

# A novena to Christmas

16<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> December 2021

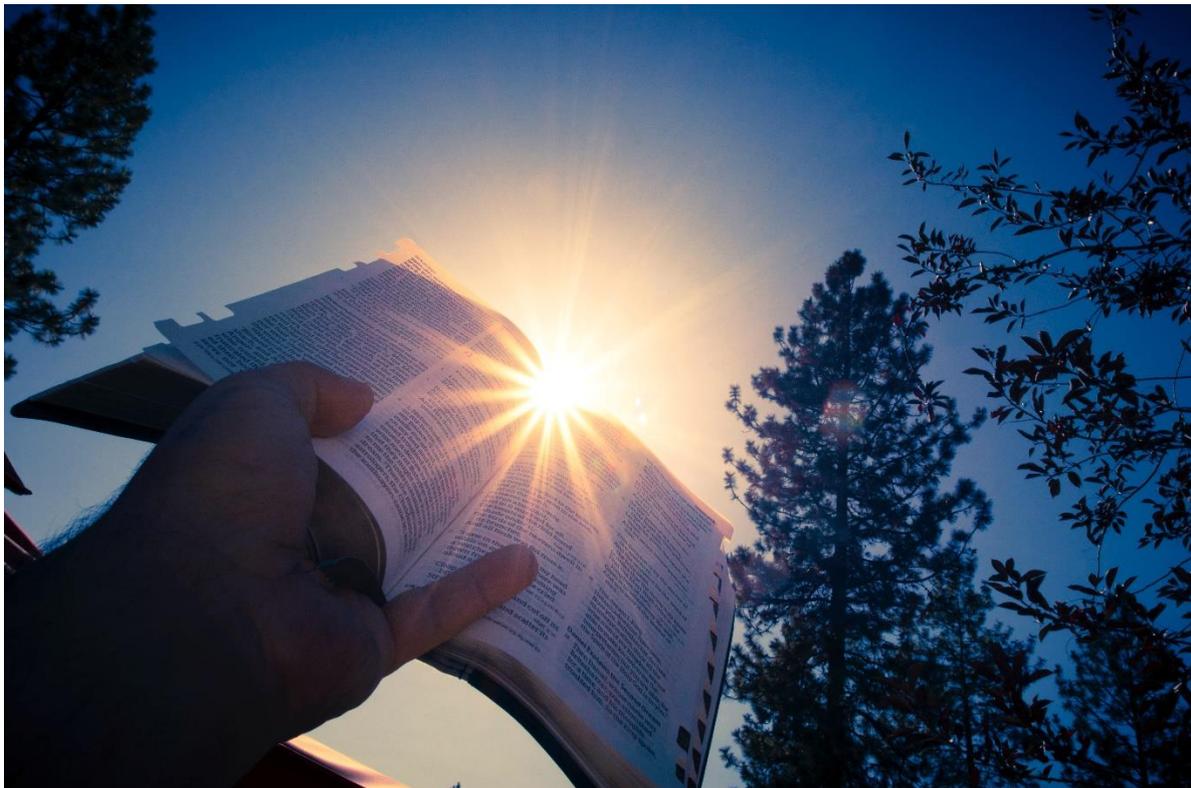
We are now invited to enter into a very solemn part of our journey through Advent; it is a time to get ready, with minds and hearts open to the impending message, However, if you are like me, these last few days, leading up to December 25th are hectic: school carol services, parties to go to, shopping to get, cards to send and gifts to wrap and churches to get ready. In these strange times, perhaps there is not the same intensity, and we might be able to focus a little more closely on the meaning of Christmas. In a strange way, the pandemic may have given us the gift of 'time and reflection.' I urge you to use it wisely and well! I invite you to join us as we pray the Christmas Novena over these next nine days; the Novena is a traditional Catholic prayer. Those who practice recite a series of prayers for nine days with a purpose – or for a particular request – in the common thought of praising God.

