



A Champagnat Marist Prayer Resource
for Advent 2020
District of the Pacific



A Champagnat Marist Prayer Resource for Advent

What is in the resource?

The resource comprises:

- A theme developed from the Gospel of the day
- A selection of morning offerings and Marial greetings
- The readings and psalm of the day
- An opening and concluding prayer
- A reading from a Champagnat Marist source related to the theme of the Gospel for the day
- Three intercessions, to which you may add additional prayers

How to this resource could be used:

The Advent Prayer Resource is designed to assist in focusing our community prayer on the Gospel reading of the day as we journey through the season of Advent. The resource is flexible and could be used on its own or as part of another form of community prayer.

A suggested process:

As part of the community prayer:

- Read the Gospel of the day.
- Then allow several minutes of silent reflection.
- Then invite the participants to share any reflection they may have on the Gospel and/or the Champagnat Marist reading.
- The psalm of the day could be used as a response to the readings and reflection.

Preparation for Community Prayer:

As part of the preparation for community prayer:

- Read the Gospel for the day,
- Read a Scripture commentary. An online commentary from the Society of Jesus in Ireland is available at <http://livingspace.sacredspace.ie>
- Make a short note of what emerged for you from the reading.

Why was the resource developed?

Our recent General Chapters have all urged us, as part of the ongoing process of centring our lives on Jesus Christ, to deepen our personal and community prayer. One way to assist this is to develop a style of community prayer based on the Gospel reading of the day.

Brothers Today has developed this resource, based on the Gospel theme, as an example of one approach to a Gospel centred style of prayer. The Sunday readings are Year B and the weekday readings are Year 2.

Christmas Day - A prayer service for morning prayer is included in this resource.

Advent 1 – Sunday 29 November | Stay Awake!

Prayer

Gracious God,
in this Advent of expectation
you call us to be awake and ready
to recognise the signs of your
kingdom in our midst
A kingdom of justice and mercy,
of joy and of peace.
May we be aware of your presence in our lives.
Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Readings

- **Isaiah 63:16-17, 64:1, 3-8 | That you would tear the heavens apart and come down**
- **Psalm 80**
- **1 Corinthians 1:3-9 | The revelation we looked for, Christ Jesus, our Lord**
- **Mark 13:33-37 | Stay awake! You never know when the Lord will come**

Champagnat Marist Reading - Water from the Rock, par. 73

As mystics we perceive “the footprints of God” in all the events of life. Through a reading of our reality in faith, we are taken beyond appearances and surface meanings, and brought into the depths of each situation. Our prayer becomes, *Oh Lord, how great is your love!* And with a deep trust that comes from knowing we are profoundly loved, we confidently open our hearts to God’s will.

Intercessions

We pray that we may use this time of Advent to examine all of our relationships with others, material possessions and God. Lord hear us.

We pray for those trapped in the darkness of addiction, that they may be freed. Lord hear us.

Lord, help us to recognise you and respond to you in love through every person and every experience of this day. Lord hear us.

Poem | Christmas 1939 (Patrick Kavanagh)

O Divine Baby in the cradle
All that is poet in me
Is the dream I dream of Your Childhood
And the dream You dreamed of me.

O Divine Baby in the cradle
All that is truth in me
Is my mind tuned to the cadence
Of a child’s philosophy.

O Divine Baby in the cradle
All that is pride in me
Is my mind bowed in homage
Upon Your Mother's knee.

O Divine Baby in the cradle
All that is joy in me
Is that I have saved from the ruin
Of my soul Your Infancy.

Prayer

Loving God,
You loved the world so much
that You gave us Your only Son
to be our Saviour.

When Jesus humbled himself
to be born among us
and take on our humanity,
he fulfilled the plan You formed long ago.
Jesus opened for us the way of salvation.

In this Advent season,
we watch in expectation for the day,
hoping that the salvation promised us will come,
when Christ our Lord
will come again in his glory. Come Lord Jesus!

Advent 1 – Monday 30 November | Faith

St Andrew

Prayer

Gracious God,
we pray that we may have the same faith
as Jesus speaks about in the gospel.
May the faith that can move mountains
also move our hearts
as we prepare for the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.
We make this prayer through
Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Readings

- **Isaiah 2:1-5 | The Lord will gather many nations in peace in the kingdom of heaven**
- **Psalm 121**
- **Matthew 8:5-11 | Many will come and take their place in the kingdom of heaven**

Champagnat Marist Reading - A Revolution of the Heart, p. 9

Many of us realize that the worlds in which we live can no longer be expected to carry the faith for us. The time is long past when we could count on living in a Christian culture, or even on being surrounded by believers. Even in some of our Marist communities, those among us who wish to have a vibrant life of faith cannot count on some in the group for support.

So, here at the dawn of a new millennium, more than a few of us long for a God who will dwell at the centre of our lives. One to whom we can relate easily, and who will provide depth of meaning and an answer to our ultimate concerns. This is the God around whom we long to renew our spirituality and build a life of personal and communal prayer.

Intercessions

We pray for all those who show genuine concern for their neighbours and bring peace of mind and heart to those who suffer from our inhumanity to others. Lord hear us.

We ask your blessing, Lord, on those who show real concern for the spiritual and material good of their neighbours. Lord hear us.

Lord, increase our faith as we wait in hope for the coming of the Saviour. Lord hear us.

Prayer

God of hope, be with us as we begin this
Advent journey.
Increase our faith,
Show us your ways,
Teach us your paths,

That we might walk with you more closely,
Our hand in your hand,
Our feet in your footsteps,
That we like Mary and Marcellin
May be your willing servants.
Amen.

Advent 1 – Tuesday 1 December | Openness to Revelation

Prayer

Loving God,
you reveal great things to your followers,
especially those with a humble and open disposition.
Help us to set aside our fears and hesitations,
and to embrace you more wholeheartedly
in this season of active preparation for your coming among us.
We make this prayer through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Readings

- **Isaiah 11:1-10 | The Spirit of the Lord rests upon him**
- **Psalm 72**
- **Luke 10:21-24 | Jesus is filled with the Holy Spirit**

Champagnat Marist Reading - Water from the Rock, pars. 19-20

Marcellin taught the first Brothers: To make Jesus known and loved is the aim of our vocation and the whole purpose of the Institute. If we were to fail in this purpose, our congregation would be useless. In saying this, Marcellin clearly expressed his conviction, and a growing conviction for Marists today – the centrality of Jesus in our life and mission.

For us Jesus is the human face of God. In a privileged way we encounter him in the three special Marist places, where Jesus reveals God to us.

