

Stations of the Nativity

An Advent Time of Reflection



2020 Advent

**St. Margaret Mary
Catholic Community**

The First Station

The Annunciation

All: We adore you O Christ and we praise you for by your holy birth you have redeemed the world.

Reading

And an angel said to her, “Fear not, Mary, for you have found favor with God. You will bear a son and call his name Jesus, and he will be great. . .” And Mary said, “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word.”

Luke 1:30-31, 38

Meditation

We do not know Mary before this moment, but we quickly discover her loving spirit. She has a deep sense of God’s presence and a willingness to let God lead her wherever he wants. Despite her fears, she gives a truly humble and faithful “YES” to whatever God asks.

Prayer (together)

Lord God, you who do miracles in the souls of those who love you, help each of us to cooperate with your grace in our lives and to give our will to you without reserve.

Amen!

Sing (together)

O come, O come Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel

Reflection Question: During this Advent Season, what will you say “YES” to in order that you come closer to Jesus? We all have fears, what is a fear you have that you can hand over to Jesus? How will you live Gabriel’s “Fear not” during the remainder of this year?

The Second Station

The Visitation

All: We adore you O Christ and we praise you for by your holy birth you have redeemed the world.

Reading

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leapt in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke with a loud voice, saying, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb."

Luke 1:41-42

Meditation

The grace of the Holy Spirit helped Elizabeth "see" that Mary was especially blessed by God with a child who would do wonderful things for all people. Elizabeth was also able to understand that Mary had accepted this gift with love and faithfulness. We, too, can pay attention to the Spirit, which will help us know what is right and helps us feel the joy and peace of always choosing God's will.

Prayer (together)

O God, teach me the joy and happiness of doing your will always, and seeing your love and goodness in everyone whom I greet this day.

Amen!

Sing (together)

O come, O come Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel

Reflection Question: How has the Holy Spirit blessed you this Advent Season? What are the stirrings within you that come from the Holy Spirit? What peace and joy do you want from God's will?

Third Station

The Magnificat, the Song of Mary

All: We adore you O Christ and we praise you for by your holy birth you have redeemed the world.

Reading

My souls glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my savior... for he that is mighty has done great things for me. . .His mercy is on those who fear him in every generation. . .He fills the hungry with good things. . .and he helps his servant Israel."

Luke 1:46-47, 49, 50, 53-54

Meditation

Mary sings one of the most famous songs in the Bible. She thanks God for the great blessing he has brought her, but she does not dwell on her own importance. She quickly goes on to remember all the times God has helped Israel. She moves past her own good fortune to praise God for saving the poor, the hungry, and the humble.

Prayer (together)

Through the help of Mary, our Mother, may God make the sick well, the troubled calm, and the wounded healed. Amen!!

Sing (together)

O come, O come Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel

Reflection Question: What great blessing has God gifted you with this year? How does your life point to God? What is your "magnificat" (great song of praise) to God?

Fourth Station

The Birth of John the Baptist

All: We adore you O Christ and we praise you for by your holy birth you have redeemed the world.

Reading

Elizabeth's time came for delivery, and she gave birth to a son, and her neighbors and relatives . . . rejoiced with her. . . They made signs to [the child's] father how he would name him. . . and he wrote, 'His name is John'.

Luke 1:57-58, 62,63

Meditation

St. Luke weaves the birth of John the Baptist into the story of how Jesus was born, because they were closely related in God's plan. The name "John" means "God gives favor" or "God has mercy." John will go before Jesus to announce his coming as the day of God's favor, mercy, and salvation for the whole world. John will call on everyone who hears him to repent and to prepare for the Lord.

Prayer (together)

Father, you sent John the Baptist before your Son to warn us to give up our sins and to seek your forgiveness. May we recognize Jesus when he comes into our lives and welcome his love into our hearts. Amen!!

Sing (together)

O come, O come Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel

Reflection Question: During Advent, how will you announce the coming of Jesus to those you encounter? How will you repent and prepare for the Lord? Where in your life do you find God's mercy?

Fifth Station

The Prophecy of Zechariah

All: We adore you O Christ and we praise you for by your holy birth you have redeemed the world.

Reading

Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying, “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people. . .that we might serve him without fear, holy and righteous in his sight all the days of his life.” Luke 1:67-68, 74-75

Luke 1:67-68, 74-75

Meditation

Zechariah, John's father, is given the gift to foresee that his child will become the greatest prophet of all time. John will prepare that way for Jesus. In Jesus, God remembers his covenant with his servant Israel, offers forgiveness of sins, and brings peace and light to all people of the world.

Prayer (together)

O God, who sent John the Baptist to remind us of your eternal mercy, grant that we turn from our sins and treat one another with justice, love, and respect always. Amen!!