## **Christmas novena: the prayers**

- The first day is dedicated to the invocation of Baby Jesus. The whole New Testament is based on the expectation of Christ that we continue to wait every year as if it were the first. The first prayer is "Come, Baby Jesus"
- On the second day, the heart rejoices because God announces the future salvation to people. This announcement is a cause of great joy because it means that after death, reconciliation and communion with Jesus will be possible. The prayer of the second day is "Jesus, hear us"
- On the third day of Novena, we prepare the ways for the Lord. The reference prayer is "Send your Spirit, O Lord"
- The fourth day is dedicated to bearing witness to Christ. At the time it was the mission of John the Baptist and he accomplished it in truth and in humility, exhorting to conversion and pointing to Jesus as the Saviour. The prayers are accompanied by "Listen to us, O Lord"
- The fifth day is dedicated to God's plan of salvation which meets the will and collaboration of Joseph and Mary. Even the fifth day prayers are guided by "Listen to us, oh Lord"
- The sixth day is addressed to the handmaid of the Lord. After the announcement to Mary by the Archangel Gabriel, God begins to give life to the ancient promises about the coming of the Messiah. The prayer is "We thank you, O Jesus"
- On the seventh day a sign of salvation appears, the miraculous birth of Emmanuel, the son of a virgin. In this event the Evangelist reconnects the prophecy of the birth of Jesus: now God is really with us. By becoming a man, he came to live among us and continues to remain among us today, in the church and in the Eucharist. The prayer is "Honour and glory to You, Lord Jesus"
- The eighth day the emphasis is placed on the saving power of love. This love is good, tenderness, mercy and presents itself despite the sins and weakness of men. The prayer is "Show us, Lord, your Mercy"
- Finally, the ninth day is that of Christmas Eve and is dedicated to the journey into darkness until the reach of God. On the ninth day the prayers are guided by "Listen, oh Lord"

## **Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> December 2021**

In our gospel today, Jesus reflects on the ministry of John the Baptist: 'I tell you of all the children born of women, there is none greater than John!' (Lk 7:28) Jesus reminds his own disciples that they will have to go to palaces if they are looking for refinement and wealth. John is the prophet who points the way' he is the messenger who helps us all to see the future. The observation of Jesus is interesting that even the tax collectors, who were seen as the greatest of sinners, were accepting the message, while the religious leaders rejected it. In fact, these same leaders were doing all in their power to silence him. We might not go to John for fashion tips, but we can look to him for an understanding of what it means to be a Christian—even in today's complicated society. The message he offers is so simple: turn away from anything that harms your relationship with God. Make a commitment to love God, and your neighbour, as yourself. It is really that easy. Today: renew again your commitment to God and to each other



*Image: Photo by [Timothy Eberly](#) on [Unsplash](#)*

### **We can pray:**

Parents and godparents, this light is entrusted to you to be kept burning brightly.  
This child of yours has been enlightened by Christ. He (she) is to walk always as a child of the light.

May he (she) keep the flame of faith alive in his (her) heart.

When the Lord comes, may he (she) go out to meet him with all the saints in the heavenly kingdom.

**AMEN**

(Prayer from the Rite of Baptism, as the Baptismal Candle is offered to the family of the newly baptised.)

## Friday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2021

Without a doubt one of the most popular programmes on British TV is “Who do You Think you are?”: it is a very simple format where a celebrity delves into their family history and discovers all kinds of interesting, sometime salacious, material on their ancestors. Through Church and civic records, they can go right back and discover their origins and genealogy. My cousin, John Healy has done my own family a great service by recording our history and he discovered a great, great, great uncle recorded in the 1901 census as an ‘imbecile’; he may have been a little different, but we have no memories or other records of this hidden ‘Uncle Patrick’--not even a record of his death. Matthew today presents the genealogy of Jesus; conscious of his Jewish audience, he begins with Abraham and ends with Jesus, while a more inclusive Luke begins his family tree with Jesus and traces him back to “**...son of Seth, son of Adam, son of God**” (Lk 3:38). Our Gospel today is taken from the very beginning of Matthew’s account: he is proclaiming who Jesus is. ‘**Jesus Christ, Son of David, Son of Abraham**’ (Matt 1: 1). I must be honest; I was always praying that Deacon Michael or Deacon Fidelis would be able to proclaim the gospel on 17th December as some of the Hebrew names are real tongue twisters! However, more importantly this opening chapter grounds Jesus in a human reality. Unusually, Mathew mentions five women in the lineage—some of whom were involved in irregular relationships, as were many of the men in the list. We are not called to judge, rather we embrace the good and bad that gave us the gift of Jesus, our Wisdom; Jesus was part of a family that embraced the very good and also those we would rather hide away and forget. When you read the stories of the first four women—and of the men on the list—we do not focus on their sin, but on the grace of God. The hero of this story is God. His grace shines through the darkest of human sin as he chooses flawed men and women and places them in Jesus’ family tree.

**Today:** tell a story from your childhood to a younger family member or friend



### **We can pray:**

Lord, I thank you for my heritage and my family history.  
Bless all my family, living and dead; may I play my full part and never discredit my family name.  
Today, Lord, bless us especially with your wisdom.

