

# LIVING THE WORD

- ❖ **Advent Story.** *“A Kitten at Christmas”.* A Catholic couple were celebrating Christmas Eve. The wife invited her husband to Midnight Mass, but he declined. He thought he would instead stay at home on this cold night, watch television, and they could have a Christmas drink when she returned. His wife left early to attend Christmas carols and, shortly after, he heard a noise at the front door. Opening the back door he noticed a cold and wet kitten. He reached toward it but it cried in fear and retreated further away. He pondered to himself how he could help comfort this poor kitten. He got some milk from the fridge, poured it into a plate, showed the kitten and placed it just inside the door. He hoped to welcome the kitten into the warm and dry room of his house. The kitten continued its crying. He tried again to reach out to it, but the kitten interpreted these actions fearfully and moved further away into the cold. As the man continued to ponder how he could truly communicate positively with this kitten, it dawned on him that he would need to become like this kitten. Suddenly he realised what God had done. He jumped into his car to attend Midnight Mass and whispered to his wife: *‘for the first time I’ve realised that Christmas is God born among us in Jesus to help us!’*
- ❖ King David had unified the tribes of Israel by bringing the ‘Ark’ – the special wooden box containing the tablets with the Ten Commandments – to Jerusalem. He now thought he would build a Temple to give a proper ‘home’ to God. Nathan went along with this plan but God had to intervene. God describes 11 times (*l...*) what He has done. God has intervened in history – not the other way around! As you approach the end of the year and consider what you would like to do next year, have you consulted God in prayer? Is there someone like Nathan who could help you?
- ❖ Paul writes of a *‘mystery kept secret for long ages but now made public to all nations’*, bringing about obedience of faith. Is your faith in Jesus ‘secret’ or ‘public’? At your own level of comfort, how could you witness to being a believer and follower of Jesus? Could you invite someone to Christmas carols? Midnight Mass? Mention Jesus at your family gathering?
- ❖ God zooms in from eternity to a historical place (Galilee), to a town (Nazareth), to a person (Mary), engaged to a descendant of King David (Joseph). Here is a scriptural window into the most significant historical event of eternity. God, through the angel, awaits Mary’s response. What part of Mary’s experience can you identify with the most?
- ❖ Mary saying ‘Yes’ to God’s calling, and birthing Jesus into the world at Christmas, is also symbolic of every disciple. Have you ever had a ‘God’ moment, a sense of a significant job God has planned for you, and then ‘the angel departed’. It was over. Are you living in obedience? Forgetfulness? Laziness? Fear?

## NORWAY’S BISHOP VARDEN ON THE INCARNATION – A CHRISTMAS REFLECTION

The Incarnation (i.e. the Son of God became man) is the account of the mysterious union of two incommensurate entities. From the divine angle, at the centre of the word “Incarnation”, you have “*caro*”. So the Incarnation is enfleshment. It is the fact that God assumes our flesh, submits to that restriction. He who is everywhere, in whom everything was made, the everlasting Word of the Father, chooses to be specifically present in a single embodied person, and thereby renders that person, Jesus Christ, a walking epiphany, which is the great story of the Gospel that the disciples’ eyes are increasingly opened to.

It’s also really important to look at the Incarnation from the point of view of the flesh. What we need to remember is that in becoming flesh, the Word didn’t simply occupy one human body as a guest for 33 years. But it was human nature as such — that is, flesh — that was invested with a potential for divinity. So, being a human being in the wake of the Incarnation isn’t the same as being a human being before the Incarnation, whether or not one believes in Christ and whether one even knows that Christ ever walked on this earth.

According to St Athanasius, human nature wasn’t working as it was supposed to work. The only way in which it could be restored was through God’s chosen way of the Incarnation. The reason God needed to become Man was to overcome mortality, which is the wages of sin, and so restore to humanity that opening towards eternity for which it was made, and for which it was intended. Because human nature had been wounded and had ceded to mortality, the Word, in whose image that nature was made, needed to reinvest it, in order to reanimate that human possibility of rising to eternal life.

The Incarnation continues in sanctified lives – in men, women, and children – transformed by what they consume sacramentally by God’s grace, by the grace of community, and thereby become Christs to others. The Church itself is a mystery of Incarnation. We can’t emphasise enough how important it is to remember that the Church isn’t just the People of God, but that it is the Body of Christ. The Church is a sacramental mystery.

The Word didn’t come with a huge cry, but came as an infant. In Latin, “*infans*” means “speechless”. All of us yearn for that receptivity to the Word coming among us.

