



Course of prayer
and solidarity
for the family
in Advent and Christmas

CALLED TO BE A BODY

Being a Church
in communion

DIOCESI DI BERGAMO

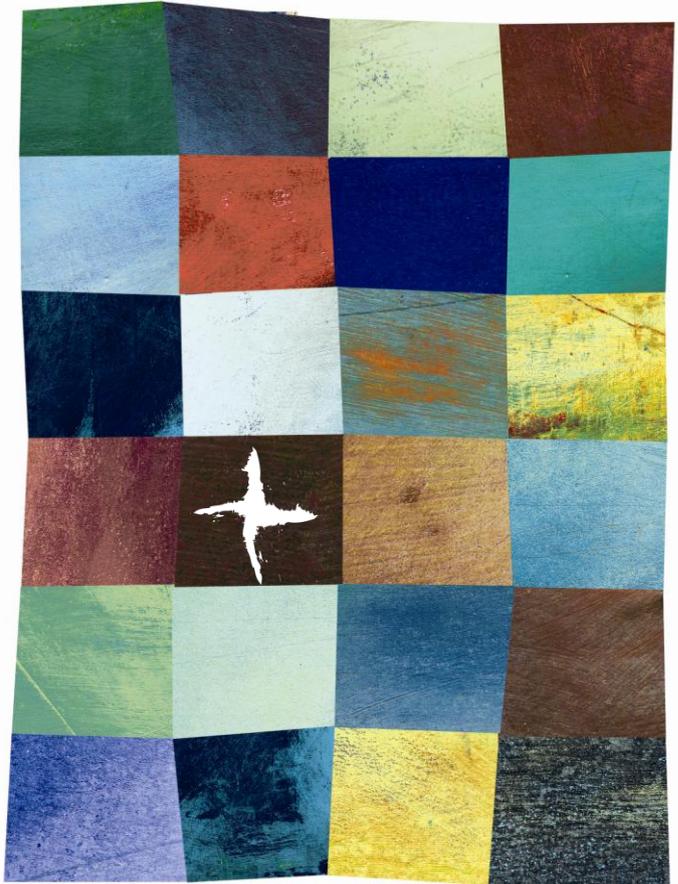
ESSERE CHIESA

Come to him, a living stone, rejected by human beings but chosen and precious in the sight of God, and, like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it says in scripture:

*Behold, I am laying a stone in Zion
a cornerstone, chosen and precious,
and whoever believes in it shall not be
put to shame.*

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of His *own*, so that you may announce the *praises* of Him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were *no people* but now you are God's people; you had *not received mercy* but now you have received mercy.

From the first letter of Peter (2,4-6.9-10)



LET US RE-READ THE WORDS OF THE BISHOP

In light of the forthcoming Christmas

Here is a passage from the pastoral letter that our bishop wrote to the entire diocese introducing us to the theme that will guide our prayer this Advent-Christmas period: living brotherhood in the Church in order to be the Church-Family of Jesus Who is coming.

«Brotherhood is one of the fundamental connotations of the Christian community. Jesus Himself speaks of his disciples as brothers, evoking however, a relationship which already was recognized by his people as indicating something beyond the family organizations: «how good and joyful it is that brothers are together». The apostles use this terminology to address the disciples of Jesus Christ and to trace the features of life of the first Christian communities.

The life of the first community is consigned to us as an example of fraternal life. The underlining emphasis in this sense is on particular vocations, such as monks and nuns, the consecrated persons, the presbytery, who are not exclusive, but rather, prophetic or exemplary of a condition proper of everyone baptized in relating with other baptized persons and with all the other human persons. It deals with a brotherhood which somehow belongs to a profound level much superior to that determined by family bonds».

+ Francesco, vescovo

Being the BODY OF CHRIST which is the Church

« Now you are the body of Christ, each according to one's own part, its members» (1 Cor 12,27)

The reflection on the Church and that of every baptized person being the Church leads us to re-read the texts that the Church wrote pondering on her own mystery. Let us begin with an excerpt of the apostolic letter «*Novo Millennio Ineunte*» of John Paul II: let us remember the task that the Pope left us as a Church to live this new period.

«TO MAKE THE CHURCH THE HOME AND SCHOOL OF COMMUNION: that is the great challenge facing us in the millennium which is now beginning, if we wish to be faithful to God's plan and respond to the world's deepest yearnings.

But what does this mean in practice? Here too, our thoughts could run immediately to the action to be undertaken, but that would not be the right impulse to follow. Before making practical plans, we need to promote A SPIRITUALITY OF COMMUNION,

making it the guiding principle of education wherever individuals and Christians are formed, wherever ministers of the altar, consecrated persons, and pastoral workers are trained, wherever families and communities are being built up. A spirituality of communion indicates above all THE HEART'S CONTEMPLATION OF THE MYSTERY OF THE TRINITY DWELLING IN US, and whose light we must also be able to see shining on the faces of the brothers and sisters around us. A spirituality of communion also means an ABILITY TO THINK OF OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN FAITH WITHIN THE PROFOUND UNITY OF THE MYSTICAL BODY, and therefore as «those who are a part of me». This makes us able to share their joys and sufferings, to sense their desires and attend to their needs, to offer them deep and genuine friendship. A SPIRITUALITY OF COMMUNION IMPLIES ALSO THE ABILITY TO SEE WHAT IS POSITIVE IN OTHERS, to

welcome it and value it as a gift from God: not only as a gift for the brother or sister who has received it directly, but also as a "gift for me". A spirituality of communion means, finally, to know how to "make room" for our brothers and sisters bearing "each other's burdens" (*Gal 6:2*) and resisting the selfish temptations which constantly beset us and provoke compe-

titution, careerism, distrust and jealousy.
Let us have no illusions: unless we follow this spiritual path, external structures of communion will serve very little purpose. They would become mechanisms without a soul, "masks" of communion rather than its means of expression and growth». *Apostolic letter Novo millennio ineunte of his holiness Pope John Paul II*

In the memory of the VATICAN COUNCIL II

On October 11 we commemorated 50 years since the opening of the Second Vatican Council (10/11/1962), a prolific moment for the Catholic Church that has left precious fruits for all of us. During the course of Advent we will read excerpts from the conciliar constitution «*Lumen Gentium*», the Constitution on the Church. Every Sunday we will be able to enjoy the beauty and intelligence which the council fathers left

us and maybe intrigued, go on to read the entire internal document (found on the site of the Catholic Church: www.vatican.va).
Each week, always about being the Church and the writings that concern it, will be proposed, and in the meditations on weekdays, a passage from the Acts of the Apostles. This book of the Bible tells of the birth of the Church, of how the apostles



learned to live in the community, of the rules that they gave themselves and the recognition they received. Our being Church today is also in the origins of the

Church , this origin is what was looked at with particular attention and wisdom by the Council Fathers in drafting the documents of the Council.

Being Church in the FAMILY

The reflection about being Church regards every baptized person, but takes on a particular significance when a family questions itself about its Ecclesiastical belonging. In the family there are simple gestures to carry out that educate all members in feeling like a «part» of the community: for example, going to Mass together on Sundays, finding moments of common prayer-even simple acknowledgements around the table or helping the children with their evening prayers. It is precisely about the family and the Church that «*Lumen Gentium*» speaks of. «Christian spouses, by virtue of the Sacrament of Matrimony, with which they partake, they signify the mystery of that

unity and fruitful love which exists between Christ and the Church , they help each other to attain holiness in their married life, accepting and rearing their children thus they, in their state of life and in their function, have their own special gift among the people of God . From this mission, in fact, the family continues, into which new citizens of human society are born, who by the grace received from the Holy Spirit in Baptism become God's children and so His people are perpetuated through the centuries. In this which could be called the domestic church, the parents must be for their children the first teachers of the faith and giving in to the vocation of each one, to the sacred ones in a special way » (n. 11).

