



Fourth Sunday of Advent
December 21, 2014

Sunday Liturgy Guide for the Church of the Poor in the Spirit of the New Evangelization

The Church of the Poor, through the Basic Ecclesial Communities, realizes the Promise of God when she shares the Word through inclusive dialogue with all peoples.

In light of today's theme: The Church of the Poor, through the Basic Ecclesial Communities, realizes the Promise of God when she shares the Word, Jesus Christ, inclusive dialogue to all peoples, let us continue to ponder on PCP-II's vision of a Church Renewed that focuses on Discipleship in Community. In the context of the Church as a community-in-mission, it now talks of "our missionary vocation".

"C.3 A Community-in-Mission"

b) Inter-Religious Dialogue

(110) Mention of the Chinese communities which usually have syncretist beliefs consisting of Buddhist, Taoist, and Confucianist elements brings up the necessity of inter-religious dialogue in the task of evangelization.

(111) We recognize the fact that Muslims make up a significant portion of Filipinos, though constituting less than 5% of our country's population. They are, however, of special importance for at least two reasons: (1) our history as a Christian people has pitted us against them in a long series of religious conflicts, and lowland Filipinos still suffer today from its psychological and cultural effects. And (2) we are part of the Asian region and Asia contains the bulk of the world's Islamic countries. We need, therefore, to take a close look at inter-religious dialogue as an imperative of mission."

Now, do you have the courage of the Holy Spirit to share Jesus Christ with all sorts of people: the peasants and farmers, the workers and the urban poor, the fishers and the indigenous people, the students and professionals, entrepreneurs and big business people, public servants and Church people, men, women, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, straight, prostitute, drug addict, killer and criminal, corrupt, sinner, saint, good men and women of integrity, Rightists, Moderates, Leftists? Can you do that as an individual ... as a couple ... as a family... as a group? Dare! ■

Introductory Rites

Entrance Antiphon: (Cf. Is 45:8)

Drop down dew from above, you heavens, and let the clouds rain down the Just One; let the earth be opened and bring forth a Savior.

P: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: *Amen.*

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: *And with your spirit.*

Introduction and Welcome

P: Dear brothers and sisters: we celebrate today the Fourth Sunday of Advent. Let us ask God's grace to be missionaries of his Word, to share our profound and real experience of Jesus the Christ with all kinds of people. Let us be open to Jesus, who breaks everything to bring in the new and the real. Let us be open to the new things that Christmas may bring.

Blessing of the Advent Wreath

Lord God, your Church joyfully awaits the coming of its Savior, who enlightens our hearts and dispels the darkness of ignorance and sin.

(Lighting of the four Candles) Pour forth your blessings upon us as we light the candles of this wreath; may their light reflect the splendor of Christ, who is Lord, for ever and ever.

R. *Amen.*

Penitential Act

P: Brothers and sisters: to celebrate worthily these sacred mysteries, let us now recall to mind our sins and ask God's loving forgiveness and compassion.

P: I confess...

A: *to Almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words,* **2**

in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore, I ask blessed Mary ever-virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

P: May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

C: *Amen.*

P: Lord, have mercy.

C: *Lord, have mercy.*

P: Christ, have mercy.

C: *Christ, have mercy.*

P: Lord, have mercy.

C: *Lord, have mercy.*

C: *Amen.*

Collect

P: Let us pray: Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord, your grace into our hearts, that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ your Son was made known by the message of an Angel, may by his Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of his Resurrection. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

C: *Amen.*

LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading: 2 Sam 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16

L: A reading from the Second Book of Samuel

When King David was settled in his palace, and the LORD had given him rest from his enemies on every side, he said to Nathan the prophet, "Here I am living in a house of cedar, while the ark of God dwells in a tent!" Nathan answered the king, "Go, do whatever you have in mind, for the LORD is with you." But that night the LORD spoke to Nathan and said: "Go,

tell my servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD: Should you build me a house to dwell in?’

“It was I who took you from the pasture and from the care of the flock to be commander of my people Israel. I have been with you wherever you went, and I have destroyed all your enemies before you. And I will make you famous like the great ones of the earth. I will fix a place for my people Israel; I will plant them so that they may dwell in their place without further disturbance. Neither shall the wicked continue to afflict them as they did of old, since the time I first appointed judges over my people Israel. I will give you rest from all your enemies. The LORD also reveals to you that he will establish a house for you. And when your time comes and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your heir after you, sprung from your loins, and I will make his kingdom firm. I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me. Your house and your kingdom shall endure forever before me; your throne shall stand firm forever.”

L: The Word of the Lord.

C: *Thanks be to God.*

Commentary on 2 Sam 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16:

2 Sam 7 is central in the David story. David’s greatness was not found in his military might and political achievements but in God’s promise to build the Davidic dynasty. David wanted to build a house for Yahweh, a temple, an edifice. But Yahweh built David’s house, starting from him and continuing with his children as his successors. The first house is spatial: it occupied space and stability, fixed and immobile center of worship. But the second house is temporal: guided by Yahweh, it moved through the dynamics of human history,

moving with the people in their quest for a better life, in their pilgrimage to the house of God. The first house was founded on the word of David; but God was not pleased by any material offering, for everything belonged to him. Rather, by his word, Yahweh promised another house, a new way of looking at human history: anchored on God’s promise, the Davidic dynasty would usher in a new world guided by Yahweh.