*The Pillar – by Luke Coppen, December 24, 2022*



## CALENDAR

### Monday

December 25  
*Nativity of the Lord*  
Is 52:7-10  
Heb 1:1-6  
Jn 1:1-18 or  
1:1-5, 9-14

### Tuesday

December 26  
*St. Stephen,  
the First Martyr*  
Acts 6:8-10;  
7:54-59  
Mt 10:17-22

### Wednesday

December 27  
*St. John,  
Apostle and  
Evangelist*  
1 Jn 1:1-4  
Jn 20:1a, 2-8

### Thursday

December 28  
*Holy Innocents,  
Martyrs*  
1 Jn 1:5-2:2  
Mt 2:13-18

### Friday

December 29  
*Christmas  
Weekday*  
1 Jn 2:3-11  
Lk 2:22-35

### Saturday

December 30  
*Christmas  
Weekday*  
1 Jn 2:12-17  
Lk 2:36-40

### Sunday

December 31  
*Holy Family  
of Jesus, Mary,  
and Joseph*  
Sir 3:2-6, 12-14  
Col 3:12-21 or  
3:12-17  
Lk 2:22-40 or  
2:22, 39-40

## Schedule for Christmas 2023 and New Year 2024

**Sunday, 24<sup>th</sup> December 2023 (Christmas Eve)**

10:00 am. **ENGLISH MASS**

9:00 pm. *Confession*  
10:30 pm. *Mass in Thai, presided over by Archbishop Francis Xavier Card. Kriengsak Kovithavanij. (English booklets will be made available for the English-speaking community.)*

*From around 5.00 pm., there will be Christmas Market. All proceeds of ticket sales will go toward a range of charities supported by the Church.*

*Please use public transportation or park your cars at Assumption College.*

**Monday, 25<sup>th</sup> December 2023 (The Nativity of the Lord)**

09:00 am. *Thai Mass*  
11:00 am. **ENGLISH MASS**

**Sunday, 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 (New Year's Eve)**

10:00 am. **ENGLISH MASS**

9:30 pm. *Eucharistic Adoration*  
10:00 pm. *Thai Mass*

**Monday, 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024 (Solemnity of Mary, The Holy Mother of God)**

9:00 am. *Thai Mass*  
11:00 am. **ENGLISH MASS**

## APPEAL FOR YOUR GENEROSITY

Assumption Cathedral is organising the 2023 edition of its "**Christmas Market**". This will take place on Christmas Eve, December 24<sup>th</sup>, from around 5:00 pm, in the front courtyard and surrounding areas of the Cathedral. The event will include many different games and a host of other fun activities.

Tickets for this event will be sold right after Mass this morning – members of our Lay Ministry Team will approach you for your contributions. Money collected from the ticket sales will be used entirely to support the charitable activities of the Church, so please **dig deep** and give **generously** and **joyfully**.

## ASSUMPTION CATHEDRAL

23 Oriental Avenue (Charoenkrung Soi 40)  
Bangrak, Bangkok 10500  
Thailand  
Tel: 0-2234-4592, 0-2234-8556, 0-2233-7120  
Fax: 0-2234-3414

### PASTOR:

Rev. Ignatius Adisak Somsaengsuang

### ASSISTANTS:

Rev. Peter Booncharat Suksawang  
Rev. Peter Withawat Kaewwaen

### MASS SCHEDULE:

Mon-Fri : Thai 06:00 hrs.  
Sat : Thai 06:00; 17:00 novena followed by mass  
Sun : Thai 07:00; 08:30 and 17:00 hrs.  
English 10:00 hrs.

### BAPTISM:

Thai : **First Sunday** during 8:30 am mass.  
English : **Second Sunday** during 10:00 am mass.

### CONFESSION:

Sundays : Before all masses (Thai).  
English before 10:00 am mass.

### CATHOLIC CENTER:

For religious articles, please visit the center opposite the entrance of the Cathedral.

### Opening Hours:

Mon-Fri : 08:30 – 17:00 hrs.  
Sat, Sun : Closed  
& public holidays

# Dear Padre

December 24, 2023

**The Bible talks about Jesus' brothers and sisters. Is there scriptural proof that Jesus was Mary's only child?**

The Catholic Church's position is that Mary had only one child; her son called Jesus. Yet there are at least ten scriptural references to "the brothers of Jesus" or to his "sisters" (see Matthew 13:55-56, Mark 6:3, and Luke 8:19-21).

The difficulty is that the meaning of the term "brothers" (translated from the Greek *adelphos*) isn't restricted to the sharing of a parent. On the contrary, it may not only refer to other relatives, including cousins, but also to close relationships, such as disciples. This is not unlike how we might refer to "brothers in arms" as those who fought in a war together, or a religious order of brothers or sisters.

