



CHRISTMAS NOVENA – 20 DECEMBER

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.

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

Reflection: 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.

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.

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.

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.

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

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.

Concluding Hymn: (Optional)

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