Intercessions

Lord, open our eyes, ears and minds to the mystery of your revelation in our daily lives. Lord hear us.

Lord, help us to welcome the Word of God into our hearts, as a beautiful gift and a privileged encounter with you. Lord hear us.

Lord, may all Champagnat Marists encourage one another and the young people confided to our care. May our relationships with others be marked by joyful simplicity and wholehearted generosity. Lord hear us.

Prayer

God, loving Father of us all,
we are encouraged to confidently welcome
and share your message
despite our limitations.
May your kingdom be proclaimed.
May your gifts be received.
May we live in charity and authenticity
and thus reveal you in today's world. Amen.

Advent 1 – Wednesday 2 December | Healing

Prayer

Loving God,
you challenge us this Advent,
this time of preparation,
to put aside our pride
and to understand our need for
repentance and forgiveness.
Purify our hearts and sanctify our lives.
We make this prayer through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Readings

- **Isaiah 25:6-10 | The Lord God will wipe away tears from every face**
- **Psalm 23**
- **Matthew 15:29-37 | Jesus healed many and multiplied the bread**

Champagnat Marist Reading - Water from the Rock, par. 124

Marist spirituality, being apostolic, is lived out on mission. The mission of Marist apostles is born of the experience of being loved by God and of our desire to actively participate in the mission of Jesus. God is passionate about the world and its people, and Jesus expresses this love by a ministry of teaching and healing. *I came that you may have life, and have it abundantly.* Like Jesus we recognise the urgings of the Spirit within, calling us to witness to this Good News. Out of these inner promptings, the mission of the Church is born: to proclaim the Kingdom of God as a new way of living for humanity, a new way to relate with God. We join in this mission of the Church as we look upon the world with compassion.

Intercessions

We pray that we may be open to hear, to see and to understand the message of Jesus. Lord hear us.

We pray that we may be open to the healing presence of Jesus Christ. Lord hear us.

We pray that we may follow faithfully the way of Jesus Christ, to tell courageously the truth of Jesus Christ, and to live joyfully the life of Jesus Christ. Lord hear us.

Prayer

Gracious Father,
your words are spirit and they are life.
Through the prayers of St Andrew,
make us true disciples of Christ,
eager to spread the Good News by word and example.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Advent 1 – Thursday 3 December | Doing the Father’s Will

St Francis Xavier

Prayer

God who dwells with us, we pray for one gift this Advent;
we pray for a change of heart.
For any relationship with you
is more an affair of the heart than of the head.

We pray for hearts open enough so that we can,
like Mary, take you at your word and not demand
that all of our questions
be answered at that outset.

We pray too that our hearts be as fruitful as Mary’s
and eventually as passionate, on fire,
full of love for Jesus and His Good News. Amen.

Readings

- **Isaiah 26:1-6 | Let the upright nations, the custodians of truth, enter**
- **Psalm 118**
- **Matthew 7:21, 24-27 | Whoever does the will of my Father will enter the kingdom of heaven**

Champagnat Marist Reading – Constitutions #43

The call to live evangelical obedience for the Kingdom involves communities, Provinces, and the Institute itself in a constant search to know God’s will. It is not always easy to be sure of what He asks of us, especially in times of profound change and renewal. We discern it in prayer, so as to arrive at a decision in concert with our Superiors. This discernment in the Holy Spirit calls for a spirit of faith, attentiveness to the word of God, fidelity to the charism of the Institute, an accurate reading of the signs of the times, and a putting aside of particular interests of individuals or groups.

Intercessions

We pray for a disciple’s heart that is open to the action of the Holy Spirit. Lord hear us.

Lord, we pray that we may be like the sensible person who listens to your word and acts on it. Lord hear us.

Lord, as we prepare for Christmas, help us to find the right balance between action and prayer in our lives. Lord hear us.

Prayer

Lord, what you will, let it be so,
Where you will, there we will go,
What is your will, help us to know.

Because you will it, it is best,
Because you will it, we are blest,
Until in your hands our hearts find their
rest. Amen.

Advent 1 – Friday 4 December | Spread the Good News

St John of Damascus

Prayer

God of life,
as we begin this period of Advent,
may we see Your unconditional love for us
in the birth of Jesus.
As we rejoice in the birth of our Saviour
renew our faith in the
healing presence of Jesus in our lives. Amen.

Readings

- **Isaiah 29:17-24 | In that day the eyes of the blind will see**
- **Psalm 27 | The Lord is my light and my help**
- **Matthew 9:27-31 | Their belief in Jesus brought the cure of the two blind men**

Champagnat Marist Reading – Water from the Rock, pars. 88-90

We pray in all situations, with creativity and generosity. No matter the difficulties and struggles of daily life, no matter the limitations and injustices we live with, we continue to see the blessings of God upon us and those we love. Like Mary in her Magnificat prayer, we are grateful to God who has blessed us.

In our times of solitude, we cultivate an interior life that strengthens our love of, and communion with, the world. In this way we become more sensitive to life. Though we experience the poverty of our limitations and failures, we also recognize the beauty and wonder of humanity and of all creation.

Day after day, we feel called to commit ourselves to the world; to contemplate the world with the eyes and the heart of God. Our spirituality draws us to deepen our relationship with Christ and in trust to give ourselves in service in community living and mission.

Intercessions

Lord, heal our blindness when we cannot see your will for us. Lord hear us.

Lord, as you came to us as a child; give us the insight to see your redeeming love for us.
Lord hear us.

Lord, give us the courage to spread your Good News among all those we encounter. Lord hear us.

Prayer

God of love,
in the birth of Jesus you show us
your personal love for each one of us.
Give us a stronger belief in, and love for
Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Amen.

Advent 1 – Saturday 5 December | The Kingdom is at hand

Prayer

In your time, Saving God
You walked upon this earth
And in your time
Became one of us
To show what we could become.
Remind us always
As we look at our lives
In comparison with yours
That at the centre of all things
Is the saving Grace of God. Amen.

Readings

- **Isaiah 30:19-21, 23-26 | If you have mercy the Lord God will be gracious when you cry**
- **Psalm 146**
- **Matthew 9:35, 10:1,6-8 | When Jesus saw the crowd he felt sorry for them**

Champagnat Marist Reading - Making Jesus Christ Known and Loved, p. 39

I believe Marcellin might also raise some troubling questions. Honest questions, but disturbing, nonetheless. Questions such as: Does sufficient evidence exist to prove that you and I are bringing the Gospel of Jesus Christ to poor children and young people here at the outset of the third millennium? When the Christian young people entrusted to our care move on from our programs and institutions, have they come to know and love Jesus Christ? Are the teachings and values of his *Good News* evident in their day-to-day lives?