**AMEN**

*Image: Photo by [Adam Winger](#) on [Unsplash](#)*

## Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> December 2021

The human reality and tragedy that was the conception of Jesus comes to light today with a needed focus on Joseph, the husband of Mary. He discovers that Mary is pregnant, and Matthew makes it clear that Joseph has no knowledge of the event. Rather than forcing her to endure public humiliation and punishment, 'being a man of honour and wanting to spare her publicity, he decided to divorce her informally' (Matt 1: 19). As a Salesian, I love dreams, as they feature so much in the life of our founder, Don Bosco; thus Matthew's use of the 'dream' is very significant: the messenger of God, the angel consoles him in his darkest hour, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife....she will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus because he is the one to save his people from their sins" (Matt 1: 20-21). This is how the naming and birth of Jesus is announced in Matthew-it is all quite abrupt and we need to look to Luke's infancy narrative for more detail. The prophecy of the Isaiah is fulfilled as 'Emmanuel' (Isa 7: 14) is born and Joseph is central to the account because 'he did what the angel of the Lord had told him' (Matt 1: 24). Through the gift of Christmas 'God-is-with-us' (Matt 1: 24) in a real and tangible way; in the gift of Jesus Christ, we can experience God on our own terms.



**Today:** thank God for all those parents who accept the gift of children into their lives, even though circumstances may be difficult

### **We can pray:**

May we, as parents and carers, be slow to anger, quick to hear, and eager to accept our children and grandchildren for the precious treasures they are. Right now, they need our assurance of love and comfort more than ever in these days of pandemic. Thank You for blessing us with the responsibility and privilege of parenting and grandparenting. At times we feel so weak, but You are strong. You will make a way through this. Our trust is in You always.

**AMEN**

## Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2021 – Fourth Sunday of Advent

On this final Sunday of our Camino through Advent, we are presented with the Visitation account from Somehow, the reading today is much more immediate as we are just days away from Christmas. We read of her journey to visit Elizabeth—no visits to the Nazareth branch of ‘Mothercare’ for Mary or getting the Nazareth nursery ready: her faith is practical and simple. Like her, it is in those ordinary and simple things that we can find salvation. There is a lovely story told of the teenage saint Dominic Savio: he took to Don Bosco’s exhortation that his pupils could become saints; Dominic started to follow the example of the aesthetic saints he had read about. He filled his bed with stones so that he could not sleep properly and took to fasting for long periods; with lack of food and sleep, his health deteriorated badly, and Don Bosco was deeply concerned. When Dominic told his mentor what he was doing to achieve sanctity, Bosco reminded him that we become saints not by doing the extraordinary but by doing the ordinary extraordinarily well. In that simple act of visitation, Elizabeth can recount that **‘the child in my womb leapt for joy’** (Lk 1:44). A simple act brings such gladness and support.

Last year another fifteen-year-old, Carlo Acutis was beatified; he can rightly be called the saint of Facebook and Twitter. He is a modern saint who, while dressed in jeans and a tracksuit top, pointed to the need for the Eucharist in our lives. A modern saint who was at home with the internet and recognised its power in our lives; his mother Antonia spoke to reporters prior to the ceremony, **“I must say that the internet is incredible. It’s a gift. Of course, the internet has a dark side” when misused for pornography, bullying and selling drugs, but Carlo showed the good side of internet. And we know that the light is stronger than the darkness.**” Obviously, she is biased but she sees her eldest child, a victim of leukaemia, as a prophet for our times: **“because, of course, a saint is somebody who goes a little bit against the mainstream, the mentality of most people.”** Don Bosco, Dominic Savio and Carlo could be seen as ‘rebels’ as they offer values that sometimes we would like to hide. Blessed Carlo spoke of the cult of the superstar that is all too obvious in our society today, as a quick look into any tabloid newspaper will show; he would comment:

**You see queues in front of a football match or an actor or rock singer, but you don’t see a queue for the tabernacle where there is the real presence of God, God that lives among us**



*(Blessed Carlo Acutis 1991-2006 - By Unknown - <https://cruxnow.com/church-in-europe>, Fair use, <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?curid=65806943>)*

Personally, I am drawn to Carlo's wisdom when he said, "**we are all born original, but many die as photocopies.**" Today we see God blessing the original gift to the world that is Mary; Blessed Carlo wants each of us to make our own contribution to the life of the world, it is a contribution that only YOU can make. While Carlo was strongly attached to the Eucharist, his prayer life, and working in his local soup kitchen, he enjoyed physical activity, playing with his many friends and living the life of a normal teenager. Others sought him out when they had problems, and he was a real friend to those in need. Carlo's friendly face was a common sight in his neighbourhood. He befriended everybody, including the gatekeepers, janitors, and other domestic servants that worked around his area. These workers were often non-Europeans with Muslim and Hindu backgrounds.