In the family, the domestic Church, the first experience of community that our children have, one learns to pray and one can savor the sweetness of simple gestures that in silence vibrate hearts uniting them even more. However, since the church is not closed in on itself, so also the family is invited to also be for others guardians of The Word, support and help, a place

of testimonies even in daily difficulties. Meditating on the Church is therefore an opportunity to compare one's being a family, the choices made and those to come, asking oneself what specific vocation we are called to respond to together. In this regard, every Sunday there will be some questions that will guide the reflection and extend to the world that surrounds us.

SOLIDARITY in times of crisis

The aggravated economic and occupational crisis has produced, as early as 2009, a significant increase of requests for access to programs of economic support offered by Caritas. These are men, women, Italians and foreigners, entire families who find themselves faced by a number of problems that once seemed very unlikely or pertained only to certain categories of people considered marginal. In this situation of

crisis, thinking of solidarity with brothers near or far may seem to clash, and yet a Child is born, Christmas comes ...

The time of waiting, to teach us to welcome, is not a period void of any actions. There is a lot that must be done for a great job of building a new humanity, within and around us. A question for all: what should we do? Changing lives in a radical way or humbly



occupying ourselves with our daily lives? We are told: a change is urgent. Yes, but why or for whom should we change? There must be a really strong reason to put us on the road, for us to reverse course. Not for pre-meditation. Not for convenience. There must be Someone so strong so as to seize our life. No changes unless he is met by a presence that moves, warms his heart, gives him hope and conquers death.

Today the shepherds of the nativity scene are a bit different: they are the men of the city, consumers, they are men who have or had everything and who continue to hunger and thirst for everything. But, when it comes to keeping vigil, to guard, to seek, we feel somehow like the shepherds, whose job is to care. Care for nature, the world and for the other. Care for humans. Above all, care for the mystery of life, of the Word that gives concreteness to our questions and quenches our desires God made flesh is beyond all expectations.

Ours is a society of haste and efficiency. We have so much to do, to build and to buy. It seems that nothing can exist if it is not immediately in our hands and under our eyes. Even our cities, our neighborhoods, our streets, so well known, so familiar, can resemble a desert, desolation and loneliness, misunderstanding and insufficiency. They need love and forgiveness. Some One promised to put up His tent amidst us and it is obvious that we must prepare ourselves to welcome His coming. Prepare ourselves for a great feast.

A brief period, increasingly more confused by what surrounds and involves us: lights, rushing for the last gift, luncheons, invitations, dinners, holidays. This time, rich in many ways, should remind us that there are also those who are not rich like us or those poorer than us. Many are crying from hunger and from the lack of a roof under which to seek refuge. The Incarnation is the way in which God takes care of the poverty of man, of every man, to lend an ear to the cry of the

poor and the oppressed, the widow and the orphan, the foreigner and the prisoner. Welcoming Jesus who comes on Christmas

■ Eve means to accept with Him even all those
■ for whom He came , accepting that our lives
■ change because we met, heard and accepted
■ Him.

GROWING AS SISTER CHURCHES

The Caritas project for this Advent and Christmas



On May 20 and May 29, 2012 the Po Valley was rocked by two strong earthquakes that destroyed homes, schools, warehouses and even churches. The memory of the images and the agony of the people is still vivid in our eyes and in our hearts. Everyone responded and helped as he could, especially to meet the urgency, but there are still so many things to do. In this regard, the Diocese of Bergamo is joined with the pastoral unit of Poggio Rusco, in Mantua, to support those activities that require help

■ and brotherly support. The name of the
■ project : "Growing sister Churches" helps us
■ to understand helping between Christians,
■ brothers, is always a matter of reciprocity and
■ communion, a transfer of mutual acceptance
■ and gratitude.

■ The Caritas is therefore working to implement
■ a total aid to this pastoral unit which includes
■ three parishes that merged the four churches
■ among which, only one, the smallest and the
■ farthest -remained safe and accessible. Three
■ churches to be rebuilt to return not only a
■ place of prayer and celebration for the
■ Christians of that land, but also a sign of



normality, recovery and hope. The Advent and Christmas plan invites all families and all parish communities of the Diocese of Bergamo to make gestures of solidarity, in particular by supporting the

reconstruction project of the churches destroyed by the earthquake. For more information, see the photos of parishes and to have all the data to make a deposit please consult www.caritasbergamo.it.

The PRAYER Scheme

The prayer program for the family daily articulates the preparation for Christmas. On weekdays you read a short passage from the Bible with a comment that connects it to the theme that you are meditating on during the week; Sundays and feast days of the Christmas season offer an image that is to be enjoyed with one's eyes and with a brief comment to discover the wealth of the artistic heritage of the Church of Bergamo

which supports us in the journey of faith.

The Advent calendar is inspired by the images that the «*Lumen Gentium*» attributes to the Church, especially to those that speak of the Church as the place where God has pitched his tent: «The Church is called the building of God. The Lord compared himself to the stone which the builders rejected, but which became the cornerstone. On this foundation the Church is built by the apostles and from

it receives stability and cohesion. This building is called in various ways: the house of God, that is, in which his family lives, the dwelling place of God in the Spirit, the dwelling of God with men, and above all, holy temple» (n.6). A stone with a

cross is the base of city-building that reminds us of the diversity of charismas and roles with which one belongs to the Church. Each day there will be a window to open to an image and a brief prayer of thanksgiving.

IMAGES for the Itinerary

The Prayer Program this year borrows some of the oldest frescoes that testify the faith of Christians in Bergamo. It is shown by the medieval frescoes preserved partly in the Museum of the excavations and the in treasures of the Cathedral and partly in the Hall of the Curia, each at a distance of 100 meters from the other in the splendid setting of the Old Town Square, in the Upper Town. Every Sunday a comment allows you to enter the painting by connecting it to the theme and the Gospel of the day. The frescoed walls become

speakers, bearing witness to a faith that came before us, and in some way generated. By looking at these walls our faith can be strengthened.

The Church is the communion of bodies called to be the Body of Christ Our Lord, it not the beautiful buildings which accommodate it , as Saint Augustine reminds us: «Certainly this church in the name of God was built for you. But above all, you yourself are the Church, it is for you, as a place to physically enter, but above all, for your minds which should be the place where God comes» (Sermon 359).

LET US REMEMBER THE WORDS OF THE COUNCIL: *«The Church is in Christ like a sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race. The present-day conditions of the world add greater urgency to this work of the Church so that all men, joined more closely today by various social, technical and cultural ties, might also attain fuller unity in Christ»* (Lumen Gentium n.1).

THE PROMISED JUSTICE

The particulars of the big painting on universal judgment represent Christ as judge. The image is repeated in the vision of the Apocalypse (1,16): *«In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance»*. Where *«in To him who loves us and has freed us “from our sins by his blood»* (Ap 1,5) Speaks to the churches. Let us consider the various elements that constitute the painting to understand it. First of all Jesus is closed in an almond, that, like a seed, has reference to life and to its origin.: *«In the beginning was the word»* (John 1,1).

The sword is not grasped, is among teeth, not a symbol of threat, but of the Words of the Lord that are sharp for those who listen to it will free from all that is evil (squandering, preoccupations of life...). The arms are open to show the wounds of the Crucified, just as in the Easter apparitions,, sign of welcoming and mercy towards all. The red habit alludes the passion, just as the side and the feet that are pierced with a lance, so that the Church may not forget the sacrifice by which she is born. Finally, the throne of Jesus is a rainbow: sign of the covenant between God and man renewed in Christ.



Christ Judge (detail), Hall of the Curia of Bergamo

SUNDAY DECEMBER 2

– open the window of the calendar



IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, THE SON
AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. **AMEN**

THE THEME OF THE WEEK

Do we live as Christians? Do our daily choices reveal the responsibility of being a sign of love of the Father and the way of salvation traced by His Son Jesus? Today just as at the time of Jesus, the indifference and living oneself without the sense of criticism «what the others do» which take us far from the heart of existence.

