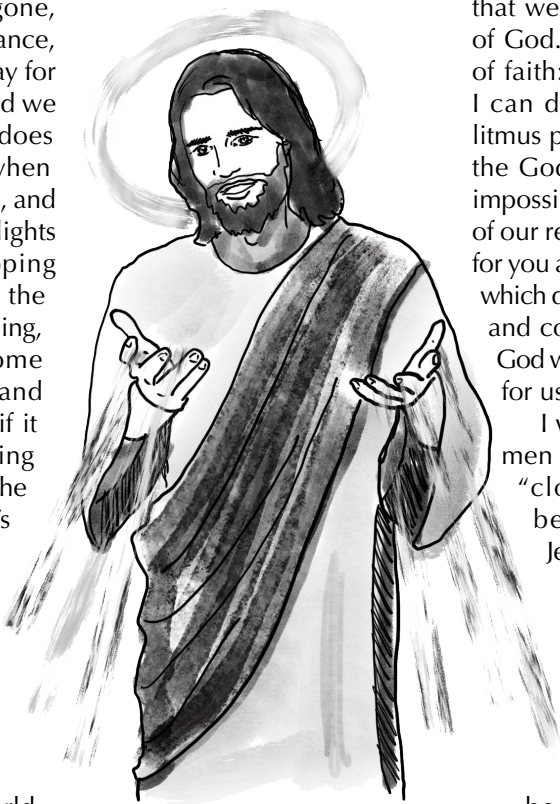


# Jesus is the coming Light

People say that we cannot truly appreciate the value of things until they are gone, even temporarily. For instance, much of the utilities we pay for are treated as a “given” and we run amuck when water does not flow from the tap, when the Wi-Fi lacks connection, and most especially when the lights go out and leave us groping in the dark. Left without the light, especially in the evening, even simple tasks become burdensome: preparing and eating dinner (especially if it is fish-based dish), washing the plates, and navigating the house without hurting one’s self. No wonder then that when the lights turn back on, one happily heaves a sigh of relief.

Today’s readings point towards the Lord as the Light who will come but, at the same time, has already come into the world. The Prophet Isaiah makes this clear with his hopeful oracle of future redemption: “Out of gloom and darkness, the eyes of the blind shall see.” This is seconded by our affirmation in Psalm 27:1 that the Lord indeed is our light and our salvation, which is further heightened by our Gospel Acclamation: “Behold our Lord shall come with power; he will enlighten the eyes of his servants.” But there is a third dimension to our Advent preparations which we more often than not overlook: our discernment and recognition of the Lord’s daily and enlightening



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visitations. This is given emphasis in the Gospel, where we see Jesus healing two blind men, bringing to completion in their fullest sense the Old Testament readings proclaimed.

Matthew presents three movements in our continuous navigation of our being-in-relationship with the Lord. First, the necessity of prayer: “Son of David, have pity on us!”, which implies not just ritual or pious sentimentality but real discipleship, regardless

whether we make faltering half-steps, acknowledging humbly that we are blind and in need of God. Second, the necessity of faith: “Do you believe that I can do this?”, which is the litmus paper test of our trust in the God for whom nothing is impossible. Third, the necessity of our response: “Let it be done for you according to your faith”, which demands from us a loving and concrete response to the God who makes all things well for us (cf. Rom 8:28).

I wonder if the two blind men were ever tempted to “close their eyes” again because the light that Jesus brings is not always comfortable. Light heats, energizes, purifies, and reveals. What areas of our lives need to be (re)heated? What parts of our relationships need to be (re)energized? What aspects of our humanity need to be purified? What dark spaces of our hearts need to be revealed?

As painful as it may be, acknowledging humbly that we have oftentimes chosen to be blind—and have been comfortable in the dark—is the first step to recovering our sight. All we need now is to reach out in faith to Jesus our Light so that we may be healed according to the depth of our faith and of our willingness to be healed. Only then will light shine upon us who have walked in darkness (Is 9:1). Only then will Jesus be born in the dark stable of our hearts.

## THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

### Entrance Antiphon

*(Recited when there is no opening song.)*

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

### Greeting

*(The sign of the cross is made here.)*

**P**—The Lord be with you.

**All**—And with your spirit.

### Introduction

*(These [or similar words] may be used to address the assembly.)*

**P**—The season of Advent is a period of preparation for the coming of the Lord who will visit his people and save them from all forms of oppression. The prophet Isaiah pictures the Lord's salvation as a time of healing and deliverance. The blind shall see, and the lowly will find joy. In Jesus who heals two blind men, the ancient dream of Isaiah is fulfilled.

### Penitential Act

**P**—Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries. *(Pause)*

**P**—You were sent to heal the contrite of heart: Lord, have mercy.

**All**—Lord, have mercy.

**P**—You came to call sinners: Christ, have mercy.

**All**—Christ, have mercy.

**P**—You are seated at the right hand of the Father to intercede for us: Lord, have mercy.

**All**—Lord, have mercy.

**P**—May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

**All**—Amen.

### Collect

**P**—Let us pray. *(Pause)*

Stir up your power, we pray, O Lord, and come, that with you to protect us, we may

find rescue from the pressing dangers of our sins, and with you to set us free, we may be found worthy of salvation.

Who live and reign with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**All**—Amen.

## LITURGY OF THE WORD



### Reading (Is 29:17–24) *(Sit)*

*To the people broken and oppressed by tyrants, Isaiah announces the good news of God's visitation. God will again deliver his people from their oppressors, just like what he did to the Israelites in Egypt.*

### A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

THUS SAYS THE LORD GOD: But a very little while, and Lebanon shall be changed into an orchard, and the orchard be regarded as a forest! On that day the deaf shall hear the words of a book; and out of gloom and darkness, the eyes of the blind shall see. The lowly will ever find joy in the LORD, and the poor rejoice in the Holy One of Israel. For the tyrant will be no more and the arrogant will have gone; all who are alert to do evil will be cut off, those whose mere word condemns a man, who ensnare his defender at the gate, and leave the just man with an empty claim. Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of the house of Jacob, who redeemed Abraham: now Jacob shall have nothing to be ashamed of, nor shall his face grow pale. When his children see the work of my hands in his midst, they shall keep my name holy; they shall reverence the Holy One of Jacob, and be in awe of the God of Israel. Those who err in spirit shall acquire understanding, and those who find fault shall receive instruction.

—The word of the Lord.

**All**—Thanks be to God.

### Responsorial Psalm (Ps 27)

**R**—The Lord is my light and my salvation.

**1.** The LORD is my light and my salvation;/ whom should I fear?/ The LORD is my life's refuge;/ of whom should I be afraid? **(R)**

**2.** One thing I ask of the LORD; this I seek:/ to dwell in the house of the LORD/ all the days of my life;/ that I may gaze on the loveliness of the LORD/ and contemplate his temple. **(R)**

**3.** I believe that I shall see the bounty of the LORD/ in the land of the living./ Wait for the LORD with courage;/ be stouthearted, and wait for the LORD. **(R)**

### Alleluia *(Stand)*

**All**—Alleluia, alleluia. Behold, our Lord shall come with power; he will enlighten the eyes of his servants. Alleluia, alleluia.

### Gospel (Mt 9:27–31)

**P**—A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

**All**—Glory to you, O Lord.

AS JESUS PASSED BY, two blind men followed him, crying out, "Son of David, have pity on us!" When he entered the house, the blind men approached him and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I can do this?" "Yes, Lord," they said to him. Then he touched their eyes and said, "Let it be done for you according to your faith." And their eyes were opened. Jesus warned them sternly, "See that no one knows about this." But they went out and spread word of him through all that land.

—The Gospel of the Lord.

**All**—Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

### Homily *(Sit)*

### Prayer of the Faithful

**P**—This Advent season, let us pray to the Father that we may prepare for the Lord's coming with prayerful expectation and vigilance, as we attend to our day-to-day responsibilities. With confidence, we pray:

**R**—Lord, listen to your people.

**C**—May we look at the past with gratitude, live the present with enthusiasm, and look to the future with confidence—for you, Lord, are the master of our history and our destiny. We pray: **(R)**

**C**—May the Lord take care of the blind and those with physical impairments, so that they can turn to the Lord with grateful hearts. We pray: **(R)**

**C**—May the Lord watch over us and deliver us from the evils of terrorism, kidnapping, and conflict of every kind. We pray: **(R)**

**C**—May we celebrate the Advent season by devoting ourselves to more intense prayer, to devout listening to Sacred Scripture and attentive study of it, and to building communion with our brothers and sisters. We pray: **(R)**