Carlo told everybody about his love for Christ, and people could not help but listen and share in his joy. Another recent saint, Cardinal Newman powerfully reminds us of our uniqueness. I pray that today you do not follow the crowd, but that you are prepared to make a difference:

**God has created me to do him some definite service; He has committed some work to me which he has not committed to another. I have my mission; I never may know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next. I have a part in a great work; I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for naught. I shall do good, I shall do His work; I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place, while not intending it, if I do but keep His commandments and serve Him in my calling.** (St John Henry Newman)

Mary had found that level of sanctity and was chosen to be the 'SHEKINAH' or place of encounter with God. God's Shekinah is assuming flesh and blood in the womb of history, within the womb of a Davidic descendent, Mary, is blessed **because 'she believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled.'** (Lk 1: 45). It is Mary's faith that makes the incarnation possible. It is our faith that makes the incarnation possible in our own world. It brings new meaning to our families, to grow with us, to be with us. And it is through the goodness of our own faith, one with him, that the love of God is to be radiated out into the whole world. Mary and Elizabeth are those faithful disciples who hear and keep God's word; not only do they 'talk the talk', which is relatively easy to do, they 'walk the walk'-much harder to achieve but the sign of a true disciple. Like Mary, you will be carrying Jesus with you today; how you respond to situations and people will define your very being today. Be kind, listen and give praise and thanks who help you along the Camino today: may your day move from grey to gold. Today we can follow the example of Mary and see great things happen with just a little love, mixed with a little faith; Christmas is not something that happened to other people many, many centuries ago. Christmas can happen every day when we bring our faith together and say to God, "**Take my life. Be it done to you and be it done to me according to Your word.**"

**Today:** follow the example of Blessed Carlo and use the internet to bring goodness-even a positive tweet could help someone

#### **We can pray as we light the fourth candle:**

Lord, we thank you for the gift of Mary in the life of our Church-may we follow her example of faith, hope, service and love. Like her may we see God's hand in all we do and say today.

We thank you for the gift of Elizabeth and her elder wisdom.

We thank you for the gifts of Dominic Savio and Carlo Acutis; they are role model for our young as the remind us that we can all be happy and have good times following the Gospel.

As adults, may we always give good example and be open to learning from our young people: they can teach us so much if our ears and hearts are open to them.

As we light this fourth candle and complete a circle of light, may we share that light with those we meet this week; may that light guide us through the hectic few days ahead and may we enjoy the eternal light of Jesus on Christmas Day itself.

**AMEN**

Monday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2021

**O dawn of the east, brightness of light eternal, and sun of justice: come, and enlighten those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.**

One of the things I love about Mary of Nazareth is her decisive action; in reality she does not appear much in the Gospels, but she is always seen as helping and supportive from Bethlehem to Cana to Calvary to the early Christian lockdown in the Upper Room. This mission of service begins, as Luke reminds us today, in her act of unconditional trust which we read in the Annunciation. Once again we are given with the Annunciation account from Luke that we read, as our Gospel, back on the Feast the Immaculate Conception (8th December). Somehow, however, the reading today is much more immediate as we are just days away from Christmas. As our backdrop today we are aware of Mary's fear and wonder, but we recognise her deep trust and faith. Her simple life in the outback of Galilee had '**won God's favour**' (Lk 1: 30).

Unlike the father of John, Zechariah, Mary actually does believe in miracles—the impossible can happen. Zachariah, the Temple official who is, literally, working next to the 'Holy of Holies' in the centre of the Jewish faith cannot comprehend the gift being offered to him and is speechless. Mary, in an obscure village, miles away from the sophistication and deep theological teaching of the Temple, can say with total trust, '**I am the handmaid of the Lord, let what you have said be done to me**' (Lk 1:38). She shared the faith of her ancestors, slaves in Egypt, that Moses would liberate them. Miracles will happen if we believe. As the chosen people discovered, it could take a long time, but it will happen. Sometimes we need to go through generational change for real movement to take place. What we cannot do, no matter how comforting or easy it might be, is to look back, and live in a past that we deem be 'golden'. Like Mary, we will be called to take risks and meet the challenges that Covid-19 has brought to our Church. We are invited to move forward, sharing a mutual trust and hope in our future—time and time again, the Angel of the Lord tells us, '**Do not be afraid**' (Lk 1:30). We can never let fear traumatise us, or not help us to move on. We need not fear because '**the Lord is with you!**' (Lk 1:28). Remember that the Lord walks with you today and always—enjoy his company.