Sing (together)

O come, O come Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel

Reflection Question: How do you prepare the way for Jesus to enter your heart, your home, and daily life? How do you serve God without fear? Where do you shed light in our often times dark world?

Sixth Station Joseph's Dream

All: We adore you O Christ and we praise you for by your holy birth you have redeemed the world.

Reading:

Behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, fear not to take to yourself Mary your wife...She shall bring forth a son and you will call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

Matthew 1:20-21

Meditation:

Joseph loved Mary, his bride to be, but what of the child she was clearly carrying? He decided to send Mary away. Then Joseph was visited by an angel and told of the child's divine origin. Should Joseph now do what society expected, or make the more difficult choice and listen to the word of God?

Prayer (together):

God our Father, help us to imitate the faith and trust of Joseph, the early guardian of your divine Son, Jesus, and to seek your help in all our troubles.

Amen!!

Sing (together):

O come, O come Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel

Reflection Question: What are those times in your life when you doubt the word of God? How do you follow God's direction in difficult matters? Why is it easier to conform to the ways of society versus following the way of Jesus?

Seventh Station

Joseph Takes Mary into his Home

All: We adore you O Christ and we praise you for by your holy birth you have redeemed the world.

Reading

Then Joseph awakened from sleep and did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and received Mary as his wife. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and [Joseph] called his name Jesus. Matthew 1:24-25

Meditation

The angel told Joseph to name the child *Jesus*. In Hebrew this means “God saves” his people. The angel also gave the child a second name, *Emmanuel*. This means “God with us”. When Joseph woke, he received the blessing of this name right away. His decision was difficult, but he acted with faith and obeyed God’s word. By bringing Mary and her baby into his home, Joseph truly had God with him.

Prayer (together)

O loving Father, you sent your Son Jesus to live with us on earth that we might live with him forever in heaven. Grant that we may stay close to him all the days of our lives. Amen!!

Sing (together)

O come, O come Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel.

Reflection Question: Names are important. What does your name mean? Throughout this year, how have you felt Emmanuel, “God with us”, in your life? How do you act in faith and obey God’s word?

Eighth Station

The Journey to Bethlehem

All: We adore you O Christ and we praise you for by your holy birth you have redeemed the world.

Reading

And Joseph went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth into Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, with his engaged wife Mary, who was near to giving birth, in order to pay the tax there. Luke 2:4-5

Meditation

Until now, the events preparing for the birth of Jesus seem guided by God's hand, often through miracles and dreams. But now a long difficult trip had to be made, commanded by Rome. Even when Joseph and Mary arrived in Bethlehem, their problems were not over; there was no room at the inn. If they were following God's word, why wasn't life easier?

Prayer (together)

O Lord, be with us in every pain and difficulty, and give us the courage to put up with hardships in our lives. Let us serve you as faithfully as Mary and Joseph did in their lives. Amen!!

Sing (together)

O come, O come Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel.

Reflection Question: Reflect on a trip you have taken. What were some obstacles you encountered along the way? How did you overcome those obstacles? Did you ask God to be with you?

Ninth Station

The Birth of Jesus

All: We adore you O Christ and we praise you for by your holy birth you have redeemed the world.

Reading

And so it was, that while they were there, her days were completed so that she was to give birth. And she brought forth her first born son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Luke 2:6-7

Meditation

In a barn, there among God's beloved animals, Jesus was born. He came into the world as small and helpless as any human being ever did. This way he could be a friend and savior for every kind of person: rich, poor, young, old, important, or unimportant.

Prayer (together)

O God of all love and mercy, look upon us with kindness when we are most in need and the least important in the eyes of others. Help us also to imitate the love and kindness Jesus had for all people.

Amen!!

Sing (together)

O come, O come Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel.

Reflection Question: Many know the joy that the birth of a new child brings, but also the great changes that parents and families must go through. In this Season of Advent and Christmas, what gives you hope? What may need to change in your own life to prepare for the arrival of Christ?

Tenth Station

The Angels Announce the Good News

All: We adore you O Christ and we praise you for by your holy birth you have redeemed the world.

Reading

And there were shepherds in the same area watching their flocks by night, and behold the angel of the Lord appeared to them...and said, "Fear not, I bring you good news of great joy to all peoples, for unto you is born this day in the city of David a savior; who is Christ the Lord." Luke 2:8-11

Meditation

The angels said, "Fear not." These words are repeated often in the Bible. The ways of God are great and mysterious and can sometimes be frightening. But they are also filled with love for each of his creatures, for all of his creatures. Here were words of the greatest love, that a savior had come for all people.

Prayer (together)

Lord Creator, let me listen to the word of God without fear, but rather with quiet rejoicing in my heart, knowing that Jesus came for me and for all people.