Intercessions

May we be carriers of the Good News by becoming shepherds leading the sheep to where they belong. Lord hear us.

May we have the courage to accept the call from the Good Shepherd to liberate people from all binds them. Lord hear us.

Lord, we ask your blessing on those who labour in the fields among the needy to bring hope into their lives. Lord hear us.

Prayer

In your time, Mighty God
You will come in glory
And in your time
Gather the harvest
From one end of this earth to the other.
Your saving power reaches
the ends of the earth.

Through the prayers of St Juan Diego,
may we become more aware
that at the centre of all things
is Your love and mercy. Amen.

Advent 2 - Sunday 6 December | Prepare a way for the Lord

Prayer

Lord of heaven and earth,
you govern all things according to your love.
May the light of the Gospel
scatter the darkness of the world,
And may you open the hearts of all
who remain blind to the Truth.
We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Readings

- **Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11 | Make straight in the desert the way of the Lord**
- **Psalm 85**
- **2 Peter 3:8-14 | We wait for a new heaven and a new earth**
- **Mark 1:1-8 | Prepare a way for the Lord**

Champagnat Marist Reading – Evangelisers in the Midst of Youth, par. 69

We are invited to be prophets in our time, to listen to the calls that God is sending us through the lives and suffering of so many brothers and sisters who find themselves at the margin of society. In these specific conditions, feeling a responsibility to proclaim the Gospel and denounce the profaning of God's face present in each person, our mission takes shape and becomes set, enriched by the particular goings-on in the world us. In this process we approach young people and open our eyes to their dreams and plans and their genuine challenges. This offers us the wherewithal to truly become builders of justice and peace in the world. Ours is a prophetic Church in tune with the prophetic vocation of youth.

Intercessions

We pray that our faith may make a difference in the world. Lord hear us.

We pray that all nations may know true and lasting peace. Lord hear us.

We pray that we may be attentive to the prophets in our time. Lord hear us.

Poem | A Christmas Prayer (Ian Oliver)

On that holy night,
Somehow
It happened.

Somehow,
God took a handful of humanity:
Proud, petulant, passionate;
And a handful of divinity:
Undivided, inexpressible, incomprehensible:
And enclosed them in one small body.

Somehow, the all too human
Touched the divine.
And was not vaporized.
To be human was never the same,
But forever thereafter,
Carried a hint of its close encounter with the perfect.
And forever thereafter,
God was never the same,
But carried a hint of the passion of the mortal.

If God can lie down in a cattle-trough,
Is any object safe from transformation?
If peasant girls can be mothers to God,
Is any life safe from the invasion of the eternal?

If all this could happen, O God,
What places of darkness on our earth
Are pregnant with light waiting to be born this night?

If all this could happen, O God,
Then you could be, and are, anywhere, everywhere,
Waiting to be born this night in the most
Unbelievable places,
Perhaps even in our own hearts.

Prayer

Almighty God, You sent John the Baptist into the world
to prepare the way for Your Son.
May we also prepare a place for Your Son in our hearts.
Give us the conviction to actively work for a more just world
on which all of creation reflects Your goodness and grace.
Grant this through our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Blessing

May God the Father,
who loved the world so much that he sent his only Son,
give us grace to prepare for eternal life. Amen.

May God the Son,
who comes to us as redeemer and judge,
reveal to us the path from darkness to light. Amen.

May God the Holy Spirit,
by whose working the Virgin Mary conceived the Christ,
help us bear the fruits of holiness. Amen.

Advent 2 - Monday 7 December | We have seen wonderful things

St Ambrose

Prayer

Gracious God,
open our hearts to prepare the way for the coming of Christ.
Open our hearts to your Word,
and instruct us in your ways of compassion.
May we become beacons of light
where there is darkness,
transforming our world, day by day. Amen.

Readings

- **Isaiah 35:1-10 | God will come and save you**
- **Psalm 84**
- **Luke 5:17-26 | We have seen wonderful things this day**

Champagnat Marist Reading - Marvellous Companions, p. 70

Our rediscovery of Scripture in the years that have followed Vatican II has changed our vision of God significantly. No longer consigned to the role of distant purveyor of history, He is at last able to be himself. Rest assured that God is fully invested in our world's transformation. The gospel stories remind us that where life was diminished, Jesus restored it; where the human spirit was imprisoned, he made his presence felt by liberating it.

Intercessions

Most provident God, you promised us that the desert shall rejoice and bloom, may all people find sufficient water of spirit and truth to satisfy their thirst. In trust we say, **our God is here.**

May the eyes of the blind be open. Grant us the gift to recognise our own blindness.
In trust we say, **our God is here.**

Your highway shall be called the holy road. Grant us the courage and understanding to share in the burdens of our companions on the journey. In trust we say, **our God is here.**

Prayer

God of wondrous deeds,
your grace and mercy astound us.
Make us more aware of your vision of truth and love,
of justice and peace.
Strengthen us as we prepare the way
for your coming among us.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Advent 2 – Tuesday 8 December

The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Greeting to Mary

O with what joy we sing of Mary, a woman of great love,
whose openness and loving kindness,
gave birth to God's own Son.

Mary, O so gentle and discrete, be with us as we pray,
to know the whisper of His presence,
The wonder of His love.

Prayer

Gracious God,
may the life of Mary, preserved from sin,
help us to follow in the footsteps of Jesus.
Open our hearts to your Word,
and help us to respond generously, as Mary did.
May we become beacons of light
where there is darkness,
transforming our world, day by day.
Amen.

Readings

- Genesis 3:9-15,20 | I will place enmity between your seed and the seed of the woman
- Psalm 98
- Ephesians 1:3-6,11-12 | God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world
- Luke 1:26-38 | Rejoice, favoured one, the Lord is with you

Marist Reading

Mary is, for each one of us, the sign and reality of the Kingdom already here and still to come. During the time of Advent Mary is, more than ever, the way which leads to Jesus. Without waiting for the morrow she is already living, in every detail of her daily life, the values of the kingdom which her Son is coming to establish.

Dialogue Prayer (based on the *Constitutions*)

- Mary lived out her whole life in the spirit of her “Fiat”.
She is blessed because she listened to the word of God and carried it out. (C. 38)
- As Champagnat Marists, Lay and Brothers, we come to Mary, the Handmaid of the Lord, to be schooled by her, and we respond to her call:
“Do whatever he tells you”. (C. 38)
- Faithful handmaid, she lives out her YES even to the Cross.
Mother, she ponders in her heart what Jesus does, and relates his actions to the words of Scripture. (C. 67)

- We contemplate her, hidden and unknown in the world, faithful in her mission of bringing God to us.

