85 Provinces and Vice-Provinces throughout the world, and each year new vocations continue to add to the number of preachers. The Dominican Family continues to grow, which include not just the friars, but also the nuns, active sisters, and the lay fraternities. Since then, the Order has grown with the same mission - saving souls. **For eight centuries, the Order of Preachers continued to live in common, undergo assiduous study, preach the Gospel, and fervently pray for the salvation of souls.** True to their mission, the Dominicans continue to praise, to bless, and to preach.

Onward we go, sons and daughters of St. Dominic, and preach for the salvation of souls!



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Saint Stephen: Unang Martyr ng Simbahan

CATECHISM on the Feast of St. Stephen, The Proto-Martyr
by Br. Khen Airon A. Yonzon

Saint Stephen is venerated as the Proto-Martyr (first martyr) of the church. Siya ang pinakaunang disipulo na nagbuwis ng buhay bilang tagasunod ni Kristo. Ang kanyang buhay ay makikita natin na nakasulat sa Acts of the Apostles, kung saan mababasa natin ang ilang salaysay ng mga Kristyanong nagbuwis ng buhay para sa kanilang pananampalataya.

Saint Stephen, evidently a Hellenistic Jew, was one of the first seven deacons ordained in the church of Jerusalem. Nothing is recorded of his conversion or early life. Ang alam lang natin ay puno sya ng grasya at lakas, at nagpapakita umano sya ng magandang halimbawa at simbolo ng pananampalataya sa mga tao. Apparently, he also liked to engage his fellow Jews in public disputation over the life and teachings of Christ. **Ipinaglaban nya nang tapat ang mga turo ng Panginoon,** at dahil dito ay itinakwil sya ng mga Hudyo ng Sanhedrin.

Ayon sa kwento sa Acts of the Apostles, tinanong sa Stephen ng mga nakatatandang paring Hudyo. Responding to the charge of blasphemy, he delivered a long sermon chronicling the history of God's covenant with his servants Abraham and Moses before rising to a shocking rhetorical climax. At dahil matatatag siya sa kaniyang pananampalataya, binaliktad nya ang mga akusasyong ibinato sa kanya ng mga Hudyo pabalik sa kanila:

“You stiff necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One (Jesus Christ), whom you have now betrayed and murdered, you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it.”

His audience responded with predictable outrage. Nagalit ang mga Hudyo sapagkat ipinahiwatig ni Stephen ang katotohanan. Pinalayas sya ng mga Hudyo sa syudad. **Ang magiting, matapat na tagasunod at diakono ng**



Panginoon ay pinagbabato at pinatay sa kadahilanang pagtatanggol sa totoong pangaral ni Hesukristo. Gayon pa man, bago siya mawalan ng buhay, ipinakita ng Panginoon ang langit sa kanya, at doon nya nakita si Hesus na nakalukluk sa kanan ng Ama. At kahit naging madugo at karumal-dumal ang pagpapahirap sa kanya, naisipan nya pa ring patawarin ang pumaslang sa kanya.

The death of Stephen marked a new foundation for the early church. Jesus' proclamation of the reign of God had given way to the

proclamation of Jesus Himself. Nagpapatuloy pa rin ang katotohanan na ang mga disipulo ng Tagapagligtas ay kailangan ding humarap sa kapalarang katulad sa kaniya. **Ang kamatayan na tulad nang kay Hesus ay nagpapatawad. Bagamat malagim ang karanasan, nagdadala ito ng gantimpala sa kanyang kaluwalhatian - gantimpala sa mga taong ipinaglalaban ang katotohanan at namuhay sa totoong turo ng Panginoong Diyos.**

Nawa'y maging matapang, matapat, at mapagpatawad din tayong lahat tulad ni Saint Stephen.



