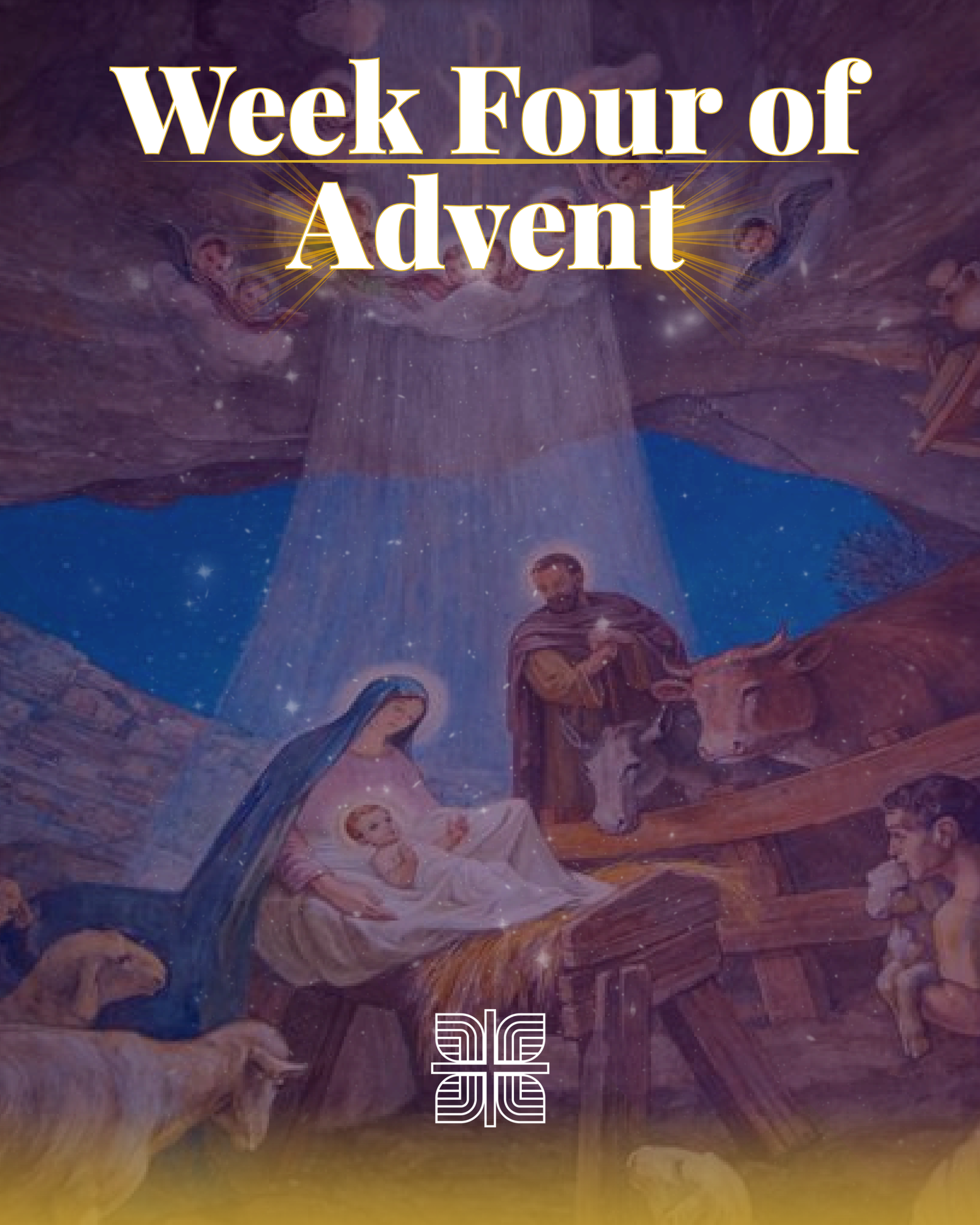
Week Four of Advent



DAY 22

Daily invitation, 12/20

Adults: As you discerned, contemplated, and reconciled your obedience to God's word last week, journal for 10 minutes on what God said to you during today's Mass. How can you say, "here am I" to God as we enter the week of the Nativity?