LET US LISTEN TO TODAY'S GOSPEL AGAIN

from the gospel according to Luke (21,25-36)

KEEP VIGIL TO BE AUTHENTIC SIGN

But when these signs begin to happen, stand erect and raise your heads because your redemption is at hand. Beware that your hearts do not become drowsy from carousing and drunkenness and the anxieties of daily life, and that day catch you by surprise like a trap. For that day will assault everyone who lives on the face of the earth.

LET US HOLD HANDS

OUR FATHER...

LET US PRAY PSALM 72

The Son is the just king: let us welcome Him with acts of justice!

O God, give your judgment to the king;
your justice to the king's son;
That he may govern your people with justice,
your oppressed with right judgment,

May he be like rain coming down upon the fields,
like showers watering the earth,
That abundance may flourish in his days,
great bounty, till the moon be no more.

WE CONCLUDE WITH GRATEFUL HEARTS

LET US BLESS THE LORD.

THANKS BE TO GOD.



LOOK AT OUR FAMILY:

how much is superfluous or not so necessary? Do we know how to distinguish between real needs from those induced, invented? How does our outlook on our lives change when we think of those who have lost everything?

MONDAY DECEMBER 3

– open the window of the calendar



IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, THE SON
AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. **AMEN**

LET US LISTEN TO THE WORD

from the book of Genesis (9,8-1)

A SIGN OF PEACE

God said to Noah and to his sons with him: «See, I am now establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you. This is the sign of the covenant that I am making between me and you and every living creature with you for all ages to come: I set my bow in the clouds to serve as a sign of the covenant between me and the earth».

LET US REFLECT

To be Christians means to be part of a covenant, the covenant made between God and man: first with Hebrew people, then in the fullness of time, in Jesus Christ with all men and women of good will. The Church is the sign this covenant, this heavenly hand is extended to each one.

The Church is, and thanks to each one of us, a rainbow of peace for the world.

LET US HOLD HANDS

OUR FATHER...

LET US PRAY WITH THE CHURCH

The intercessions of the Liturgy of the Hours

R. Come, Lord and save us.

Christ, our light and our hope...

Word generated from the Father for ages to come...

Son of God, made man by the power of the Holy Spirit...

WE CONCLUDE WITH GRATEFUL HEARTS

LET US BLESS THE LORD.

THANKS BE TO GOD.

TUESDAY DECEMBER 4 – open the window of the calendar



IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, THE SON
AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. **AMEN**

LET US LISTEN TO THE WORD

from the book of Deuteronomy (6,4-36)

ALWAYS REMEMBER

Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone! Therefore, you shall love the LORD, your God, with your whole heart, and with your whole being, and with your whole strength. Take to heart these words which I command you today. Keep repeating them to your children. Recite them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you get up.

LET US REFLECT

To be Christian means to treasure in memory the gift of incarnation of the Word. A memory that continues in the Eucharist of the Church, but also a memory to be cultivated personally in family, in community. Of whom can we be a sign if

we don't meet and know in the intimacy of heart in prayer and in meditation of the Scripture? How much of the rhythm of our day keeps us away from what is precious?

LET US HOLD HANDS

OUR FATHER...

LET US PRAY WITH THE CHURCH

The intercessions of the Liturgy of the Hours

R. Come, and save us Lord.

We wait for you, full of hope...

In you is our existence, energy and life, O Lord...

You, who are not far from us...

WE CONCLUDE WITH GRATEFUL HEARTS

LET US BLESS THE LORD.

THANKS BE TO GOD.

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 5 – open the window of the calendar



IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, THE SON
AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. **AMEN**

LET US LISTEN TO THE WORD

from the book of Prophet Ezekiel (20,18-20)

THE SIGN OF A BOND

Then I said to their children in the wilderness:
«Do not follow the statutes of your parents. Do not keep their ordinances. Do not defile yourselves with their idols. I am the LORD, your God: follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances; keep holy my sabbaths as a sign between me and you so that you may know that I am the LORD, your God».

LET US REFLECT

To be a sign means to show oneself not in a boastful way, but in humility of daily goodness. The Christians are recognized in the breaking of bread which becomes a kind of life that build respect and fraternity. Eucharist is the sign of bond existing between us and the Lord Jesus

Christ this and it is to the extent that this bond becomes intimate and deeper, more real and «ours» .

LET US HOLD HANDS

OUR FATHER...

LET US PRAY WITH THE CHURCH

The intercessions of the Liturgy of the Hours

R. Your kingdom come, O Lord.

Holy Father, look upon your Church...

Your faithfulness endures forever...

Turn your glance towards all peoples...

WE CONCLUDE WITH GRATEFUL HEARTS

LET US BLESS THE LORD.

THANKS BE TO GOD.

THURSADY DECEMBER 6

– open the window of the calendar



IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, THE SON
AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. **AMEN**

LET US LISTEN TO THE WORD

from the gospel according to Matthew
(21,28-31)

TO BE THE WILL OF GOD

A man had two sons. He came to the first and said: «Son, go out and work in the vineyard today». He said in reply, «I will not», but afterwards he changed his mind and went. The man came to the other son and gave the same order. He said in reply, «Yes, sir», but did not go. Which of the two did his father's will?» They answered, «The first.»

LET US REFLECT

To be Christian does not mean to be perfect, much less be presupposed, all the more to be a gift and a final goal to be attained. Jesus repeats this several times: often the perfection is «exterior» and «easy» are things that do not touch the heart, it is a false sign. Instead,

repentance, to return to one's own way by listening to Someone beyond our own wishes, is a real sign of good will.

LET US HOLD HANDS

OUR FATHER...

LET US PRAY WITH THE CHURCH

The intercessions of the Liturgy of the Hours

R. Come, Lord Jesus.

True light that illumines every man...

Only Son who lives in the Father ...

You who overcame every barrier of division and hatred...

WE CONCLUDE WITH GRATEFUL HEARTS

LET US BLESS THE LORD.

THANKS BE TO GOD.

FRIDAY DECEMBER 7 – open the window of the calendar



IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, THE SON
AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. **AMEN**

LET US LISTEN TO THE WORD

from the acts of the Apostles (4,32-33)

FAITH LIVED CONVERTS THE HEARTS

The community of believers was of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they had everything in common. With great power the apostles bore witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great favor was accorded them all.

LET US REFLECT

The Acts of the Apostles recounts us how the disciples of Jesus became Christians, how they became Church. Their life after the resurrection of Jesus, became an exigent of his words, their faith was immediately manifested as the style of life so fraternal which could not be passed without being observed, rather it evokes

«favour», that is benevolence towards those who were outside the community: this is how we can be a sign in the world.

LET US HOLD HANDS

OUR FATHER...

LET US PRAY WITH THE CHURCH

The intercessions of the Liturgy of the Hours

R. Save your family, O Lord

Good shepherd of the flock of God...

Engender authentic messengers of your word...

Have mercy on all who are afflicted and oppressed, and those who are suffering in life....

WE CONCLUDE WITH GRATEFUL HEARTS

LET US BLESS THE LORD.

THANKS BE TO GOD.

SATURDAY DECEMBER 8

 – open the window of the calendar

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF MARY



IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, THE SON
AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. **AMEN**

LET US LISTEN TO THE WORD

from the book of Revelation (12,1-3)

MARY IMMACULATE SIGN OF THE LOVE OF THE FATHER

A great sign appeared in the sky, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. She was with child and wailed aloud in pain as she labored to give birth. Then another sign appeared in the sky; it was a huge red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on its heads were seven diadems.

LET US REFLECT

The woman in the sky, according to the intentions of the author, is the Church, but in brief time those who read this text also saw the image of Mary. The church is often, in fact, is represented by Mary and the Church shares

certain attributions: mother and disciple, she who presented Jesus to the world. Mary and the Church safeguards the mystery of the birth of Jesus and meditates on it not only for itself but for all generations.

LET US HOLD HANDS

OUR FATHER...

LET US PRAY WITH THE CHURCH

The intercessions of the Liturgy of the Hours

R. Mary full of grace, intercede for us.

You wished Mary as mother of the family of Nazareth...