Patiently she awaits God's hour. (C. 84)

Intercessions

Let us praise God who has given us Mary as a model of holiness. We pray:

Mother of Christ, teach us to hear the word of God.

Be praised in Mary, comforter of the afflicted; teach us to be a healing presence in the lives of others.

Mother of Christ, teach us to hear the word of God.

Be praised in Mary, help of Christians; help us to proclaim the Gospel with our lives.

Mother of Christ, teach us to hear the word of God.

Be praised in Mary, Queen of Peace; give us forgiving hearts and bless our world with the peace that only you can give.

Mother of Christ, teach us to hear the word of God.

Prayer

Loving God,

you have given us Mary, the mother of Jesus

to encourage and guide us on the way to union with you.

Let her life of loving obedience and prayer

be a beacon of light for us

as we seek to follow your Christ.

We ask this in the name of that same Jesus Christ,

the Eternal Word,

who lives and reigns with you

and the Holy Spirit, forever. Amen.

Advent 2 | Wednesday 9 December| Come to me...
St Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin

Prayer

God of life,
help us to look forward
to the coming of your Son
who shoulders our yoke and lifts our burdens
that we may be enabled to proclaim
the coming of your Kingdom. Amen.

Readings

- **Isaiah 40:25-31 | The Lord God gives strength to the weary**
- **Psalm 103 | My soul, give thanks to the Lord**
- **Matthew 11:28-30 | Come to me, all who are overburdened**

Champagnat Marist Reading – Water from the Rock, par. 109

With God's grace we engage in the challenging journey of growing into that inner harmony that attracted people to Jesus - humble and gentle of heart. We cannot grow towards our potential as human beings without being involved with others, and responding to the support and challenges posed by those who share our journey most intimately.

Intercessions

Lord, we thank you for your Word which lightens our way and lifts our burdens. Lord hear us.

Lord, lighten our burdens, grant us we ask your forgiveness and healing. Lord hear us.

Lord, bless those who are overburdened and give them your peace. Lord hear us.

Prayer

God of compassion and love,
we thank you for your Word today
as we prepare for the birth of Jesus,
our way, our truth and our life.
Through Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

Advent 2 – Thursday 10 December | Take up your cross

Prayer

Father, as we prepare for the birth of your Son, Jesus,
who walked the path of obedience, even to the Cross.
Help us to discern your holy will in our lives
and make our hearts obedient to the prompting
of your Holy Spirit. Amen.

Readings

- **Isaiah 41: 13-20 | I am your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel**
- **Psalm 145**
- **Matthew 11: 11-15 | No greater than John the Baptist has been born**

Champagnat Marist Reading – Water from the Rock, pars. 22 & 24

At the foot of the Cross, we are in awe of a God who loves us without reserve. We find a God who shares the physical and psychological suffering, betrayal, abandonment and violence experienced by humanity, and transforms these experiences. There we enter the mystery of redemptive suffering and learn humble fidelity in love. The crucified Christ is the sign and deepest expression of a God who is love.

At the Cross, we associate ourselves with people affected by failure and suffering, and with those who struggle for bread, justice and peace.

Intercessions

We pray that we may remain faithful to proclaiming the Kingdom of God through our words and actions. Lord hear us.

We pray for those who courageously witness to the Gospel in areas where the Church is persecuted. Lord hear us.

We pray for all those who have committed their lives to building relationships of peace and justice. Lord hear us.

Prayer

God our Father,
we remember the violent deaths of John the Baptist and of Jesus,
who were obedient to your will.
Look with pity on those who are suffering
persecution because of their faith.
Grant this through Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

Advent 2 – Friday 11 December | God’s wisdom

St Damasus I

Prayer

God of life,
help us to look forward
to the coming of your Son
who shoulders our yoke and lifts our burdens
that we may be enabled to proclaim
the coming of your Kingdom. Amen.

Readings

- **Isaiah 48:17-19 | If only you had listened to my commandments**
- **Psalm 1**
- **Matthew 11:16-19 | They listened neither to John nor the Son of Man**

Champagnat Marist Reading - Water from the Rock, par. 109

With God’s grace we engage in the challenging journey of growing into that inner harmony that attracted people to Jesus - humble and gentle of heart. We cannot grow towards our potential as human beings without being involved with others, and responding to the support and challenges posed by those who share our journey most intimately.

Intercessions

Lord, we thank you for your Word which lightens our way and lifts our burdens. Lord hear us.

Lord, lighten our burdens, grant us we ask your forgiveness and healing. Lord hear us.

Lord, bless those who are overburdened and give them your peace. Lord hear us.

Prayer

God of compassion and love,
we thank you for your Word today
as we prepare for the birth of Jesus,
our way, our truth and our life.
Through Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

Advent 2 – Saturday 12 December

Our Lady of Guadalupe

Greeting to Mary

O with what joy we sing of Mary, a woman of great love,
whose openness and loving kindness, gave birth to God's own Son.
Mary, O so gentle and discrete, be with us as we pray,
to know the whisper of His presence, the wonder of His love.

Prayer

Father, we praise you with Mary, for the wonders of your love.
We thank you for renewing us this morning with the gift of life in your presence.
We thank you for sending Jesus, your Son, to reveal to us your wonderful love.
We thank you for searching for us and calling us to follow Jesus.
We open our hearts, hands and minds to the people and the events of this day. Amen.

Readings

- **Zechariah 2: 14-17 | Rejoice, daughter of Zion, for I am coming**
- **Judith 14:18-20**
- **Luke 1: 26-38 | You will conceive and bear a son**

Champagnat Marist Reading – Homes of light, p. 15

What thoughts might have run through Mary's mind after she dared to say a bold and confident yes to God at the Annunciation (cf Lk 1:38)? Her life plans changed completely in the blink of an eye. I think that only a heart that was free and on fire with love would be capable of accepting a situation that was so novel, unfamiliar and with so many unknowns... Immediately, she rushed to the hills to meet with Elizabeth (cf Lk 1:39). And just a few months later she gave birth to Jesus (Lk 2:7). We can also imagine what feelings invaded Mary's heart as her time came, with the fear and distress at not having a suitable place to deliver her child (cf Lk 2:7). She was able to accept this new reality thanks to her heart being free and full of the warmth of God.