Recall, too, that Jesus and his disciples spoke Aramaic, and there is no equivalent for the meaning of "cousins" as we know it in that language. Instead, the word for brother or sister was used when referring to cousins. Thus, when St. Jerome (*circa* 340-420) translated the Bible from Hebrew into Church Latin, he considered "the brothers of Jesus" as cousins, not siblings. After all, it would have been the rightful responsibility of these male relatives of Jesus to take care of Mary when Jesus died. Yet Jesus entrusts his mother to the care of his beloved disciple John (John 19:26). ●

Fr. Byron Miller, C SSR / DearPadre.org

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**MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION**

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

**DOXOLOGY PLEASE STAND**

**Priest:** Through him, and with him, and in him, O God, almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honour is yours, for ever and ever.

**GREAT AMEN**

**Amen. Amen. Amen.**

**COMMUNION RITE**

**THE LORD'S PRAYER (No. 387)**

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.**

**Priest:** Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil; graciously grant peace in our days, that, by the help of your mercy, we may be always free from sin and safe from all distress, as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our saviour, Jesus Christ.

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

**LAMB OF GOD**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. (Repeat)**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, grant us peace, grant us peace.**

**PLEASE KNEEL**

**Priest:** 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 HYMN: JESUS, HOPE OF THE WORLD (No. 909)**

**FINAL HYMN: HAIL MARY, GENTLE WOMAN (No. 889)**

**PLEASE STAND**



**FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT (Year B)**

*Sunday, 24 December 2023*

**ENTRANCE HYMN: O COME, DIVINE MESSIAH (No. 401) PLEASE STAND**

**INTRODUCTORY RITE**

**Priest:** I confess to almighty God,

**All:** and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done, and in what I have failed to do;

*— and, striking their breast, they say —*

Through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault;

Therefore I ask blessed Mary, ever-virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

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

**All:** Amen.

**KYRIE, ELEISON / LORD, HAVE MERCY**

**Kýrie, eléison, (2); Christe, eléison, (2); Kýrie, eléison, (2).**

**FIRST READING: 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16**

**A reading from the second Book of Samuel:**

When King David was settled in his palace, and the LORD had given him rest from his enemies on every side, he said to Nathan the prophet, "Here I am living in a house of cedar, while the ark of God dwells in a tent!" Nathan answered the king, "Go, do whatever you have in mind, for the LORD is with you." But that night the LORD spoke to Nathan and said: "Go, tell my servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: Should you build me a house to dwell in?'

" 'It was I who took you from the pasture and from the care of the flock to be commander of my people Israel. I have been with you wherever you went, and I have destroyed all your enemies before you. And I will make you famous like the great ones of the earth. I will fix a place for my people Israel; I will plant them so that they may dwell in their place without further disturbance. Neither shall the wicked continue to afflict them as they did of old, since the time I first appointed judges over my people Israel. I will give you rest from all your enemies. The LORD also reveals to you that he will establish a house for you. And when your time comes and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your heir after you, sprung from your loins, and I will make his kingdom firm. I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me. Your house and your kingdom shall endure forever before me; your throne shall stand firm forever.' "

The word of the Lord.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

[ 2 ]

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM 89: FOR EVER I WILL SING**



1. The promises of the LORD I will sing forever; through all generations my mouth shall proclaim your faithfulness. For you have said, "My kindness is established forever"; in heaven you have confirmed your faithfulness. (R)
2. "I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant: Forever will I confirm your posterity and establish your throne for all generations." (R)
3. "He shall say of me, 'You are my father, my God, the Rock, my savior.' Forever I will maintain my kindness toward him, and my covenant with him stands firm." (R)

**SECOND READING: Rom 16:25-27**

**A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans:**

Brothers and sisters: To him who can strengthen you, according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret for long ages but now manifested through the prophetic writings and, according to the command of the eternal God, made known to all nations to bring about the obedience of faith, to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ be glory forever and ever. Amen.

The word of the Lord.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: ALLELUIA PLEASE STAND**

Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.

**All: Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord.  
May it be done to me according to your word.**

**GOSPEL: Lk 1:26-38**

**Priest:** The Lord be with you.

**All: And with your spirit.**

**Priest:** A reading from the Good News according to Luke.

**All: Glory to you, Lord.**

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?"

[ 3 ]

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.

**Priest:** The Good News of the Lord.

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

**PLEASE BE SEATED**

**THE APOSTLES' CREED PLEASE STAND**

**Priest:** I believe in God,

**All:** the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

**PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL**

**RESPONSE TO THE PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL:**  
**"Incarnate Lord, hear our prayer."**

**PLEASE BE SEATED**

**LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST**

**PROCESSION OF THE GIFTS**

**OFFERTORY HYMN: WAIT FOR THE LORD (No. 406)**

**PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS PLEASE STAND**

**Priest:** Pray, brethren, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

**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.**

**THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER**

**HOLY**

**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, hosanna in the highest.**