**C**—May the Lord welcome our beloved dead before his heavenly throne and let them join the company of angels and all the saints. We pray: **(R)**

**C**—Let us pray for the urgent concerns of our community and our personal intentions (*pause*). We pray: **(R)**

**P**—Lord our God, bless us with a clear conscience and blameless conduct. Bring to completion the good things you have begun in us, so that we may be found worthy on the day of Christ Jesus, who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

**All—Amen.**

LITURGY OF  
THE EUCHARIST



**Presentation of the Gifts**

**P**—Pray, brethren...

**All—May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.**

**Prayer over the Offerings**  
*(Stand)*

**P**—Be pleased, O Lord, with our humble prayers and offerings, and, since we have

no merits to plead our cause, come, we pray, to our rescue with the protection of your mercy.

Through Christ our Lord.  
**All—Amen.**

**Preface** *(Advent I)*

**P**—The Lord be with you.

**All—And with your spirit.**

**P**—Lift up your hearts.

**All—We lift them up to the Lord.**

**P**—Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**All—It is right and just.**

**P**—It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord.

For he assumed at his first coming the lowliness of human flesh, and so fulfilled the design you formed long ago, and opened for us the way to eternal salvation, that, when he comes again in glory and majesty and all is at last made manifest, we who watch for that day may inherit the great promise in which now we dare to hope.

And so, with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions, and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven, we sing the hymn of your glory, as without end we acclaim:

**All—Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. (Kneel)**

**Acclamation** *(Stand)*

**All—We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.**

**THE COMMUNION RITE**

**The Lord's Prayer**

**All—Our Father...**

**P**—Deliver us...

**All—For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and for ever.**

**Invitation to Peace**

**Invitation to Communion**  
*(Kneel)*

**P**—Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

**All—Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.**

**Communion Antiphon**  
*(Cf. Phil 3: 20–21)*

**We await a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our mortal bodies, to conform with his glorified body.**

**Prayer after Communion**  
*(Stand)*

**P**—Let us pray. *(Pause)*

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.

**All—Amen.**

**THE CONCLUDING RITES**

**P**—The Lord be with you.

**All—And with your spirit.**

**Prayer over the People**

**P**—Bow down for the blessing.  
*(Pause)*

Be propitious to your people, O God, that, freed from every evil, they may serve you with all their heart and ever stand firm under your protection.

Through Christ our Lord.

**All—Amen.**

**P**—And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, (†) and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever.

**All—Amen.**

**Dismissal**

**P**—Go in peace, the Mass is ended.

**All—Thanks be to God.**



## PRAYER TO THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

**D**ivine Jesus, you have said, "Ask, and you shall receive; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you," behold me kneeling at your feet, filled with a lively faith and confidence in the promises dictated by your Sacred Heart and pronounced by your adorable lips. I come to ask this favor: *(Here silently mention your petitions.)*

To whom can I turn if not to you whose Heart is the source of all graces and merits? Where should I seek if not in the treasure which contains all the riches of your kindness and mercy? Where should I knock if not at the door through which God gives himself to us and through which we go to God? I have recourse to you, Heart of Jesus. In you I find consolation when afflicted, protection when

persecuted, strength when burdened with trials, and light in doubt and darkness.

Dear Jesus, I firmly believe that you can grant me the grace I implore, even though it should require a miracle. You have only to will it, and my prayer will be granted. I admit that I am most unworthy of your favors, but this is not a reason for me to be discouraged. You are the God of mercy and you will not refuse a contrite heart. Cast upon me a look of mercy, I beg of you, and your kind Heart will find in my miseries and weaknesses a reason for granting my prayers.

O Sacred Heart, whatever may be your decision with regard to my request, I will never stop adoring, loving, praising, and serving you. My Jesus, be pleased to accept this my act of perfect resignation to the decrees of your adorable Heart which I sincerely desire may be fulfilled by me and by all your creatures forever.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, I know that there is but one thing impossible to you: to be without pity for those who are suffering or in distress. Look upon me, I beg of you, dear Jesus, and grant me the grace for which I humbly implore you through the Immaculate Heart of your most sorrowful Mother. You have entrusted me to her as her child, and her prayers are all-powerful with you. Amen.

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