Intercessions

Let us pray for one another that the Lord will open our minds and hearts to be true to the message He gives us through His word today. Lord hear us.

On this feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, we pray that like Mary, we may hear the Word of God and respond generously to His call. Lord hear us.

We pray that like John the Baptist, we may be heralds of the Good News of Jesus Christ.
Lord hear us.

Prayer

Loving God, you sent your Son among us, born of a woman, to be our Messiah.
Open our ears to hear your Word, and our hearts to recognise you present in the daily events of our lives. Help us, like Mary, to say "yes" to all that you ask of us.
We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Sunday Advent 3 | 13 December | Rejoice in the Lord

Prayer

At this Advent-time we remember Mary and Joseph,
giving thanks for their faithfulness,
courage and obedience,
stepping out into the unknown,
in the strength of your Spirit,
playing their part
in the fulfilment of your plan
to bring your prodigal people home again.

We pray that their example
might be the pattern of our lives.
That when your gentle whisper
breaks through the clamour of this world
and into our small corner,
we might be ready to listen,
and having listened, to act. Amen.

Readings

Isaiah 61:1-2, 10-11 | I exult for joy in the Lord

Psalm – Luke 1:46-50, 53-54

Thessalonians 5:16-24 | Be happy at all times

John 1:6-8, 19-28 | The one who is coming stands unknown among you

Champagnat Marist Reading – Revolution of the Heart, p. 34

The members of our 20th General Chapter challenged us “to centre our lives and communities in Jesus Christ, like Mary, with passion and enthusiasm, and to implement processes of human growth and conversion which promote this.”

Their Message is a challenging one, but not without its own measure of joy. Certainly, today joy must be very evident in our life and mission as Marcellin’s brothers. As one of our brothers said to me recently: “Wouldn’t it be wonderful for you and for me to come to the end of our Marist life and wonder if there was any merit in it at all, because we had enjoyed it so much?”

So, my Brothers, let us be up and doing. The challenge we face is clear, and we have the resources to contend with it. But hasn’t the challenge ever been the same, beginning with our foundation on 2nd January 1817? Marcellin put it very simply: “To love God,” he said, “to love God and to labour to make God known and loved – this is what a brother’s life should be.” In giving us this description of our vocation, he was reminding us that at the heart of our identity as Little Brothers of Mary, now as then, must be found, first and foremost, Jesus Christ and his Good News.

Intercessions

We pray that we may recognise Christ in the presence of our brothers and sisters. Lord hear us.

We pray that all new born infants may be welcomed into homes of love. Lord hear us.

We pray in this Advent season that Jesus Christ may increasingly become the centre of our lives. Lord hear us.

Prayer

Rejoice in the Lord always

Shout out his name

For God is with us

Our God is with us

The God of our salvation

In whom alone we trust.

Rejoice in the Lord always

Shout out his name

For God is our loving Father

He draws us home to himself

By streams of living water

Where we shall thirst no more.

Rejoice in the Lord always

Shout out his name

He knows our thoughts

Understands our hearts

And enables us to become

The people we are meant to be. Amen.

Blessing

May God the Father,
make us worthy of a place in his kingdom. Amen.

May God the Son, coming among us in power,
reveal in our midst the promise of his glory. Amen.

May God the Holy Spirit keep us steadfast in faith,
joyful in hope and constant in love. Amen.

Advent 3 | Monday 14 December | Belief in God

St John of the Cross

Prayer

God of life,
you revealed your Son through the message of an angel.
Give us the grace to discern where you are breaking into our lives,
And the courage to respond to your call.
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Readings

- **Numbers 24:2-7, 15-17 | A star from Jacob will arise**
- **Psalm 25 | To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul**
- **Matthew 21:23-27 | John's baptism; where did it come from?**

Champagnat Marist Reading – Water from the Rock, pars. 18 & 50

18. We endeavour to develop our relationship with God so that, just as for Marcellin, it is our daily source of renewed spiritual and apostolic dynamism. This vitality makes us daring, despite our shortcomings and limited resources. Drawing from Marcellin's experience we embrace the mysteries of our life with confidence, openness and self-giving.

50. In such human situations we discover God as the one for whom our hearts really yearn. We realise that this longing is not of our making but primarily the work of God's Spirit within the depths of our being. With trust, we can open ourselves and come to an experience of God.

Intercessions

Lord God, we pray that we may find you in the love we have for one another. Lord hear us.

Lord God, may we like John the Baptist be heralds of your presence in the world. Lord hear us.

Lord, that we may be open to the movement of your Holy Spirit in our lives. Lord hear us.

Prayer

God, source of all gifts,
may the joy you promise be with all Champagnat Marists.
May this blessing take us in haste
to those on the margins of life,
the 'cribs' and 'stables' of our world. Amen.

**Advent 3 | Tuesday 15 December | True Response to God's Word
Foundation Day of the District of the Pacific 2013**

Prayer

O God,

Enlarge our hearts that they may be big enough to receive your Word.

Expand our hearts that they may be a shelter for those in need of healing.

Stretch our hearts that they may be a place of nourishment for those who hunger for justice.

Enlarge our hearts until they become your kingdom here on earth. Amen.

Readings

- **Zephaniah 3: 1-2, 9-13 | Messianic salvation is promised to all of the poor**
- **Psalm 34 | I will bless the Lord at all times**
- **Matthew 21: 28-32 | John came and sinners believed in him**

Champagnat Marist Reading – Water from the Rock, par. 80

Daily contact with the Word of God allows us to connect with our personal journey from the perspective of the History of Salvation. It takes us beyond our personal window on life to the larger window of the journey of the People of God.

Intercessions

Lord, we pray that we may see the world through the eyes of poor children and respond with compassion to their needs. Lord hear us.

Lord, we pray for those who doubt your existence. May our lives witness your love. Lord hear us.

Lord, we ask the grace for every child to discover their infinite dignity as your son or daughter.
Lord hear us.

Prayer

Jesus, once again this Advent,
we rejoice in your accepting us,
ceaselessly seeking us,
freely treasuring us
with love older than the earth itself,
or the distant stars,
yet ever new each day. Amen.

Advent 3 | Wednesday 16 December| Tell him what you have seen

Prayer

Just and Holy God,
rain down your grace upon us.
Guide us this Advent as we walk the path of justice.
We make this prayer through Jesus,
who lives with you and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Readings

Isaiah 45:6-8, 18, 21-25 | Let the clouds rain down
Psalm 85 | O Lord, you once favoured your land
Luke 7:19-23 | Tell John what you have seen and heard

Champagnat Marist Reading – *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, p. 301

We must undergo conversion. We have to change our spiritual relationship with self, neighbour, even with the most remote human communities and with nature itself, in view of the *common good*. This truly felt inter-dependence is a new category: the response to it is solidarity.