**Today:** Show the world that you walk with the living Lord of light. Smile more-share a joke and laugh heartily (just like a six year old)

**Watch and reflect:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NieC8KA0Evl&t=12s>

**We can pray:**

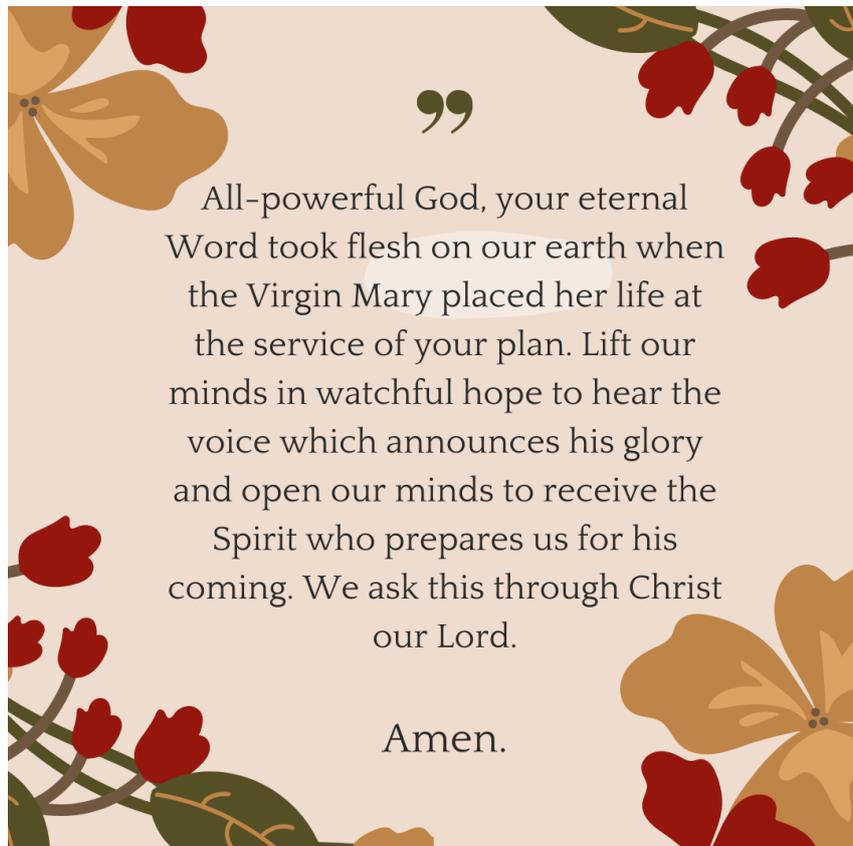
May you find a gift this morning  
Laid out for you in the sky.  
A beautiful reminder  
That sets your hope in flight.

May you notice birds above you  
That soar and ride the winds.  
And know that as you lift your prayer  
God lifts your heart and sings.

May you hear the sweet birds chirping  
May you smell the fresh cool air  
And know that God's love is all around Holding you so dear.



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## Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> December 2021

Today we might feel a real sense of déjà vu, as we once again re-tell last Sunday's gospel account of the Visitation. Perhaps the Church is trying to re-enforce the message that being a follower of Jesus, involves going out of our comfort zones. Scripture tells us clearly that humanity is made in the image of God (see Gen 1:27); being made in that divine image means that we do not play at being good. We are called to reach beyond ourselves and make an impact on the lives of others. Mary made an impact on the lives of Elizabeth, Zachariah and their whole household—she made a difference. Perhaps today is the day to look back on those who have made a difference in your life: those who have been there for you, held your hand and dried your tears. Without these angels without wings, our lives would have been a lot worse. Perhaps they are still with you, perhaps they are a memory—a faded picture. Your children might ask you who that person is—the one in your picture. You can tell them that, with this individual, you had some of the best days of your life. Your children might never be able to meet them, but they can share your deep respect and love for them. Be grateful for all those visits you were able to take with those who loved you—if anything, the lockdown experience and physical distancing taught us so much about our need for each other. We can bring so much joy and laughter into the lives of others—I pray that you can reconnect

**Today:** try to reconnect with a friend you have not seen for such a long time—if you can visit them, it will mean so much. If not try a telephone call, social media or a letter.

### **We can pray:**

O blessed Lord,

you have commanded us to love one another.

Just as we have received your undeserved blessings,

may we love everyone in you and for you.

We ask your kindness for all,

but especially for the friends

whom your love has given to us.

Love them, O fountain of love,

and move them to love you

with all their heart,

that they may will, and speak, and do only those things

which are pleasing to you.

Bless especially those friends who are a distant memory:

We thank you for their support and care.

Lord, be with our friends always.

**AMEN**

### Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2021

In the Gospel today, we have Mary's response to Elizabeth's greeting—a response that we have come to love in the Magnificat prayer. It is a prayer rooted in the Hebrew hymn of praise tradition and it something we could perhaps use as a guide for our own prayer today. Mary gives a reason for her praise **“because has looked upon on his lowly handmaid”** (Lk 1: 47); she joins with women such as Hannah and Leah in offering fulsome praise of God: “What happiness! Women will call me happy!” (Gen 30: 13). In full charismatic flow, Mary proclaims God to be:



- The mighty one—God saves the people; for the Hebrew people this is centred on Exodus, their freedom from slavery and commemorated annually at Passover.
- The holy one—Mary carries the holy one who will show the world what it means to be truly HOLY. It does not involve ‘chewing down the altar rails’ as the wise women of St James Parish in Bootle would often remind me!
- The merciful one—time and time again, God has offered his people yet another chance. God continues that quality in the ministry of both John and Jesus; we need to continue that quality in our forgiving and caring relationships.