In Mary, who was attentive to your word and faithful servant of your will, show us the model and image of the holiness of the Church...

You crowned Mary as queen of heaven....

WE CONCLUDE WITH GRATEFUL HEARTS

LET US BLESS THE LORD.

THANKS BE TO GOD.

LET US REMEMBER THE WORDS OF THE COUNCIL: «Through Baptism we are formed in the likeness of Christ: "For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body".(1 Cor 12,13). Really partaking of the body of the Lord in the breaking of the Eucharistic bread, we are taken up into communion with Him and with one another». (Lumen Gentium n.7).

TESTIMONIES FOR CENTURIES

Few years ago the fresco found under the Cathedral narrates the Christian community that has preceded us in this land of Bergamo and the images that have enriched the faith. Saint John the Baptist came ruined, with a portion lost in time, yet all the elements of his witness are again recognizable. First of all the word of God «*descended*» upon him, that changed his life, held his hands and continues to precede him. It is written in Latin: «*a voice of one crying in the wilderness...*». The clothes, the Gospel quotes anew «*he was clothed with a camel's skin*» (Mt. 3,4) and alludes to the condition of an ascetic essence chosen by the Baptist to conform himself to his mission, to be consistent with the word that he brings. His head crowned with clouds, sign of holiness to look at, the feet narrates a journey without rest, towards the Lord who comes, inviting us also not to stay at rest, to fulfill the conversion promised in Baptism.

*John the Baptist,
Museum of the excavations and treasures of the Cathedral of Bergamo*



SUNDAY DECEMBER 9 – open the window of the calendar



IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, THE SON
AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. **AMEN**

THE THEME OF THE WEEK

The Church is the body of Christ. We became Church when we received Baptism, when we became children, and participants in the life of the Son. In the Church each one lives its own vocation: in this way we experience plurality even though we belong to one body, to one Lord.

LET US LISTEN TO TODAY'S GOSPEL AGAIN
from the gospel according to Luke (3,1-6)

THE WORD OF GOD CONVERTS THE HEART

The word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the desert. He went throughout [the] whole region of the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah: «A voice of one crying out in the desert: Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths».

LET US HOLD HANDS

OUR FATHER...

LET US PRAY PSALM 1

The just man is a gift for humanity

Blessed is the man who does not walk
in the counsel of the wicked,
Nor stand in the way of sinners,
nor sit in company with scoffers.
Rather, the law of the LORD is his joy;
and on his law he meditates day and night.

He is like a tree planted near streams of water,
that yields its fruit in season;
Its leaves never wither;

WE CONCLUDE WITH GRATEFUL HEARTS

LET US BLESS THE LORD.

THANKS BE TO GOD.



LET US TALK IN OUR FAMILY:

*do we know how to share the choice
of solidarity gestures in favor of a relative,
acquaintance, an association or project? Do
we know how to share each others motives and
make them become image of authentic faith?*

MONDAY DECEMBER 10 – open the window of the calendar



IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, THE SON
AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. **AMEN**

LET US LISTEN TO THE WORD

from the book of Exodus (14,21-22)

THE PASSAGE TO SALVATION

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD drove back the sea with a strong east wind all night long and turned the sea into dry ground. The waters were split, so that the Israelites entered into the midst of the sea on dry land, with the water as a wall to their right and to their left.

LET US REFLECT

To understand better the sacrament of Baptism and to «plunge» oneself in its mystery the Church always refers to certain events of the Old Testament. One of these is the crossing of the Red Sea during the escape from Egypt: the threatening water become benevolent thanks

to the wind sent by God. In Baptism the eyes of faith see existence made good, worthy of salvation.

LET US HOLD HANDS

OUR FATHER...

LET US PRAY WITH THE CHURCH

The intercessions of the Liturgy of the Hours

R. Come, Lord Jesus.

Lord, may the world recognize your justice...
You, who willed to share the weakness of our human condition...
You came in humility to take away our sins...

WE CONCLUDE WITH GRATEFUL HEARTS

LET US BLESS THE LORD.
THANKS BE TO GOD.

TUESDAY DECEMBER 11 – open the window of the calendar



IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, THE SON
AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. **AMEN**

LET US LISTEN TO THE WORD

from the book of the prophet Isaiah (43,1-3)

YOU BELONG TO ME?

But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, Jacob, and formed you, Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name: you are mine. When you pass through waters, I will be with you; through rivers, you shall not be swept away. When you walk through fire, you shall not be burned, nor will flames consume you. For I, the LORD, am your God, the Holy One of Israel, your savior.

LET US REFLECT

Isaiah's song is the song that the Lord sings in front of every baptized. Belongingness is not synonymous of possession but of mutual love and care. To belong to the Church means to put oneself at the disposal of a project greater than any single individual's personal project.

It is not easy, however only if one is for all and of all, one is on the way to salvation which in Baptism shows us as brotherhood.

LET US HOLD HANDS

OUR FATHER...

LET US PRAY WITH THE CHURCH

The intercessions of the Liturgy of the Hours

R. Come, Lord Jesus.

You, who have shared our human condition...

For the mystery of your coming, light in us the fire of your love...

You, who now allows us to walk in the darkness of faith...

WE CONCLUDE WITH GRATEFUL HEARTS

LET US BLESS THE LORD.

THANKS BE TO GOD.

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 12 – open the window of the calendar



IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, THE SON
AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. **AMEN**

LET US LISTEN TO THE WORD

from the book of Giona (21,25-36)

**IN THE SIGN OF DEATH AND
RESURRECTION**

But the LORD sent a great fish to swallow Jonah, and he remained in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. Jonah prayed to the LORD, his God, from the belly of the fish: «But I, with thankful voice, will sacrifice to you; What I have vowed I will pay: deliverance is from the LORD».

LET US REFLECT

Jonah remained three days inside the fish and then freed is a picture of the death and resurrection of Jesus. It is also the sign of Baptism in which we go through in our death in order for to rise in Christ. We do not give

ourselves salvation, but it can only be given to us by Another through other brothers. This is the Church of which we are part of.

LET US HOLD HANDS

OUR FATHER...

LET US PRAY WITH THE CHURCH

The intercessions of the Liturgy of the Hours

R. Come, Lord Jesus.

Lamb of God, You came to take away the sins of the world...

You, Who draws us with the strength of faith....

You, Who will come to judge the living and the dead...

WE CONCLUDE WITH GRATEFUL HEARTS

LET US BLESS THE LORD.

THANKS BE TO GOD.

THURSDAY DECEMBER 13 – open the window of the calendar



IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, THE SON
AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. **AMEN**

LET US LISTEN TO THE WORD

from the gospel according to John (21,25-36)

I THIRST FOR YOU

On the last and greatest day of the feast, Jesus stood up and exclaimed, «Let anyone who thirsts come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as scripture says: “Rivers of living water will flow from within him”».

LET US REFLECT

The bond with the Lord is a fundamental link, as water is in our existence. Yet it is not a bond that ties in a forceful way: acknowledges and respect the human freedom. In Baptism the Lord offers us the water that gives eternal life, but

at the same time admits that He needs us, that he came to search for us, that His heart is thirsty for us.

LET US HOLD HANDS

OUR FATHER...

LET US PRAY WITH THE CHURCH

The intercessions of the Liturgy of the Hours

R. Come, Lord Jesus.

You, Who does not resist calling brothers those whom you have redeemed...

Help us to welcome with open hearts the gift of salvation...

You, Who opens the unfathomable riches of your goodness...

WE CONCLUDE WITH GRATEFUL HEARTS

LET US BLESS THE LORD.

THANKS BE TO GOD.

FRIDAY DECEMBER 14 – open the window of the calendar



IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, THE SON
AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. **AMEN**

LET US LISTEN TO THE WORD

*from the gospel according to Matthew
(11,28-30)*

THE COMMITMENT TO BE BROTHERS

«Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for your selves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light».