Solidarity is not a vague feeling of compassion or a shallow sadness, but a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good.

Intercessions

O Lord, may the Church water the earth with your compassion, mercy and love.
Lord hear us.

O Lord, may we acknowledge our complete dependence on you.
Lord hear us.

O Lord, may your Holy Spirit help us to say “yes” to your call to us as Champagnat Marists.
Lord hear us.

Prayer

God of justice,
help us to live as Jesus taught,
that the deaf may hear, the blind see and the lame walk.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Advent 3 | Thursday 17 December| The Whakapapa (Genealogy) of Jesus

O Sapientia

O Come, O wisdom of our God most high,
guiding creation with power and love,
come to teach us the path of knowledge. (Isaiah 11: 2-3)

Prayer

Wisdom of God most high,
you guide creation with power and love.
Teach us this Advent
the path of wisdom.
We make this prayer through Jesus,
who lives with you and the Father. Amen.

Readings

- **Genesis 49:2, 8-03 | The sceptre shall not pass from Judah**
- **Psalm 72 | O God, give your judgement to the king**
- **Matthew 1:1-17 | A genealogy of Jesus Christ, son of David**

Champagnat Marist Reading – Water from the Rock, par. 124

Marist spirituality, being apostolic, is lived out on mission. The mission of Marist apostles is born of the experience of being loved by God and of our desire to actively participate in the mission of Jesus. God is passionate about the world and its people, and Jesus expresses this love by a ministry of teaching and healing. I came that you may have life, and have it abundantly. Like Jesus we recognise the urgings of the Spirit within, calling us to witness to this Good News. Out of these inner promptings, the mission of the Church is born: to proclaim the Kingdom of God as a new way of living for humanity, a new way to relate with God. We join in this mission of the Church as we look upon the world with compassion.

Intercessions

O Lord, come to all who wait in darkness and fill them with your light. Lord hear us.

O Lord, come to your Church and renew it through the power of your Holy Spirit. Lord hear us.

O Lord, come into our broken world and give us your peace. Lord hear us.

Prayer

God of love,
in the birth of Jesus you show us
your personal love for each one of us.
Give us a stronger belief in, and love for
Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Amen.

Advent 3 | Friday 18 December | Growth from Doubt to Faith and Trust

O Adonai

Come O Leader of ancient Israel,
giver of the Law to Moses on Sinai,
come to rescue us with your mighty power. (Isaiah 11: 4-5)

Prayer

O God of might,
you revealed yourself to Moses in the burning bush.
You continue to reveal yourself
through your Son, Jesus.
Come to us and set us free from all that
blocks our complete acceptance of your unconditional love. Amen.

Readings

- **Jeremiah 23:5-8 | I will raise a virtuous branch for David**
- **Psalm 72 | O God, give your judgement to the king**
- **Matthew 1:18-24 | Jesus was born of Mary, the betrothed of Joseph, a son of David**

Champagnat Marist Reading – Water from the Rock, pars. 21

At the Crib we find the innocence, simplicity, gentleness and even weakness of a God who is capable of touching the hardest of hearts. ... There is no room for fear of a God who became a child. We come to know a God who has pitched his tent in our midst, and whom we call "brother."

Intercessions

Lord, you call us to be salt for the world. Give us your strength to confront unjust structures in the Church and the world. Lord hear us.

Lord, you call us to be light for the world. Give us your strength to demand accountability, transparency and honesty of those in authority in the Church and in public office. Lord hear us.

Lord, you call us to be yeast for the world. Give us your strength to proclaim the Good News through our words and actions. Lord hear us.

Prayer

Loving God,
you are the light that gives light to our way.
You are our hope as we await the coming of your Son.
May we like Mary have Jesus constantly in our hearts. Amen.

Advent 3 | Saturday 19 December | Chosen by God

O Radix Jesse

Come O Flower of Jesse's Stem,
sign of God's love for all his people,
come to save us without delay. (Isaiah 11: 1, 10)

Prayer (*Dom Helder Camara*)

Lord, do not smile and say
You are already with us.
Millions do not know you,
and to us who do, what is the difference?
What is the point of your presence
if our lives do not alter?

Change our lives, shatter our complacency.
Make your word flesh of our flesh,
blood of our blood,
and our lives purpose.

Take away the quietness of a clear conscience,
press us uncomfortably.
For only then, that other peace is made,
your peace. Amen.

Readings

- **Judges 13:2-7, 24-25 | The birth of Samson was announced by an angel**
- **Psalm 71 | In you O Lord, I take refuge**
- **Luke 1:5-25 | The birth of John the Baptist was announced by Gabriel**

Champagnat Marist Reading – Water from the Rock, par. 60

God chooses individual men and women and calls each of them by name. He leads them into the desert and there he speaks to their hearts. ... By his Spirit, he transforms them constantly leading them more deeply into his love in order to send them out on mission. The more we come to know God, the more we come to know the deepest meaning of our lives. We grow in the knowledge that we are part of God's project for the world.

Intercessions

Lord, comfort your people and clothe us with your compassion. Come to save us without delay.
Lord hear us.

Lord, calm our anxieties, lighten the darkness that surrounds us. Come to save us without delay.
Lord hear us.

Lord, surround us with your love and anoint us with your peace. Come to save us without delay.
Lord hear us.

Prayer

God of love,
we pray with a joyful heart that Jesus
be born among us again this Christmas.
Instruct us in your ways of compassion
so that we may extend your love
and mercy to all people.

We ask this through Jesus Christ,
the Eternal Word,
who lives with you and the Holy Spirit, forever.
Amen.

Sunday Advent 4 | 20 December | Blessed is she who believed

O Clavis David

Come O Key of David,
opening the gates of God's eternal kingdom
come and free the prisoners of darkness. (Isaiah 22: 22)

Readings

2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8-11, 16 | The Lord will make the house of David secure forever

Psalm 88 | Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord

Romans 16:25-27 | The mystery kept secret for endless ages is now made clear

Luke 1:26-38 | You will conceive and bear a son

Champagnat Marist Reading – In Her Arms or In Her Heart, p. 53

Marcellin meant us to be apostolic religious in the way of Mary. What does that mean exactly? In the biblical texts, the mother of Jesus questions, pursues her son, gives orders, and travels. Actually, she travels a lot. Mary sets out “at once and in haste” to visit her cousin Elizabeth, makes the definitive pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and at Pentecost is part of the believing community into whom the Spirit of God breathes life and sends forth on mission. Yes, Mary’s story is characterized by movement, by passages from one moment of meaning to another.

