20 DECEMBER
CHRISTMAS NOVENA

INTRODUCTION: Dear friends, on this fifth day of the Novena in preparation for Christmas, we reflect on Zechariah's wholehearted praise to God at the birth of his son John, the precursor of Jesus.

SCRIPTURE: **Lk 1: 67–79.** (*The rising Sun to visit us*)

REFLECTIONS: The Benedictus encourages us not only with the good news of God's salvation through the Christ child but also with the amazing truth that God feels deeply for his people. God's compassion for humanity is passionate, profound, and permanent.

O ADVENT ANTIPHONS: *O Emmanuel, our King and lawgiver, the expected of the nations and the Saviour of them all, O come and save us, O Lord, our God.* ***Amen.***

INTERCESSIONS: RESPONSE: Come Emmanuel; come to save your people!

The "Most High" that Zechariah proclaimed comes not in a cloud of glory, but as a vulnerable child, born to a human family, in a cold stable; may Christ our Emmanuel find shelter in the cradle of our hearts. **R/-**

Witnessing the fulfilment of God's promise in his personal life fills Zechariah with reassuring hope for the future; let us draw encouragement from God's intervention in our own story. **R/-**

God is faithful to His promises and He fulfils them through the ordinary events of daily life and in spite of our flawed human responses; may we never undermine what God can accomplish even through each of us today. **R/-**

The Benedictus also proclaims that we are included in the people of the promise; we pray for this fullness of joy and peace in our world. **R/-**

That during this advent journey, may we recognise God's interventions through the familiarity of our family members, friends, neighbours and even through strangers. **R/-**

CONCLUDING PRAYER: God almighty, we thank you for your faithful love and mercy shown to the human race in sending us your Son. Grant that we may witness to your faithful love with our life; we make this prayer through Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN: Optional