LET US REFLECT

What is there to learn from Jesus? His meekness and humility are the human qualities that unveil the fraternal face of God. Brotherhood is the yoke of Jesus, the capacity to live together and to learn to carry the burdens of one another. In the Church those baptized learn how to live as

brothers in order to be so with all humanity and of all creation. Like Saint Francis then we too, will sing together to brother sun and to sister earth.

LET US HOLD HANDS

OUR FATHER...

LET US PRAY WITH THE CHURCH

The intercessions of the Liturgy of the Hours

R. Lord, all people shall see your glory

Christ, reveal yourself to those who still do not know You...

Your name resounds till the ends of the earth...

You, Who gave to all men the freedom of the children of God....

WE CONCLUDE WITH GRATEFUL HEARTS

LET US BLESS THE LORD.

THANKS BE TO GOD.

SATURDAY DECEMBER 15 – open the window of the calendar



IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, THE SON
AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. **AMEN**

LET US LISTEN TO THE WORD

from the acts of the Apostles (22,14-16)

THE BAPTISMAL CONVERSION

Then he said, «The God of our ancestors designated you to know his will, to see the Righteous One, and to hear the sound of his voice; for you will be his witness before all to what you have seen and heard. Now, why delay? Get up and have yourself baptized and your sins washed away, calling upon his name».

LET US REFLECT

The story of the conversion of Saint Paul ends with the Baptism: it was always the way that the Church has instituted to officially become members of the body of Christ. Truly, Paul tells us that for him to be Church means being like many parts of one body. Baptism in the name

of Jesus transforms existence according to faith. The words of Ananias are addressed to each one of us: «Why wait?». It's time for conversion.

LET US HOLD HANDS

OUR FATHER...

LET US PRAY WITH THE CHURCH

The intercessions of the Liturgy of the Hours

R. Come, Lord, do not delay.

Eternal Word, You are the beginning of all time...

Creator of the universe and of all living creatures...

God with us, who willed to assume our mortal nature...

LET US PRAY WITH THE CHURCH

LET US BLESS THE LORD.

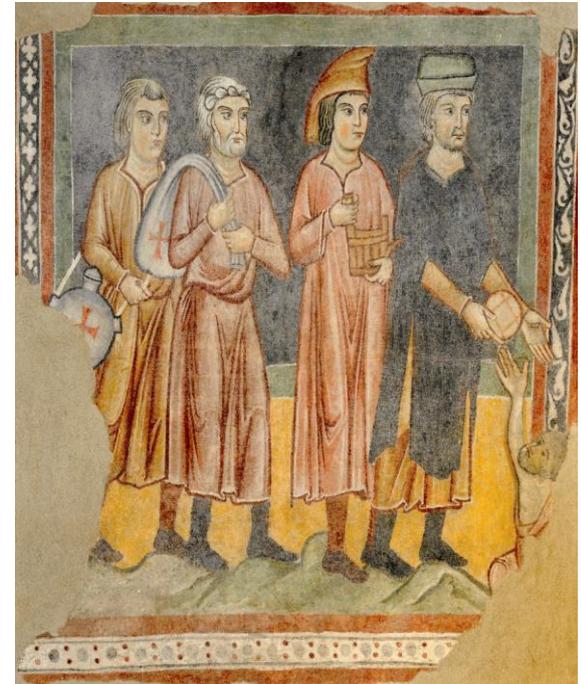
THANKS BE TO GOD.

LET US REMEMBER THE WORDS OF THE COUNCIL: « Giving the body unity through Himself and through His power and inner joining of the members, this same Spirit produces and urges love among the believers. From all this it follows that if one member endures anything, all the members co-endure it, and if one member is honored, all the members together rejoice (cfr.1 Cor 12,26)» (Lumen Gentium n.7).

THE FORM OF THE BROTHERLY SHARING

Here is another testimony of faith coming from the Middle Ages of the Church of Bergamo. The fresco does not tell a biblical scene, but an action which was obviously considered to be very important in the life of the community: alms to the poor. In particular, it shows the action of four brothers of Mercy, four lay people involved in distributing food to the poor. In the lower right, almost out of the frame depicts a beggar: the dress does not cover the whole body and the his hand, disproportionately large, is open to ask and to receive. The four brothers belong to two different census: the two on the right are the ministers who distribute the goods (you can tell by the hat and bread and wine offering directly), while the two on the left are the porters to help in the distribution (they are behind the other two, bringing a sack and a bottle with a red cross, they have no distinctive signs). This fresco shows us how sharing is not something offhand, but an organization specific and precise in the care of the poor.

Alms of the members of Mercy (torn from the fresco), Museum of the excavations and the treasure of the Cathedral of Bergamo.



SUNDAY DECEMBER 16

– open the window of the calendar



IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, THE SON
and the Holy Spirit. Amen

THE THEME OF THE WEEK

As our bishop says in his nice pastoral letter when we call ourselves «brothers and sisters» is not a figure of speech, or an honorary title, but is the name of the substance of the bonds of Christian community. In the Church we learn from the Brother to be and to live as brothers in real familiarity. And it is in the family that one learns the first gestures of care and support, gestures that humanize the heart and mind.

LET US LISTEN TO TODAY'S GOSPEL AGAIN

from the gospel according to Luke (3,10-18)

THE ACTIONS THAT REVEAL THE HEART

And the crowds asked John, «What then should we do?» He said to them in reply, «Whoever has two tunics should share with the person who has none. And whoever has food should do likewise». Even tax collectors came to be baptized and they said to him, «Teacher, what should we do?» He answered them, «Stop collecting more than what is prescribed».

LET US HOLD HANDS

OUR FATHER...

LET US PRAY PSALM 133

The fraternity is a beauty to behold

How good and how pleasant it is,
when brothers dwell together as one

Like fine oil on the head,
running down upon the beard,
Upon the beard of Aaron,
upon the collar of his robe.

Like dew of Hermon coming down
upon the mountains of Zion.
There the LORD has decreed a blessing,
life for evermore!

WE CONCLUDE WITH GRATEFUL HEARTS

LET US BLESS THE LORD.

THANKS BE TO GOD.



ACT IN OUR FAMILY: how do we use our money and possessions? The different «souls» (who is more saver, who spends more easily ...) know how to find each time a balance that takes into account of the Christian appearance of the domestic economy?

MONDAY DECEMBER 17

 – open the window of the calendar


IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, THE SON
AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. **AMEN**

LET US LISTEN TO THE WORD

from the book of Deuteronomy (10,16-19)

JUSTICE IS SUPPORTIVE

Circumcise therefore the foreskins of your hearts, and be stiff-necked no longer. For the LORD, your God, is the God of gods, the Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who has no favorites, accepts no bribes, who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and loves the resident alien, giving them food and clothing. So you too should love the resident alien, for that is what you were in the land of Egypt.

LET US REFLECT

The old song of Deuteronomy might seem a political program or exactly the opposite. Is Christian brotherhood for each of us a model for interpreting the daily search for the common

good? Does being together give us greater power to be on the side of the least or does it only enable us to keep away from those who remind us that we are all poor and alone in front of death?

LET US HOLD HANDS

OUR FATHER...

LET US PRAY WITH THE CHURCH

The intercessions of the Liturgy of the Hours

R. Come, Lord and save us.

Christ, our light and our hope ...

Word begotten by the Father forever and ever ...

O Savior, who has assumed our mortal nature in the womb of the Virgin Mary ...

WE CONCLUDE WITH GRATEFUL HEARTS

LET US BLESS THE LORD.

THANKS BE TO GOD.

TUESDAY DECEMBER 18

 – open the window of the calendar

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, THE SON
AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. **AMEN**

LET US LISTEN TO THE WORD

from the book of Sirach (4,1-4)

THE TEACHING OF THE FATHER

My child, do not mock the life of the poor; do not keep needy eyes waiting. Do not grieve the hungry, nor anger the needy. Do not aggravate a heart already angry, nor delay giving to the needy. A beggar's request do not reject; do not turn your face away from the poor.