Such an outlook is essential for anyone who claims membership in an apostolic Institute that bears her name. Unfortunately, some of us have come to resemble more the members of monastic congregations, with their commitment to a specific monastery and place. In contrast, we are meant to be itinerant, to move to those places where the need for evangelization is most urgent.

As a rural woman, she travelled beyond village boundaries to give birth to God among us and to serve as a witness to his salvific death. We, too, are called to go to those places where the Church is not, bearing God’s Good News to poor children and young people. Where we have lost this ability, we must restore it to its proper place in our lives.

Intercessions

We pray for the prophets in our midst who challenge us to read the signs of the times. Lord hear us.

We pray for all those who are sick and suffering at this time, may they experience your healing presence in their lives. Lord hear us.

We pray that broken relationships may be healed and restored. Lord hear us.

Prayer

King of Kings and Lord of Lords,
we wait in anticipation of your coming.
Help us to prepare your way
by straightening our hearts.
Fill our hearts with your love and compassion
that we may be instruments
of your peace in our world. Amen.

Blessing

Jesus, our Lord says, ‘I am coming soon.’
Come, Lord Jesus.
With love and peace - **Come, Lord Jesus.**
With justice and mercy - **Come, Lord Jesus.**
In power and glory - **Come, Lord Jesus.**
In wisdom and truth - **Come, Lord Jesus.**

Advent 4 | Monday 21 December| God will renew you by his love
St Peter Canisius

O Oriens

Come O Radiant Dawn,
splendor of the eternal light, sun of justice,
come and shine on those who dwell in darkness
and the shadow of death. (Isaiah 9: 1)

Prayer

God of power and might
you revealed the coming of Your Son
into our world through the message of an angel.
May we attune our hearts to the many ways you enter our lives,
and respond as Mary did to your invitation.
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Readings

- **Song of Songs 2:8-14 | My beloved comes**
- **Psalm 33 | Ring out your joy to the Lord, O you just**
- **Luke 1:39-44 | Why am I honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord?**

Champagnat Marist Reading – Water from the Rock, par. 102

All our relationships are enriched when they are lived by taking Mary as the inspiration for our way of being and doing with others. With Mary we learn how to express God's love in all the relationships of our personal and communal living, since from her we *learn how other people are to be loved, and we, in turn, become living signs of the Father's tenderness* (*Constitutions 21*).

Intercessions

Lord, make us aware of the many ways you enter our lives. Lord hear us.

Emanuel, God-with-us, may we live in you and you in us. Lord hear us.

Lord, come and shine your light into the darkness of our lives. Lord hear us.

Prayer

O God, as we await the coming of the radiant dawn, Jesus Christ,
enlighten our darkness and transform our hearts.
We ask this though our Lord Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Advent 4 | Tuesday 22 December | Praise for God's actions in our world

O Rex Gentium

Come O Desire of all the Nations,
keystone of the Church,
come and save us,
whom you formed from the dust. (Isaiah 9: 5)

Prayer

God, our Father,
may your kingdom come, your will be done:
in our choices as we struggle with the complexities of our world,
and confront greed and the desire for power in ourselves,
our country and our world.
May your kingdom come this Advent. Amen.

Readings

1 Samuel 1:24-28 | Anna gave thanks for the birth of Samuel

Psalm - 1 Samuel 2:1, 4-8 | My heart exults in the Lord

Luke 1:46-56 | He who has done great things for me is powerful

Champagnat Marist Reading – Water from the Rock, par. 50

In such human situations we discover God as the one for whom our hearts really yearn. We realise that this longing is not of our making but primarily the work of God's Spirit within the depths of our being. With trust, we can open ourselves and come to an experience of God.

Intercessions

Creator God, open our eyes to the wonder and truth of the Word made flesh in Mary. Lord hear us.

Lord, open our minds to the beauty of the promise of new redeeming life when our Saviour is born.
Lord hear us.

Loving Father, may we follow Christ as faithfully as Mary did, and keep to the path he shows us to the fullness of life. Lord hear us.

Prayer

Loving Father,
we thank and praise you for blessing us with the great
things which Mary proclaims in her *Magnificat*.
In your tender mercy you care for each one of us,
and especially for those this world sees as lowly,
the poor, weak, outcasts and marginalised.
Help us to do all we can to bring these blessings to all whom we meet.
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Advent 4 | Wednesday 23 December| We learn to say ‘Yes’
St John Kanty

O Emmanuel

Come O Emmanuel,
our King and Giver of the Law,
come and save us, Lord our God. (Isaiah 7: 14)

Prayer

Lord, as we come to celebrate the birth of your Son, Jesus,
we thank you for the gifts that you have given us.
We thank you for the example of Mary and Elizabeth
in accepting your Word in their lives.
We thank you for the gift of the charism to Marcellin.
We thank you for our community and family.
Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Readings

- **Malachi 3:1-4, 23-24 | I shall send the prophet Elijah as a sign that the day of the Lord is near**
- **Psalm 25 | To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul**
- **Luke 1:57-66 | The birth of John the Baptist**

Champagnat Marist Reading – Evangelisers in the Midst of Youth, pars. 67-68

Creation continues throughout revelation. God introduces His Divine Presence to human beings from the first pages of the Bible and manifests His desire to establish a covenant with them. ... [God] sends the prophets to remind us of the covenant entered into with God. The creative word of God is also the liberating Word of a God who inserts Himself in human history.

In the fullness of time God sent His only Son Jesus Christ. The Word of God became flesh to live among human beings. He came to put us in touch with that very God: “He who sees me sees the Father” (JN 16:9). He proclaims the Reign of God to all who find themselves “weary and downtrodden” - the poor, the sick, those rejected by mainstream religion, sinners, women and children. By His death and resurrection He transmitted divine life to all. In fact He had already proclaimed this: “I have come so they may have life and have it in abundance” (JN 10:10).

Intercessions

Lord, may our community share in the blessings of the Holy Family of Nazareth. Lord hear us.

Lord, may the virtues and blessings of the Holy Family be seen in the actions of the Champagnat Marist Family. Lord hear us.

Lord, give us the courage to spread your Good News among all those we encounter. Lord hear us.

