



CHRISTMAS NOVENA - 18 DECEMBER

Introduction:

Dear Friends, on this third day of the Novena in preparation for Christmas, we ponder on the meeting of two kinswomen, who received blessings and a mission, eager to support and help each other at a time of major change in their lives.

Response after each Prophecy:

(All) Our Lord and King is drawing near, O come, let us adore Him.

Leader: Rejoice, O you daughter of Sion and exult fully, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, the Lord and Master comes, and there shall be a brilliant light in that day, and the mountains shall drop down sweetness, and hills flow with milk and honey, for in that day the Great Prophet will come, and He Himself will renew Jerusalem.

Leader: Behold, the God-man of the house of David will come to sit upon the royal throne, and you will see Him and your heart will rejoice.

Leader: Behold, the Lord our Protector will come to save us, Israel's holy One, wearing the crown of royalty on His noble brow and He will exercise His rule from sea to shining sea and from the waters of the river to the ends of the earth.

Leader: Behold, the Lord and King will appear, and He will not deceive; but if He should delay, wait for Him to come; He will surely come and will not tarry.

Leader: The Lord will come down like rain upon the fleece of Gideon; justice will thrive and an abundance of true peace; all the kings of the lands of the earth will adore Him, and every nation will serve Him.

Leader: A Child will be born to us, and He will be called God the almighty; He will sit upon the royal throne of David His father, and He will hold sway, the sign of His power on His shoulder.

Leader: Bethlehem, city of the Most High God, from you will come forth the King of Israel, and He will proceed forth from His eternity; and He will be greatly praised in the midst of the entire universe; and there will be peace in our land when He will have come.

(On the Eve of Christmas add :)

Leader: Tomorrow the wickedness of the whole world will be destroyed, and over us will reign the Saviour of the world.



Scripture: Lk 1: 39 – 45 (*Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord?*)

Reflection: How affirming the revelation of Elizabeth must have been to Mary who secretly pondered such unfathomable mystery. She would have felt understood and supported by her kinswoman who similarly share God's favour. Do we have someone to share 'God-experience' in our life? Elizabeth was the first to bear witness to the Lord's presence in our world. Do we bear witness and encourage each other along our faith journey? Helping another to notice God's doing, brings true joy and hope, way beyond our expectation.

O Advent Antiphons: *O Root of Jesse's stem, sign of God's love for all his people: come to save us without delay!*

Intercessions:

Response: **Come Lord Jesus, come and be born in our hearts!**

Our family, friends and well-wishers are great blessings. We often see material gifts as a blessing and overlook people around us; may the Christmas celebration strengthen our bond of love.

Mary brought God to Elizabeth in her heart and in her womb. May we bring God's presence to everyone we meet, and in turn see God in all who come into our lives.

Lord, as Christmas draws ever closer, free us from being self-absorbed and self-centred. Instead like Mary, may we too go out in loving service of others.

The Spirit of God in Elizabeth rejoiced in the presence of Mary. We pray for those who have been friends to us, for all whose companionship or example lifts our heart to praise.

Mary carried the living Word within her. May we bear witness to the Word and the Eucharist we receive daily.

Concluding Prayer:

Lord, at the angel's message, Mary, the immaculate Virgin, became the temple of God. After her example, may we steadfastly follow your will. We make this prayer through Christ your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Amen.

Concluding Hymn: (Optional)

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