As the prayer progresses, we see Mary echo Jesus' concern for those on the margins; the reign of God is for all, not just the lucky few. Please never limit the grace of God to a special group that happen to go to your Church or who think just like you or pray just like you. We belong to a very broad Church as Mary reminds us, **“he has routed the proud of heart, he has pulled down princes from their thrones and exalted the lowly. The hungry he has fed with good things, the rich sent empty away.”** (Lk 1: 52-53). Gospel values are not always what society wants and this time of pandemic and enforced lockdown has forced many to look at their lives and see where priorities should lie. As the prayer ends Mary reminds us of the covenant bond that God has with all of us. **“mindful of his mercy—according to the promise he made to our ancestors—of his mercy to Abraham and his descendants for ever”** (Lk 1: 54-55). Unlike many of us, God makes a promise that will never be abandoned or conveniently forgotten; Mary is all too aware of the personal promise that God made to her at the Annunciation. In staying with Elizabeth for **‘about three months’** (Lk 1: 56), Mary honours that promise in her care for Elizabeth: we cannot say we are close to God and ignore our neighbour in need. The letter of John puts it very well, **‘If we say we love God, but hate others, we are liars. For we cannot love God, whom we have not seen, if we do not love others, whom we have seen.’** (1 Jn 4:12)

**Today:** offer help without having to be asked

**We can pray:** Today we pray with Mary and offer our full praise and thanks to God; concentrate on the good that you have received and offer those bad memories and experiences to a God who is walking with you today

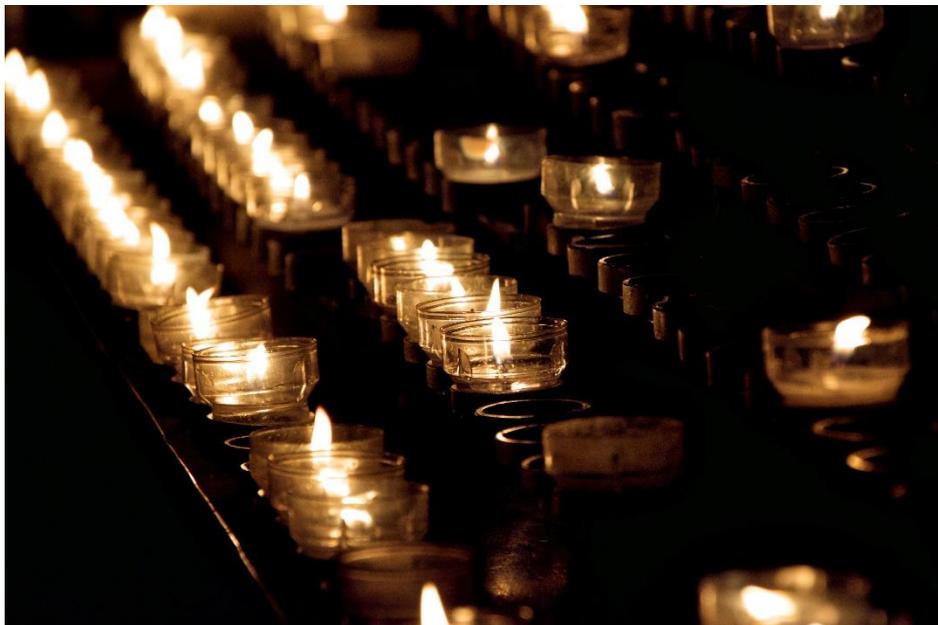
*Image: Photo by [British Library](#) on [Unsplash](#)*

Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2021

**O EMMANUEL, God with us, our King and Lawgiver, the expected of the nations and their Saviour: come to save us, O Lord our God**

Today the focus of our Gospel is once again John the Baptist: friends and family gather with Elizabeth to **'share her joy'** (Lk 1: 58) in the birth of this unexpected son. At his naming ceremony they assume that he will be named after his father, Zechariah who made it quite explicit as he wrote **'his name is John'** (Lk 1: 63)-this very fitting as the name means 'God's gracious gift.' In that simple act of submission to the will of God, the pride and arrogance of Zachariah is freed, and he is able to talk again. In regaining the gift of speech **'he spoke and praised God. All their neighbours were filled with awe and the whole affair was talked about throughout the hill country of Judea'** (Lk 1: 64-65). When we NAME somebody, the relationship becomes very special: I will always remember the time when a friend called me 'Gerry' for the first time instead of using my title, 'Father'; it may seem a little thing, but it was so special and made me realise that we were now friends and could dispense with anything that could get in the way of that true relationship. In our Gospel today, Zachariah realises his lack of faith and trust in God, while Elizabeth simply lives it; their tiny infant will grow up to challenge and to prepare the world for the Emmanuel, to help us to realise that God is indeed with us. As you walk this Advent Camino today, with Christmas Day just around the corner, I pray that your faith and trust be like that of Elizabeth: you CAN do great things today because the 'hand of God' (Lk 1: 66) is with you too.