Children: List your three favorite memories or activities this Advent. Tell your parents about it, and tell God in prayer that you're grateful.

Reflection:

The past week, we anticipated the coming of Christ through a series of acts of obedience that echoed throughout history as God moved the hearts and minds of human beings to the incarnation of the King of Kings. Finally, on this Sunday before the Nativity, we contemplate the Virgin Mary's culminating act of obedience, through which God became man. This shift from "How can this be?" to "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word," represents the redemption of Eve's sin in the Garden of Eden, in which she does not seek the knowledge of God's plan but instead trusts and obeys according to his word.

(2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16/Rom 16:25-27/Lk 1:26-38)

DAY 23

Daily invitation, 12/21

Adults: Pray the second Joyful Mystery, the Visitation, where the Blessed Virgin Mary visits her cousin, Elizabeth, who's pregnant with St. John the Baptist.

Children: Pray the second Joyful Mystery, which is the visitation of Mary to Elizabeth. Think about the joy Mary and Elizabeth must've experienced by being pregnant and the joy and excitement your parents must've had when you were born.

Reflection:
Joy! Joy and celebration! St. John the Baptist jumps for joy in the womb of Elizabeth when she hears the greeting from Mary. That joy moved through her as the Holy Spirit and compelled her to repeat the words of the angel Gabriel. As in the Song of Joy and the Springtime Rhapsody, the joy we have in anticipation of Christ this week is the joy of a lover when he sees his beloved and a warrior after a victory. Christ is coming, and by coming, he will save.

(Saint Peter Canisius, Priest and Doctor of the Church; Sg 2:8-14 or Zep 3:14-18a/Lk 1:39-45)

DAY

24

Daily invitation, 12/22

Adults: Message the person you've been praying for this Advent, giving them words of affirmation or inviting them to Mass. Have faith and hope in God's plan for their life!

Children: Give a sibling, friend, or parent a compliment.

Reflection:
Yesterday, we leapt for joy with St. John the Baptist. Today, we recognize that joy must turn into praise. It is always tempting to try to hold onto joy and to make it last forever. However, as the joy fully came from the Lord, it must also be fully given to the Lord. Both the woman at Shiloh and Mary gave their sons to God for his purpose to be performed in them, with the full faith in God's plan.

(1 Sm 1:24-28/Lk 1:46-56 [198])

DAY 25

Daily invitation, 12/23

Adults: Christmas Eve is tomorrow. Christ is almost here. Contemplate St. John the Baptist and take inventory of how you are prepared to receive Christ. As you anticipate Christ, what have you held back from the manger? Find one task that you did not perform over the Advent season and perform it.

Children: Find a task from your Advent calendar you didn't finish and complete it.

Reflection:
In today's readings, St. John the Baptist is born, and even through his naming, he begins to perform the works of God. He is the messenger of God who, like the coming messenger in the reading from Malachi, is like "a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap." This means that through him, God will prepare his people to receive his son.

([Saint John of Kanty, Priest] Mal 3:1-4, 23-24/Lk 1:57-66)

DAY 26

Daily invitation, 12/24

Adults: It is Christmas Eve. Tomorrow, Christ is born. Zechariah's prophecy in the Gospel of Luke ends with the idea that John the Baptist will "guide our feet into the way of peace." For some, Christmas Eve can be hectic. This morning, contemplate the rest of the day. How can you ensure your feet follow the way of peace?

Children: Christmas Eve is exciting! The anticipation is almost too much to bear! Ask God for patience today.

Reflection:
In today's readings, St. John the Baptist is given his purpose that follows his name. Zechariah, filled with the Holy Spirit, calls his son "the prophet of the Most High" who "will go before the Lord to prepare his ways." The dawn is coming. He will give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. He will guide our feet into the way of peace.

(2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16/Lk 1:67-79)

DAY

27

Daily invitation, 12/25

Adults: Merry Christmas! Today, reflect on the journey of Advent.

Children: Reflect on the journey of Advent and express gratitude for the joy of Christmas.

Reflection:
He is here.

(Is 52:7-10/Heb 1:1-6/Jn 1:1-18 or 1:1-5, 9-14)

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