LET US REFLECT

Wisdom of Sirach is expressed in the form of a dialogue between a father and a son. It is important to raise our kids explaining the will to live fraternally with everyone. Today's culture legitimizes one's own interests at the expense

of others: we need a renewed faith and rooted to withstand these headwinds and to express the truth that «it is good to live as brothers».

LET US HOLD HANDS

OUR FATHER...

LET US PRAY WITH THE CHURCH

The intercessions of the Liturgy of the Hours

R. Come and save us, O Lord.

We await you, full of hope ...

In you we have existence, energy and life, O Lord ...

You are the God of life ...

WE CONCLUDE WITH GRATEFUL HEARTS

LET US BLESS THE LORD.

THANKS BE TO GOD.

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 19

– open the window of the calendar



IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, THE SON
AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. **AMEN**

LET US LISTEN TO THE WORD

from the book of Tobias (4,8-11)

BROTHERHOOD: A BEAUTIFUL TREASURE

Give in proportion to what you own. If you have great wealth, give alms out of your abundance; if you have but little, do not be afraid to give alms even of that little. You will be storing up a goodly treasure for yourself against the day of adversity. For almsgiving delivers from death and keeps one from entering into Darkness. Almsgiving is a worthy offering in the sight of the Most High for all who practice it.

LET US REFLECT

Sharing is the form of fraternal life. From an early age our children get used to sanction everything as a possession: «It's mine!», Yet we recognize that they are becoming older when

they know how to offer what is theirs. Sharing is not instinctive, but the way in which the heart becomes large and discovers that it is happy and light, a precious gift before the Most High.

LET US HOLD HANDS

OUR FATHER...

LET US PRAY WITH THE CHURCH

The intercessions of the Liturgy of the Hours

R. Thy kingdom come, O Lord.

Your faithfulness lasts forever ...

Look upon all the people ...

Visit your flock spread over the world ...

WE CONCLUDE WITH GRATEFUL HEARTS

LET US BLESS THE LORD.

THANKS BE TO GOD.

THURSDAY DECEMBER 20

 – open the window of the calendar


IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, THE SON
AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. **AMEN**

LET US LISTEN TO THE WORD

from the gospel according to Luke (10,27-29)

LEARNING TO BE NEIGHBOR

The scholar of the law said in reply, «You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself». He replied to him, «You have answered correctly; do this and you will live». But because he wished to justify himself, he said to Jesus, «And who is my neighbor?».

LET US REFLECT

When asked by the lawyer Jesus responds with the parable of the Good Samaritan, overturning the original question: do not ask yourself «Who is your neighbor», but how you can «become a

neighbor». The Christian community is a place of privileged neighborhood in which one learns to be close to each other, that is getting close, able to recognize each other's needs in mutual support.

LET US HOLD HANDS

OUR FATHER...

LET US PRAY WITH THE CHURCH

The intercessions of the Liturgy of the Hours

R. Come, Lord Jesus!

Eternal Word, who created the universe and in the fullness of time you became man for our salvation ...

The true light that enlightens every man ...

Only Son, who lives in the Father ...

WE CONCLUDE WITH GRATEFUL HEARTS

LET US BLESS THE LORD.

THANKS BE TO GOD.

FRIDAY DECEMBER 21 – open the window of the calendar



IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, THE SON
AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. **AMEN**

LET US LISTEN TO THE WORD

from the gospel according to Luke (12,4.6-7)

THE EXEMPLARY CARE OF THE FATHER

«I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body but after that can do no more. Are not five sparrows sold for two small coins? Yet not one of them has escaped the notice of God. Even the hairs of your head have all been counted. Do not be afraid. You are worth more than many sparrows».

LET US REFLECT

In the words of Jesus the «young» always have a special place. Such teaches us not to be afraid to be young and to take the side of children, because that is also the part of God We cannot take care of anyone without being near

him, without putting at stake one's own body, without being a brother. Isn't this the mystery of the Incarnation which we are celebrating this Christmas?

LET US HOLD HANDS

OUR FATHER...

LET US PRAY WITH THE CHURCH

The intercessions of the Liturgy of the Hours

R. Come, Lord Jesus!

Lord who gathers in one family the peoples of the earth ...

Lamb of God, who came to take away the sins of the world ...

You, who attract us with the power of faith ...

WE CONCLUDE WITH GRATEFUL HEARTS

LET US BLESS THE LORD.

THANKS BE TO GOD.

SATURDAY DECEMBER 22

 – open the window of the calendar


IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, THE SON
AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. **AMEN**

LET US LISTEN TO THE WORD

from the acts of the Apostles (6,1-4)

CONTINUE TO NOURISH

At that time, the Twelve called together the community of the disciples and said, «It is not right for us to neglect the word of God to serve at table. Brothers, select from among you seven reputable men, filled with the Spirit and wisdom, whom we shall appoint to this task, whereas we shall devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word».

LET US REFLECT

The Acts of the Apostles tell us how the diaconate came to be in the Church: to avoid the risk of neglecting the service to the Word, the apostles appointed men to deal with the poor,

not because a job is more important than the other, but because even then, it was felt that taking too much care of material needs can lead to neglecting those of the spirit. And it is not by bread alone that man lives.

LET US HOLD HANDS

OUR FATHER...

LET US PRAY WITH THE CHURCH

The intercessions of the Liturgy of the Hours

R. Lord: all people see Your glory.

Christ, reveal Yourself to those who do not yet know you ...

Your name resounds to the limits of the world ...

You, who have given mankind the freedom of the children of God ...

WE CONCLUDE WITH GRATEFUL HEARTS

LET US BLESS THE LORD.

THANKS BE TO GOD.

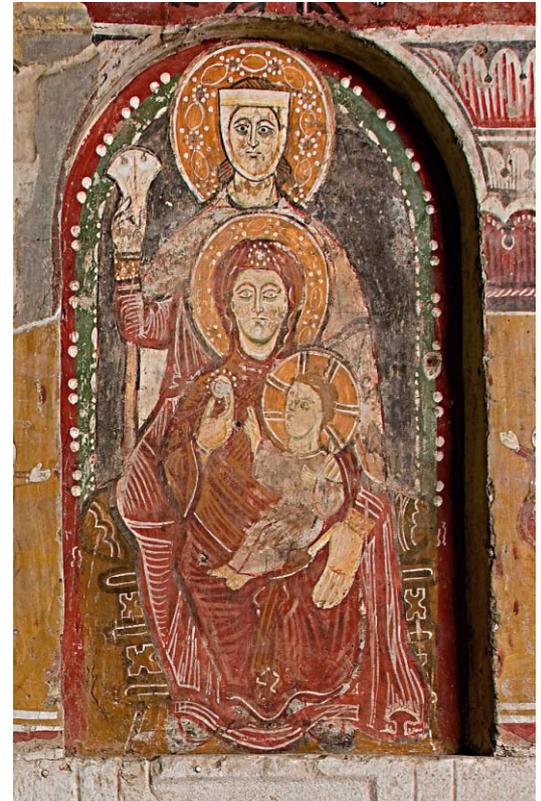
LET US REMEMBER THE WORDS OF THE COUNCIL: «*La beata Vergine è intimamente congiunta con la Chiesa: la madre di Dio è figura della Chiesa nell'ordine cioè della fede, della carità e della perfetta unione con Cristo [...] per la sua fede ed obbedienza generò sulla terra lo stesso Figlio di Dio come una nuova Eva credendo non all'antico serpente, ma, senza alcuna esitazione, al messaggero di Dio*» (Lumen Gentium n.63).

THE WOMEN OF FAITH

While we are listening the gospel of the Visitation in which Mary and Elisabeth sing some of the most beautiful words-prayer of the gospel, we look at the painting of St. Ann Metterza. The painting presents St. Ann, according to the tradition is the mother of the Virgin Mary, who holds in her arms the Virgin Mary, who is holding also the baby Jesus. The adjective «*Metterza*» derives from the contraction of the words: «*messa terza*», which means third in the order of importance or which is the third figure if we consider at the center and therefore is the first the Child Jesus. St. Ann is the ancestor, she who has given life to the Mother of God and, indirectly to Jesus. In fact, her arm is too long and not proportionate, it arrives to embrace and sustain the Child who blesses those who are present, and also the women of his family. On the other hand, St. Ann holds a Lily which recalls the Immaculate Conception of her daughter, while Mary indicates a star which shines besides her face: «*Ave Maris stella...*». The head cover of St. Ann is of a woman of medieval time, almost underlines her maternal role, around there is a halo which crowns the glory of the saints. The painting traces the feminine descendants of Jesus, as the gospel narrates those of the masculine.