**Today:** bring your family and friends before God and NAME each one of them-perhaps you can light a candle for them



*Image: Photo by [Thomas Bormans](#) on [Unsplash](#)*

**We can pray:** Lord, thank you for the goodness in my life and for giving me my name. When I wake each morning, I praise Your name! You have given me life that is filled with beauty, and the breath in my lungs is a gift from You. I pray that You will fill my day with love and sustenance. And may I remember at the end of each of my days, to thank you for all that has been placed in my life

## Friday 24<sup>th</sup> December 2021 – Christmas Eve

Our novena is nearly at an end--there is something so special about Christmas Eve: the shops are shut and if you have not got that 'must have gift', then you will have to wait until the January sales and save yourself a fortune. I remember, with great affection, the traditions of other families that I have been privileged to share: one Christmas Eve I joined a family from eastern Europe as we shared the traditional carp; due to commitments in the parish I could not stay to enjoy the whole twelve courses (in honour of the twelve Apostles of Jesus), but I did feel well and truly blessed. The Gospel of our day mass echoes that sensation as Zachariah, now free and a father for the first time, can pray his own prayer of blessing, what we now know as the 'Benedictus.' As the Hebrew people could give thanks to a saving God after the Exodus event, so praise now fills the mouth of the once silent Zechariah, **"Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel for he has visited his people, he has come to their rescue."** (Lk 1: 68).

In a few short hours we will celebrate that saving God who comes to visit us in the form of a child, innocent and full of wonder. We are saved by a God who first comes to us as a child! In his adult ministry Jesus saw the importance of children, as he welcomed and encouraged them. We are called, as a Church, to ensure that our children are always safe and well; like Jesus we are invited to learn from them. In the prayer, the father blesses his child, John who will grow up to be the Baptist **'to go before the Lord, to prepare a way for him, to give his people knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sin.'** (Lk 1: 76-77).

As the night draws in tonight, we are buoyed up by the lights of our Christmas Trees and the simple carols that we sing together that give us hope. I hope that this Advent journey has brought you light in these dark pandemic times. As the omicron variant of the virus seems to be taking hold, you might not feel safe in crowds and might not feel comfortable even at Midnight Mass. Please do not worry and it will be on your television screens later this evening from St Chad's



Cathedral in Birmingham--even the BBC and ITV acknowledge the sacred in these secular times. On this most sacred of nights, we remember that the Risen Lord will **'visit us to give light to those who live in darkness and in the shadow of death and to guide our feet into the way of peace'** (Lk 1: 79). Please send in any prayer requests that will be placed in the crib here tonight; I hope that Christmas 2021 will be remembered for the right reasons. I hope that you have a wonderful family Christmas, surrounded by those you love and who love you. Keep safe and well; may you have a very happy and blessed Christmas. While our Advent journey might end tonight, I pray that we might be able to walk together again during Lent. As the great parable of Final Judgement tells us we do not go to the Lord on our own--our actions and attitude towards others go with us. Jesus reminds us. **"as long as you did it for the least of these my sisters or brothers, you did it for me."** (Matt 25: 40).