Amen!!

Sing (together)

O come, O come Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel.

Reflection Question: Think of a time that someone shared some good news with you. How did that make you feel? When receiving good news, we often are unable to contain that news, but want to share it with others. In the coming days, how might you share something good with someone who might need to hear some good news?

Eleventh Station

The Shepherds Share the Good News

All: We adore you O Christ and we praise you for by your holy birth you have redeemed the world.

Reading

The shepherds said to one another, “Let us go then to Bethlehem and see this event which the Lord has made known to us.” So they went in haste and found Mary and Joseph and the baby lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child.

Luke 2:15-17

Meditation

If someone became king today, who would be told first? Other kings, presidents, the rich, and the powerful? Yet, when Jesus, King of Kings, was born, the news was told first to the lowly. Though simple people, the shepherds recognized God’s work hidden in the stable. Amazed by what they saw, the shepherds then told everyone they knew and praised God aloud for his goodness.

Prayer (together)

O Lord, open my ears to everyone who speaks your name, and loosen my tongue at every chance to praise you. Amen!!

Sing (together)

O come, O come Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel.

Reflection Question: It was not just the angels who were sharing the good news, but also those with whom it was shared. During the next week, do something kind for someone else to share the goodness of the presence of Christ in our world.

Twelfth Station

The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple

All: We adore you O Christ and we praise you for by your holy birth you have redeemed the world.

Reading

They took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord...in accordance with the commandment in the Law of the Lord.

Luke 2:22,24

Meditation

It is an important commandment in the Jewish faith that the firstborn is brought to the temple to be offered to God for blessings. The first child of a family represents the special love God had for the whole Jewish people when he saved them from slavery in Egypt and made them his chosen people.

Prayer (together)

Lord God, you care for us with the love of both a father and a mother. Keep us close to you as part of your family. Help each of us to act as a true child of God in everything we do. Amen!!

Sing (together)

O come, O come Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel.

Reflection Question: Even Jesus was presented in the temple. As we are the recipients of many blessings and gifts, we need to be mindful that all is a gift from God and all should be used for God's glory. We call this stewardship. Although, in the midst of our current health crisis, some may find it unsafe to gather for regular Sunday Mass, take some time to come to church and offer a prayer of gratitude for all God has done and continues to do for you.

Thirteenth Station

The Blessing of Simeon

All: We adore you O Christ and we praise you for by your holy birth you have redeemed the world.

Reading

Simeon took the boy into his arms and blessed God, saying, "Now Lord, you may let your servant die in peace. For according to your word, my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared in the sight of all peoples, a light of revelation for the pagans and the lorry of your people Israel."

Luke 2:28-32

Meditation

When Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the temple, they met two holy prophets, Simeon and Anna. Simeon rejoiced that his life was now complete because he saw in the child the Savior of the whole world. Anna, whose words followed, praised God as well, then told everyone that the redeemer had been sent.

Prayer (together)

O God of all love, help me to see your face in the faces of my friends and enemies alike, and to treat every human being as a gift from you, deserving my love.

Amen!!

Sing (together)

O come, O come Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel.

Reflection Question: We see how Simeon's spirit was lifted at the presence of Christ in his midst. How are we receiving the presence of Christ in our midst? Is this enough for us to say that we can go in peace? How might we share that peace with others?

Fourteenth Station

The Wise Man Came from the East

All: We adore you O Christ and we praise you for by your holy birth you have redeemed the world.

Reading

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea...wise men came from the East to Jerusalem, saying "Where is the new born king of the Jews? We have seen his star at its rising and have come to pay him honor." Matthew 2:1-2

Meditation

The story of the wise men from the East showed that even foreigners recognized that salvation had come. They traveled into the unknown; both the unknown land of Israel and the unknown land of a world touched by God.

Prayer (together)

O great God, bless your children everywhere, and help all people to love one another and live at peace with one another. Amen!!

Sing (together)

O come, O come Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel.

Reflection Question: The magi came from places afar to see Jesus, to encounter Christ. They did so even in light of great political and geographical hardships. How do we dare to travel to the unknown places in our world, in our own lives to encounter Christ, even in light of a world that is telling us a very different message.

Thank You!

We are grateful for the assistance of so many who helped make the outdoor Stations of the Nativity a reality this year at St. Margaret Mary.

Artists for the Stations

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Donation of Greens for Wreath

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Cutting & Transporting Greens for Wreath

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Gary Michalkiewitz

Painting, Cutting, Acquiring of Materials

Dean Plautz, David Bolle, and the
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Inspired by the book, "Stations of the Crib: A Journey of Hope from Advent to Epiphany" by Joseph Nassal, CPPS

