

Entrusting God's Son to Mary and to Us

We have seen what difference the birth of a child brings to a family. It makes grandparent dote on and speak childlike to their *apos*, and softens a father's heart over a daughter's unapproved marriage. Thus we are not surprised that our Scripture readings during Simbang Gabi have a string of pregnancies, unexpected but deeply cherished.

Yes, the coming of a child is good news but how is it a sign of salvation, which the Magnificat from Luke's Gospel describes in images like "casting the mighty from their thrones" and "filling the hungry with good things"? Like many of us who dream of a perfect leader, Israel had waited anxiously for liberating leadership. Those who came like Samson, David, and Samuel were leaders all right but also all with feet of clay. The Jews were disappointed even with Jesus of Nazareth who neither turned stones into bread nor overthrew the Roman occupation forces and their collaborators.

Thus we might dare ask why God chose to send his Son as a child into our world and what God wants us to learn from it. Perhaps with a little imagination, we can hear God speaking to us in these words: "From the very beginning, I, your Creator, desire that you partake of myself and all my riches, and that you will all come to me like Mary with her offering, 'Be it done to me according to your word.' And just as my messenger Gabriel assured her, I wish you to speak to me not in fear but in freedom, not in flight from burning fire and brimstone but in full self-giving.

In order to help you and guide your fragile hearts of flesh,

Fr. Jose Mario Francisco, SJ

I entrust my beloved Son to Mary and Joseph, as a child. Unlike the fully grown Adam and Eve who chose to turn away from me and thus began the spiral of brokenness and injustice, my Son, though truly God, would be most weak and vulnerable, needing his parents' constant care. Like all the living depending on my providence, my Son, fully human, would have to be fed and guided by hand; he would have to hear many voices in order to learn to speak, and to be raised by family and friends—no, by an entire nation—to learn to live with and for others. I deliver my Son to humankind so that in the fullness of time, he would turn to me at the Garden of Gethsemane: 'Take this cup away, but let it be as you, not I, would have it.'

This, then, is what God wants us to learn through the birth of the Christ-child. God entrusted his Son to our human family, into our hands, to raise him to advance in wisdom and grace before God and humankind, and to nurture him into his self-emptying love unto death.

Thus God calls forth from us, represented by Mary, Joseph, and those in Israel who heard his voice, the goodness with which we are all created. The birth of Jesus becomes the sign of our life-giving salvation because it has empowered us who have raised God's Son in our midst, to rise beyond our meanest selves and to mend our world.

As we live in our broken world where the fullness of God's life within us is endangered, we must confess that we have not nurtured each other—not just our children but also our partners and colleagues, our families and our nation—to be an offering to God and others. If we simply raise the children of Cain rather than those of Abel, then we have only ourselves to blame. God has put our salvation—the weak and vulnerable Christ-child—into our hands.



THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

Entrance Antiphon (Cf. Is 45:8)

(Recited when there is no opening song.)

Drop down dew from above, you heavens, and let the clouds rain down the Just One; let the earth be opened and bring forth a Savior.

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—Today we celebrate what used to be known as the “Golden Mass of Our Lady” (*Missa Aurea*) which proclaim the Annunciation—the actual start of the life of Jesus, God-became-man. Let us pray in this Eucharist that our devotion to Mary may proceed from true faith, by which we are led to know the excellence of the Mother of God and are moved to filial love toward our own mother and to the imitation of their virtues.

Penitential Act

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

P—Have mercy on us, O Lord.
All—For we have sinned against you.

P—Show us, O Lord, your mercy.

All—And grant us your salvation.

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

P—Lord, have mercy.

All—Lord, have mercy.

P—Christ, have mercy.

All—Christ, have mercy.

P—Lord, have mercy.

All—Lord, have mercy.

Gloria

All—Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Collect

P—Let us pray. *(Pause)*

O God, by consenting to the message of an angel the Immaculate Virgin became the dwelling of your eternal Word and was filled with the light of the Holy Spirit. Give us the grace to follow her example and devote ourselves humbly to your will.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever.

All—Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD



First Reading (Is 7:10–14) *(Sit)*

Isaiah tells Ahaz that as a sign of God's concern for his people, a virgin shall conceive a Son who will be called Emmanuel. This prophecy is perfectly fulfilled in Jesus who is “God-with-us” in the truest sense of the word.

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

THE LORD spoke to Ahaz: Ask for a sign from the LORD, your God; let it be deep as the nether world, or high as the

sky! But Ahaz answered, “I will not ask! I will not tempt the LORD!” Then Isaiah said: Listen, O house of David! Is it not enough for you to weary men, must you also weary my God? Therefore, the LORD himself will give you this sign: the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel.

— The word of the Lord.

All — Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm (Ps 24)

R—Let the Lord enter; he is the king of glory.

Mark Alegre

♩ = 120

Em Bm/D Dm

Let the Lord enter; He is the
King of Glo-ry.