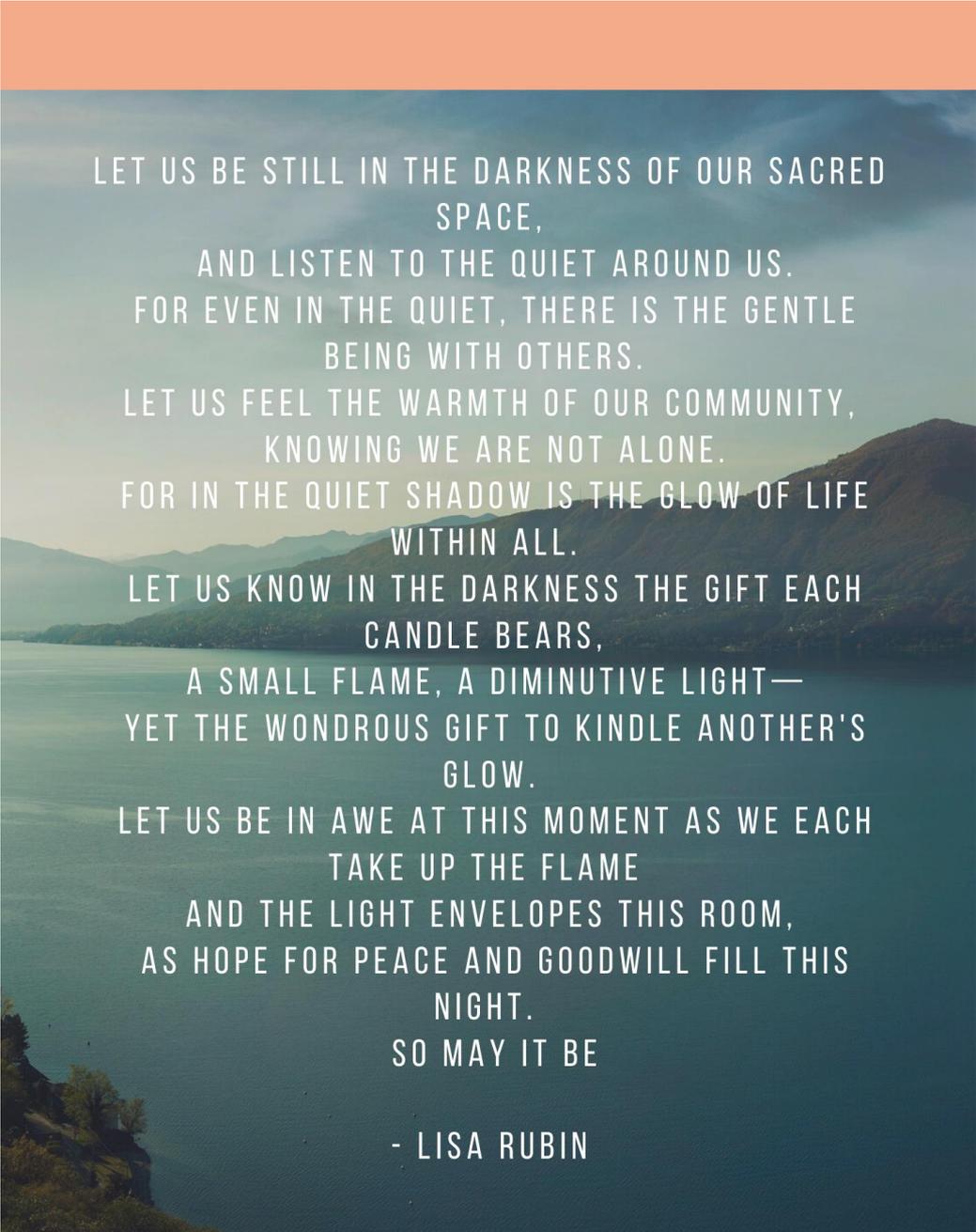
*Image: Photo by [David Beale](#) on [Unsplash](#)*

**Today:** help in the kitchen; if you are in the kitchen then don't be afraid to ask for help! Enjoy your feast see if anyone needs.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kzqrWae5IK4>

**We pray as you light the Christmas Candle**

May the Lord bless you and keep you



LET US BE STILL IN THE DARKNESS OF OUR SACRED  
SPACE,  
AND LISTEN TO THE QUIET AROUND US.  
FOR EVEN IN THE QUIET, THERE IS THE GENTLE  
BEING WITH OTHERS.  
LET US FEEL THE WARMTH OF OUR COMMUNITY,  
KNOWING WE ARE NOT ALONE.  
FOR IN THE QUIET SHADOW IS THE GLOW OF LIFE  
WITHIN ALL.  
LET US KNOW IN THE DARKNESS THE GIFT EACH  
CANDLE BEARS,  
A SMALL FLAME, A DIMINUTIVE LIGHT—  
YET THE WONDROUS GIFT TO KINDLE ANOTHER'S  
GLOW.  
LET US BE IN AWE AT THIS MOMENT AS WE EACH  
TAKE UP THE FLAME  
AND THE LIGHT ENVELOPES THIS ROOM,  
AS HOPE FOR PEACE AND GOODWILL FILL THIS  
NIGHT.  
SO MAY IT BE

- LISA RUBIN

**Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> December 2021 – Christmas Day**



*Image: Photo by [Phil Hearing](#) on [Unsplash](#)*

As you open your gifts and cards today, remember just how much you are loved and respected; love your family and friends who are with you, think of those loved ones unable to share this day. Our virtual Camino has joined us together over these past four weeks and we are closer than ever today. May you have a truly blessed and wonderful Christmas.

**Today:** be with your loved ones and enjoy their company

**We pray:**

**Fill our world with your peace. AMEN**

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