Prayer

God of love, we thank you for your servants, Mary and Elizabeth.
Their unconditional acceptance of your Word
gave birth your kingdom of love, justice and peace.
We thank you for the blessings we have received through their actions.
Give us the grace to work for justice,
that we may bring your love to those in need of healing.
Through Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

Advent 4 | Thursday 24 December| God with us

Come, O Lord, and set us free

Prayer

Emmanuel, “God with us”,
like Zachariah of old, may we be conscious of your redeeming love
and you meet you in those whom we encounter,
in the Scriptures and the breaking of bread. Amen.

Readings

- **2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8-12, 14, 16 | The kingdom of David will be established forever**
- **Psalm 89 | I will sing forever of your love, O Lord**
- **Luke 1:67-79 | From on high the rising sun will visit us**

Champagnat Marist Reading – A Revolution of the Heart, p. 50

The incarnational nature of Marcellin’s spirituality was the source of his practice of the presence of God; he had a passion for both the Lord and his mission. For Marcellin, Jesus was always close at hand. Consequently, his conversations with the Lord continued uninterrupted, and his confidence in him and abandonment to God’s will deepened over time. He often quoted the words of Psalm 127, “If the Lord does not build a house, in vain do its builders toil.”

Marcellin’s incarnational spirituality can be found in the wording of many of his letters. In an April 8th, 1839 note to Brother Marie-Laurent, for example, the founder wrote, “Your letter, my very dear friend, greatly aroused my compassion. Since then I never approach the holy altar without recommending you to Him in whom we never hope in vain, who can help us overcome the greatest obstacles.”

Intercessions

Loving God, help us to receive Jesus as Emmanuel and like John the Baptist, proclaim his message of peace. Lord hear us.

Gracious God, as you revealed your presence among us through Zachariah, may we too be aware of how actions give birth to an unfolding of God in our day. Lord hear us.

Mighty God, just as Zachariah announced the coming of a Messiah may we, by our joy in living, proclaim the coming of your Kingdom. Lord hear us.

Prayer

Father, reveal yourself to us so that we may know
how to welcome you as you become present to us
in the person of your new born Son, Jesus.
Help us to share the joy of his coming
with all whom we meet today.
Come, Lord Jesus.

Marial Greeting *Mary in the Gospels*, (p. 71) - Br. Giovanni Maria Bigotto FMS

Mary,
you welcomed Jesus,
you carried Him,
gave,
presented,
sought.

For Him, you were
a woman of faith
a courageous woman
a bosom that
welcomed and protected
time,
intelligence,
a mother,
an educator,
the first disciple,
open to His mystery,
open to the Cross,
both member and mother
of the Church.

You made Him
your centre,
your treasure,
the life of your life,
the beloved Son,
the absolute Lord,
God, in our fragile flesh.

An Advent Morning Offering

As we await your coming among us, Jesus, grant us hearts attuned to your message of peace and goodwill to all people everywhere. Let us remember especially those who suffer in our world and in our city as they await a better dawn. Encourage us to hear your 'divine whisper' in all the events of our day, as you invite us to grow in closeness to you and to all our sisters and brothers. May we especially be conscious of the need to care for and support all those to whom we minister and with whom we shall engage this day, especially our Brothers in community, and those who may be aged, sick or in pain. Amen.

Morning Prayer – Christmas Day

Call to Prayer

Christmas is much more than a birthday party celebrating the birth of Jesus. Rather Christmas celebrates the central truth that the Word was made flesh for our salvation. God has become a human person like us; he has come to live and work among us. He has entered our world to bless it and to liberate all those enslaved by oppression, by hunger and homelessness, enslaved by addictive habits and substances, enslaved by fear, anger, resentment, hatred, loneliness. Let us pray that we may approach this Child to be liberated from our particular enslavement and to help others break the chains of their enslavements, so that, in the words of Isaiah today, “all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God”.

Opening Prayer

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,
he has come to his people and set them free.

The Word was made flesh

And dwelt among us.

Unto us a child is born, a son is given, and his name shall be called the Prince of Peace.
Come, let us adore Him.

This day Christ is born, this day the Saviour has appeared. This day Angels are singing on earth.
This day the just are glad and say:
Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.

To the King of the Ages, who is immortal, invisible, the one only God, be honour and glory.
Thanks be to God.

Gospel | John 1: 1-18 | The Word Became Flesh

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, 'This was he of whom I said, "He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me."') From

his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

Champagnat Marist Reading - Homes of Light, p. 16

Of all the phrases in the Gospels where direct mention is made of Mary, there is one in particular that attracts my attention, "Mary treasured all these things and pondered over them in her heart" (Lk 2:19). The heart is mentioned often in the Bible as the inner place within humans, the seat of ideas, feelings and memories ... but, especially, where divine Being can be perceived and sensed, since this is the mystery of the incarnation. To treasure, meditate, ponder in our hearts is to read, understand, and accept our lives and events as God sees them. It is to listen to the inner voice whispered to us by the Spirit, inspiring the best steps to take.

A heart that listens, meditates, ponders and discerns is the ideal place for radiating light and, consequently, for letting God's light shine through us. Such a heart has the capacity to reduce the force of our ego because it makes greater room for the presence of God.

Intercessions

Christ, born in a stable, give courage to all who are homeless - **Jesus, Saviour, hear our prayer.**

Christ, for whom the angels sang, may all people hear the good news of salvation - **Jesus, Saviour, hear our prayer.**

Christ, worshipped by the shepherds, strengthen those who work for justice and peace in our world - **Jesus, Saviour, hear our prayer.**

Christ, before whom the wise men knelt, give humility and wisdom to all who govern - **Jesus, Saviour, hear our prayer.**

Christ, whose radiance filled a lowly manger, give the glory of your resurrection to all who rest in you - **Jesus, Saviour, hear our prayer.**

Jesus, Saviour, child of Mary, you know us and love us, you share our lives and hear our prayer. Glory to you for ever. Amen.

A Christmas Morning Prayer - Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894)

O God, our loving Father, help us
Rightly to remember the birth of Jesus,
That we may share in the song of the angels,
The gladness of the shepherds,
And the worship of the wise men.

Close the door of hate and open the
Door of love all over the world.
Deliver us from evil by the blessing

That Christ brings, and teach us
To be merry with clear hearts.

May this Christmas morning make us
Happy to be Your children, and
May the Christmas Evening bring us to our beds
With grateful thoughts, forgiving, and forgiven, for Jesus' sake.

Blessing

May the joy of the angels,
the eagerness of the shepherds,
the perseverance of the wise men,
the obedience of Joseph and Mary,
and the peace of the Christ-child
be ours this Christmas. Amen.