1. The LORD's are the earth and its fullness;/ the world and those who dwell in it./ For he founded it upon the seas/ and established it upon the rivers. **(R)**

2. Who can ascend the mountain of the LORD?/ or who may stand in his holy place?/ He whose hands are sinless, whose heart is clean,/ who desires not what is vain. **(R)**

3. He shall receive a blessing from the LORD,/ a reward from God his savior./ Such is the race that seeks for him,/ that seeks the face of the God of Jacob. **(R)**

Alleluia *(Stand)*

All—Alleluia, alleluia. O Key of David, opening the gates of God's eternal Kingdom: come and free the prisoners of darkness! Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel (Lk 1:26–38)

P—A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke
All—Glory to you, O Lord.

IN THE SIXTH month the angel

Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, "Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you." But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his Kingdom there will be no end."

But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?" And the angel said to her in reply, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God."

Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

— The Gospel of the Lord.

All—Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily (*Sit*)

Prayer of the Faithful

P—With hearts full of hope and joy, let us turn to the Father, that we may have the disposition like that of Mary who willingly cooperated with his work of redemption. In confidence, we pray:

R—Lord, listen to your people.

C—May Pope Francis, bishops, priests, and deacons remain steadfast in their faith by being obedient to their promises to serve God and his people faithfully through their ministerial and pastoral works. We pray: **(R)**

C—May those who work in government see their office as a public trust, and may their decisions be for the peace and well-being of all people. We pray: **(R)**

C—May victims of calamities, violence, and war, find favor with God through the sincere efforts of local authorities and their communities. We pray: **(R)**

C—May the Lord guide and protect migrant Filipinos, OFWs, and seafarers and fill them with consolation especially this Christmas and the coming New Year. We pray: **(R)**

C—Like Mary, may young people be filled with the Holy Spirit especially as they undergo the process of discernment in their vocation. We pray: **(R)**

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

P—Graciously listen to our prayers, O Father. As we honor Mary, the mother of your Son, may her prayers help us to follow your Son in our daily lives, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever.

All—Amen.



Presentation of the Gifts

(*Stand*)

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

P—Look with favor, Lord, upon the one sacrifice of Christ, that, by sharing in this mystery,

we may receive the blessings which we long for in faith and in hope.

Through Christ our Lord.

All—Amen.

Preface II of Advent

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 all the oracles of the prophets foretold him, the Virgin Mother longed for him with love beyond all telling, John the Baptist sang of his coming and proclaimed his presence when he came.

It is by his gift that already we rejoice at the mystery of his Nativity, so that he may find us watchful in prayer and exultant in his praise.

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... (*Kneel*)

Acclamation

(*Stand*)

All—When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.

THE COMMUNION RITE

The Lord's Prayer

All—Our Father...

P—Deliver us, Lord...

All—For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever.

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. Is 7:14)

Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and shall bear a son, and his name will be called Emmanuel.

Prayer after Communion
(Stand)

P—Let us pray. (Pause)

Lord God, defend with your divine power those whom you nourish with heavenly gifts, so that, blessed by this sacrament, we may rejoice in the peace which you alone can give.

Through Christ our Lord.

All — Amen.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

P—The Lord be with you.

All—And with your spirit.

Solemn Blessing

P—Bow down for the blessing.
(Pause)

May the almighty and merciful God, by whose grace you have placed your faith in the First Coming of his Only Begotten Son and yearn for his coming again, sanctify you by the radiance of Christ's Advent and enrich you with his blessing.

All—Amen.

P—As you run the race of this present life, may he make you firm in faith, joyful in hope, and active in charity.

All—Amen.

P—So that, rejoicing now with devotion at the Redeemer's coming in the flesh, you may be endowed with the rich reward of eternal life when he comes again in majesty.

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.

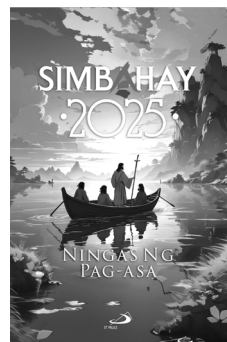
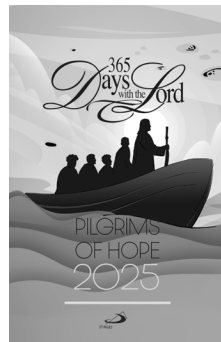
All—Amen.

Dismissal

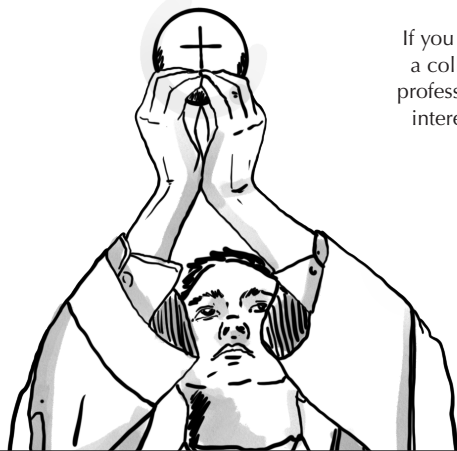
P—Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.

All—Thanks be to God.

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