Sant'Anna Metterza,

Museum of the excavations and the treasure of the Cathedral of Bergamo



SUNDAY DECEMBER 23

– open the window of the calendar



IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, THE SON
AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. **AMEN**

THE THEME OF THE WEEK

In the Church one experiment the communion of faith. In fact the most precious treasure which we are invited to share to each other and that which strengthen the Church itself. The apex of this sharing of faith is the Mass on which the body of Jesus was broken and eaten with the faith. But every day and in many occasions we are called to put in common our faith.

LET US LISTEN TO TODAY'S GOSPEL AGAIN

from the gospel according to Luke (1,39-45)

BLESSED FOR HER OWN FAITH

Elizabeth, filled with the holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, «Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed* that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled».

LET US HOLD HANDS

OUR FATHER...

LET US PRAY PSALM 128

The Song of the Blest family is the song of the Church

Blessed are all who fear the LORD,
and who walk in his ways.
What your hands provide you will enjoy;
you will be blessed and prosper.

Your wife will be like a fruitful vine
within your home,
Your children like young olive plants
around your table.

WE CONCLUDE WITH GRATEFUL HEARTS

LET US BLESS THE LORD.

THANKS BE TO GOD.



TO ENJOY IN OUR FAMILY: *taste the sweetness of sharing in our family: do we learn to understand our actions of solidarity as just and beautiful? Without making them sterile but learning to share it as much as solidarity is good and is better to the heart of each one and for the good of the family? We learn the educational power which it has to our children?*

MONDAY DECEMBER 24 – open the window of the calendar

CHRISTMAS EVE



IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, THE SON
AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. **AMEN**

LET US LISTEN TO THE WORD

from the book of Apocalypse (21,3-4)

HERE IS THE TENT OF THE SON!

I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, «Behold, God's dwelling is with the human race. He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will always be with them [as their God]. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, [for] the old order has passed away».

LET US REFLECT

The vision of the Apocalypse is the re-reading which the Church makes of the messianic promise of God which has its realization in Jesus. Jesus has promise us to be the God-among-us every time we gather as a community, every time we put together our faith, every time

that two or three persons are gathered together in His name. This night the Child will be borne among us and «our» faith, and not only «my» or «your», the faith which will accept him and worship Him.

LET US HOLD HANDS

OUR FATHER...

LET US PRAY WITH THE CHURCH

The intercessions of the Liturgy of the Hours

R. Come, Lord Jesus.

The splendor of your presence, oh Christ, overcomes our darkness...

Save your people, Lord our God...

Inflame our heart with that thirst of you...

WE CONCLUDE WITH GRATEFUL HEARTS

LET US BLESS THE LORD.

THANKS BE TO GOD.

Here is a short text to prepare us for the Christmas Mass
LET US MEDITATE WITH ST. AUGUSTINE
THE MISTERY OF CHRISTMAS THAT COMES



Where are You, Lord, because of me?

«The Lord Jesus wants to human for us. One cannot think that there had been little mercy: the Wisdom itself came to earth! In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God (Jn. 1:1).

Oh food and bread of the angels!

You are the nutriment of the angels, they continuously satisfy themselves with you, they live because of you, they are blessed because of you. But because of me, where have you found yourself? In a small place, wrapped with the linen, placed in a manger. And for whom all of these?

The one who regulates the course of the stars, takes his nutriment from the breast of a woman: He who gives nutriment to the angels, who speaks from the bosom of the Father, remains silent in the womb of the mother. But He will speak when the time comes, He will announce to us the fullness of the Good News. For us He will suffer, for us He will die, He will rise again showing us wonderful price which waits us, He will ascend to heaven in front of His disciples, He will return again for the judgment.

He who was in a manger became weak, but never lost His Power: He took to Himself what He is not, but remains what He was. Here, we have in front of us the Child Christ: Let us grow together with Him».

St. Augustine, Discourse 196

LET US REMEMBER THE WORDS OF THE COUNCIL: «*The Spirit dwells in the Church and in the hearts of the faithful, as in a temple.(cfr. 1 Cor 3,16; 6,19) In them He prays on their behalf and bears witness to the fact that they are adopted sons.(Gal 4,6; Rm 8,15-16 e 26). The Spirit guides the Church in way of all truth(Gv 16,13) and He unified in communion and in works of ministry» (Lumen Gentium n.4).*

ADORE THE NEW BORN KING

The representation of the birth of Jesus in this painting has a particular structure, near to the oriental icon, Mary is in the centre, lying tired after giving birth on many voluminous pillows and covered with colorful decoration. With the left hand indicates the Child covered with the linen in a manger and surrounded and received heat from the cows and donkeys. The Body of the Child prefigures already his sacrifice: the white linen recalls the white cloth of the crucified Christ; the manger can appear also like the altar on which the bread becomes the body offered to all for the eternal life. A star shines above the head of Mary: is the star of the Wise men, the star that guides each one of us in the holy night in order to worship the new born King.

*Nativity (detail),
Hall of the Curia of Bergamo*



THE BIRTH OF OUR LORD DECEMBER 25 – open the window of the calendar



IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, THE SON
AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. **AMEN**

LET US LISTEN TO TODAY'S GOSPEL AGAIN

from the gospel according to John(1,1-18)

THE WELCOMING OF CHRISTMAS

He came to what was his own, but his own people did not accept him. But to those who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to those who believe in his name, who were born not by natural generation nor by human choice nor by a man's decision but of God. And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth.

LET US REFLECT

During Christmas there is no place for worldly thing, not for Christians. In Christmas, for those who celebrate the birth of the Son of God, he must put this fundamental question: «Who is this Child for me?». The possibility of being part of the family of God, and of becoming brothers and sisters in Christ will happen only when we

are capable of receiving His word and imitating His action. But also in our capacity as a Church to receive those who knock in our door lies the grace of calling our Father the God of heavens.

LET US HOLD HANDS

OUR FATHER...

LET US PRAY PSALM 110

Jesus, born in our midst, you are King, Priest and Prophet of the Most High: We adore you!

The LORD says to my lord:

«Sit at my right hand,
while I make your enemies your footstool».

Yours is princely power from the day of your birth
In holy splendor before the daystar,
like dew I begot you.

The LORD has sworn and will not waver:

«You are a priest forever in the manner
Melchizedek».

WE CONCLUDE WITH GRATEFUL HEARTS

LET US BLESS THE LORD.

THANKS BE TO GOD.

THE THOUGHTS OF JOSEPH

Let us again bring our attention to the painting we have encountered during Christmas. There is another figure in the painting, even if it is marginal: it is St. Joseph. A man, which has gray hair which suggest an old age, seated and holding in hand a walking stick of a pilgrim, the walking stick which had sustained him during his journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem. He was thinking while looking at Mary and the Child: this is his family on which he is responsible. Through faith he decided to be a part of this family and through faith he will depend it from danger bringing them first in Egypt and them to their new house. His looking at it is like of those of others parents, which after the anxiety of giving birth, contemplates his Son and understand that there many things to do, which is to educate the Child to be a man, and it is an adventure which is a difficult and astonishing task which one can assume.

*Nativity (detail),
Hall in the Curia of Bergamo*



HOLY FAMILY OF NAZARETH

DECEMBER 30 – open the window of the calendar



IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, THE SON
AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. **AMEN**

LET US LISTEN TO TODAY'S GOSPEL AGAIN

from the gospel according to Luke (2,41-52)

SEARCH JESUS, ALWAYS

After three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions, and all who heard him were astounded at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished, and his mother said to him, «Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety».