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St. John: Beloved to Love

CATECHISM on the Feast of St. John, Apostle and Evangelist
by Br. Rassched Chevy U. Avilla

St. John the Evangelist is an important person in Christian history. He was the son of Zebedee and brother of James the Greater. John was a fisherman from Galilee. Jesus called him to be one of his twelve apostles early on. People called him "Son of Thunder" because of his strong faith (Mark 3:17). He was close to Jesus and witnessed special events like the Transfiguration, the healing of Jairus's daughter, and Jesus' suffering in the garden (Matthew 17:1; Mark 5:37). The Gospel says he was "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (John 13:23). At the Last Supper, John sat next to Jesus. At the cross, Jesus asked John to care for Mary, his mother (John 19:26-27). John's pure heart and love allowed him see God's secrets clearly (Matthew 5:8).

John's work as an apostle was full of courage and care. With Peter, he healed a man who could not walk at the Temple and shared the good news even when put in jail (Acts 3:1-11; 4:3). He went to Samaria to help new

believers and spoke up for including people from other nations at a big church meeting (Acts 8:14-17; 15:6-29). Later, he lived in Ephesus after Peter and Paul died. He led churches in Asia during hard times of hate. The emperor sent him to the island of Patmos as a prisoner around 95 AD. There, God gave him visions about the end of the world, which he wrote in the Book of Revelation.

He came back and wrote his Gospel, three letters, and more around 96-100 AD, teaching about Jesus as God. Stories tell how he lived through boiling oil and helped a lost young man come back to faith. In his old age, he often said, "Little children, love one another" (John 13:34-35).

John's life and words still guide us today. His symbol is an eagle, flying high to show the eternal Word of God in Jesus (John 1:1-14). His Gospel helps people believe in Jesus and talking about light, truth, and being one with God the Father (John 20:31; 1:4-5). He died peacefully in Ephesus around 100 AD, the only apostle not killed for his faith. Pope John Paul II once told young people to follow John's example and hold on to Jesus' light. We celebrate his feast days on December 27 and May 6. **John shows us how to stay true, love others, and think deeply about God.**



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A Family that Trusts in God

REFLECTION on the Feast of the Holy Family

(Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23)

by Br. Michael S. Pepania, Jr.

The Feast of the Holy Family reminds us that God chose to enter our world through the ordinary life of a family. In today's Gospel, Joseph, Mary and Jesus face danger as they flee to Egypt and later return to Nazareth. Their journey shows us that family life is often marked by challenges, yet God's presence is always there. The Holy Family trusted in God's guidance even when the road was uncertain. Their faith and unity are what make them a model for us today.

Joseph's obedience teaches us that faith is not only about prayer but also about action. He listens to God's message in a dream and immediately protects Mary and Jesus. His courage reminds us that love requires sacrifice, especially from parents who give so much for their

children. In Joseph's quiet strength, we see that ordinary acts of care become extraordinary when done with faith.

The flight into Egypt tells us that Jesus Himself experienced life as a refugee. This connects deeply with families today who are forced to leave their homes because of war, poverty, or disaster. God's choice to let His Son share in this struggle shows His closeness to the vulnerable. **It challenges us to welcome and support those who suffer displacement. In serving them, we serve Christ Himself.** And when the family returns to Nazareth, we are reminded that holiness is found in ordinary life. Nazareth was small and unnoticed, yet it became the place where Jesus grew in wisdom and grace. This teaches us that God's presence is not only in great events but also in daily family routines. Meals, prayers, and forgiveness are all times when love and faith grow. The Holy Family shows us that our homes, too, can be holy ground.



The Feast of the Holy Family invites us to reflect on our own families with hope and faith. Like Joseph, we are called to listen to God and protect life with courage. Like Mary, we are asked to trust even when the future is uncertain. Like Jesus, we are meant to grow in wisdom and love within our homes. May our families become places where God's presence is felt and where love is shared generously with the world.

13th Century

Dominican Blessing

May God the Father bless us,
may God the Son heal us,
may God the Holy Spirit enlighten us
and give us eyes to see with,
ears to hear with,
hands to do God's work with,
feet to walk with,
and mouth to preach the word of salvation with,
and the angel of peace,
to watch over us and lead us
at last, by the Lord's gift, to the kingdom.
Amen.

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