LET US REFLECT

Our sons are other persons: and little by little they grow and we will notice that they become persons that we need to understand and to know continuously even if we are living with them for the whole life. This is what the story of the Lost of Jesus in the Temple which manifest the common experience of the parents, but it is,

at the same time, a teaching for all of us who celebrated Christmas: Jesus must be searched everyday through prayer and meditation in the temple of our heart.

LET US HOLD HANDS

OUR FATHER...

LET US PRAY WITH THE CHURCH

The intercessions of the Liturgy of the Hours

R. O Christ, you are the model and the Saviour of all men.

For the mystery of submission to Mary and Joseph...

You, who had loved with the filial affection your parents, Mary and Joseph...

You are ardent zeal for your Father's things...

WE CONCLUDE WITH GRATEFUL HEARTS

LET US BLESS THE LORD.

THANKS BE TO GOD.

HERE IS THE SON OF GOD

Mary offers Jesus to the World. Her sweet glance is appropriate to present the Child, enough to show the affection of the Mother to the Son of God. Mary is the throne on which Jesus seats and turn to all humanity, the young Lady of Nazareth is the Throne of God. In the Solemnity of the first day of January the Church celebrates Mary as Theotòkos, that is the one who gives birth to God, who brings him in her womb in the name of all humanity. Today we also remember that Mary is also the mother of the Church, as what St. Augustine suggested us: «*Mary is the mother of all the members of the body, which we are, in the sense that she had cooperated through love to generate the Church of the faithful, which forms as members of the Head*». The glance full of love with which she looks on every faithful that goes near to Jesus gives testimony to the universal love on which we are all called to be part of?.

*The Adoration of the Magi (detail),
Hall in the Curia of Bergamo.*



HOLY MOTHER OF GOD

JANUARY 1 – open the window of the calendar



IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, THE SON
AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. **AMEN**

LET US LISTEN TO TODAY'S GOSPEL AGAIN
from the gospel according to Luke (2,16-21)

SHARED FAITH

When the angels went away from them to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, «Let us go, then, to Bethlehem to see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us». So they went in haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known the message that had been told them about this child. All who heard it were amazed by what had been told them by the shepherds. And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart.

LET US REFLECT

Every Christian is invited to live Christmas as the pastors who arrive in manger. At the announcement of the angels, it moves them in the dark of the night to arrive, see and know the

Child. They are the first testimony of a faith which moves, which changes the way to see things. A faith which Mary keeps and protects for herself, and of this faith she will be remembered from generation to generation.

LET US HOLD HANDS

OUR FATHER...

LET US PRAY WITH THE CHURCH

The intercessions of the Liturgy of the Hours

R. Son of the Virgin Mary, hear our prayer.

You, who have given Mary the ineffable love of motherhood...

King of peace, you came to established your kingdom of justice and of love...

You came to form all men into one Holy people...

WE CONCLUDE WITH GRATEFUL HEARTS

LET US BLESS THE LORD.

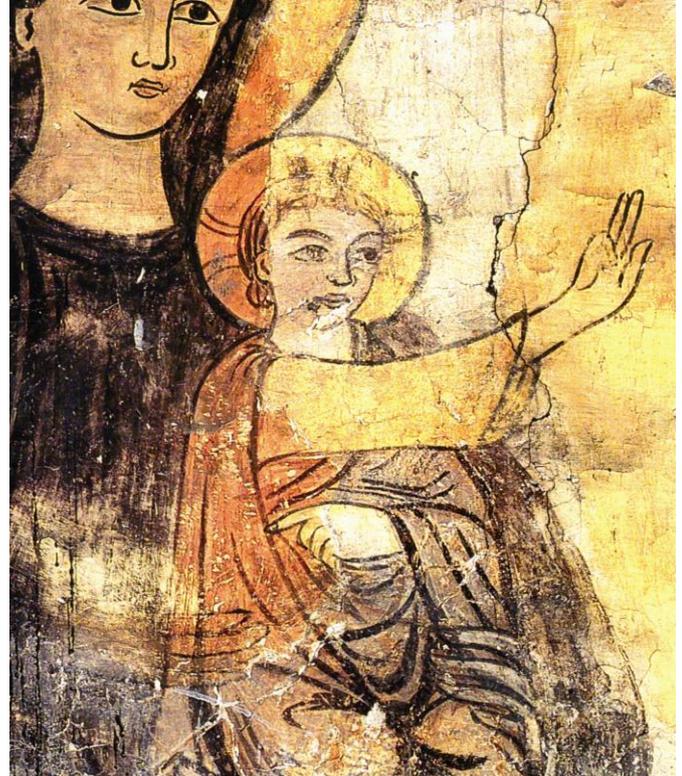
THANKS BE TO GOD.

LET US REMEMBER THE WORDS OF THE COUNCIL: *«It follows that though there are many nations there is but one people of God, which takes its citizens from every race, making them citizens of a kingdom which is of a heavenly rather than of an earthly nature. All the faithful, scattered though they be throughout the world, are in communion with each other in the Holy Spirit, and so, he who dwells in Rome knows that the people of India are his members»* (Lumen Gentium n.13).

THE BLESSING FOREVER

Today, we observe better the Child which Mary presented to the World. He looks in the same direction of the Mother (but in reality looks at the Magi which were lost for century) and with the hands showing two signs: the first is that which that blessed: if every child born is a blessing of new life for his family and for the whole humanity, in Jesus this blessing is absolutely because God became man to become brother of men. The hand, in the gesture of blessing, demonstrate also the number three: it is in a way illustrating the mystery of the Trinity, to the mystery which the Word incarnate had come to reveal and which Christians are invited to meditate also during Christmas. With the other hand seems to indicate Mary: an invitation to have faith like that of Mary mother and sister of the Son of God.

*Adoration of the Magi (detail),
Hall in the Curia of Bergamo*



EPIPHANY OF THE LORD



IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, THE SON
AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. **AMEN**

LET US LISTEN TO TODAY'S GOSPEL AGAIN

from the gospel according to Matthew (2,1-12)

A BROTHERHOOD WITHOUT BOUNDARY

The king set out. And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was. They were overjoyed at seeing the star, and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

LET US REFLECT

Around the Child Jesus all Christians genuflect and adore Him together. In the Church the mystery of communion overcomes the boundary of space and time: we genuflect besides the mysterious Magi and besides all the saints of heaven, and so as with all the brothers and sisters in Christ present in all parts of the World. Remembering the Universality of the Church, the day of the Epiphany is a reason to praise but

JANUARY 6 – open the window of the calendar

also a force: realizing that we are not alone in our journey of faith.

LET US HOLD HANDS

OUR FATHER...

LET US PRAY PSALM 96

The Song of the Church is a Song for the Universe

Sing to the LORD a new song;
sing to the LORD, all the earth.
Tell his glory among the nations;
among all peoples, his marvelous deeds.

Give to the LORD, you families of nations,
give to the LORD glory and might;
give to the LORD the glory due his name!
Bring gifts and enter his courts;
bow down to the LORD, splendid in holiness.

Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth rejoice,
indignant the sea and all within it;
rejoice in the fields and they contain,
the trees of the wood rejoice
before the Lord who comes.

WE CONCLUDE WITH GRATEFUL HEARTS

LET US BLESS THE LORD.

THANKS BE TO GOD.

THE STAR

They lost one day the star.
How it is possible to lose the star?
For having fixed it too long time...

The two white kings,
Who were the two intelligent of Caldea,
With the walking stick drew a
great circle on the ground.

And they put themselves to calculate,
to scratching their forehead...

But the star disappeared
Like an idea which had gone,
And those men, whose souls
Always thirsty to be guided,
Crying setting the cotton tent.

But the poor black king, insulted by the others,
Tells himself: «Let us think of the thirst
Which is not ours.
We must also give drink to drink the animals»

While holding his bucket,
In reflected piece of heaven
from which the camels drank
He saw the golden star dancing silently.

Edmond Rostand