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 89:2-3, 4-5, 27-29

R: *For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.*

The promises of the LORD I will sing forever; through all generations my mouth shall proclaim your faithfulness. For you have said, “My kindness is established forever”; in heaven you have confirmed your faithfulness.

R: *For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.*

“I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant: Forever will I confirm your posterity and establish your throne for all generations.”

R: *For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.*

“He shall say of me, ‘You are my father, my God, the Rock, my savior.’ Forever I will maintain my kindness toward him, and my covenant with him stands firm.”

R: *For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.*

Commentary on Ps 89:

This is a hymn that celebrates God’s faithful love. It talks of the faithful love of Yahweh, as it alludes to past history. It expands the horizon of the psalmist who now embraces the concept of “forever”, a temporal sense for the future.

Second Reading: Rom 16:25-27

L: The second reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans

Brothers and sisters: To him who can strengthen you, according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret for long ages but now manifested through the prophetic writings and, according to the command of the eternal God, made known to all nations to bring about the obedience of faith, to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ be glory forever and ever. Amen.

L: The Word of the Lord.

C: *Thanks be to God.*

Commentary on Rom 16:25-27

These are the final words of the letter to the Romans. Paul's last words make a hymn of praise to the "only wise God". This God has revealed in Jesus the mystery which he had kept secret all along in human history. Now the pagans and unbelievers are made to see this secret mystery so that they may believe: Jesus Christ is our Salvation.

Alleluia Verse: (Luke 1:38)

R: Alleluia, alleluia. Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word!
Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel: Luke 1:26-38

P: The Lord be with you.

C: *And with your spirit.*

P: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke.

C: *Glory to you, O Lord.*

The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, "Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you." But

she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

"Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?"

And the angel said to her in reply, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God." Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: *Praise be to you, O Lord Jesus Christ.*

Commentary on Luke 1:26-38

Now, Luke continues his dramatic story with the birth of Jesus, this time by weaving an extraordinary moment out of ordinary historical temporal and spatial events. First, the historical period: in the time of King Herod, in the 6th month of Elizabeth's pregnancy. Note the contradiction: the time of the mighty tyrant's rule vis-à-vis the seeming insignificant pregnancy of an unknown old woman. Then, the spatial coordinates: the contradiction between the temple and the central city of Jerusalem, on the one hand, and the obscure and peripheral little town of Nazareth, in the province of Galilee, known for being the hotbed

of guerilla movements resisting the Roman occupation and royal usurpation of Israel. A new temple or religion, God's Incarnation, will arise from this obscure town that will confront the centralized power of Judaism in the Jerusalem Temple. Then, there too is the contradiction between the pregnancy of Elizabeth, an old sterile woman, by an old husband, Zacharias, on the hand, and the pregnancy of a young virgin girl Mary, betrothed to an adult, Joseph, who both, by tradition, could not yet live together as husband and wife but would mutually guard each other's fidelity, on the other. By this contradiction, Luke is able to emphasize that Jesus is the only and final Messiah, and there will be no other, after him.

In this Lukan drama of the human experience of contradictions, Mary and the Word of God stand out as the main characters. Mary symbolizes that part of humanity and human history that is shaped by being poor, rejected and abandoned by the socio-political-religious officialdom. She, the poor of Yahweh, is totally trustful and open to the divine intervention. On the other hand, God's word descends, not in the center of wealth and power, but in the obscurity of the marginalized in the human situation. The Word that creates, that transforms, that gives security without violating the freedom of the believer, is inviting total attachment to and joyful acceptance of God's will. And Mary, by declaring herself as the handmaid of the Lord, gives herself totally to God's will, to God's Word. For God's Word is seductive; and Mary falls for that great divine seduction! Therefore, in times of contradictions and difficulties in life, God's Word is always our Guide in the human condition. He breaks everything to bring in the new and the real.

Homily: The Church of the Poor, through the Basic Ecclesial Communities, realizes the Promise of God when she shares the Word through inclusive dialogue with all peoples.

Summary of the Sunday Reading Message	Concrete description of the poor people and their situation	Reflection/ Points for reflection/ Call/ Challenge
The Church of the Poor, through the Basic Ecclesial Communities, realizes the Promise of God when she shares the Word through inclusive dialogue with all peoples.	What are the different social classes in your community? Are there lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgenders? Are there atheists and people of different faiths? What are your prejudices against them? How do you deal with them?	"There is the necessity of inter-religious dialogue in the task of evangelization." "In times of contradictions and difficulties, God's Word is always our Guide in the human condition."

Profession of Faith

A: I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit

was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayers of the Faithful:

P: Dear sisters and brothers: let us now elevate our hearts and minds to God our Father, and, with joy, humbly present to him our prayers. For every prayer let our response be: Lord, help us to love you in others.

R: Lord, help us to love you in others.

L: Let us pray for the Church: that, being a Church of the Poor spread all over the world, she may be strengthened by the Holy Spirit in her continuing missionary activity of sharing the Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, to all peoples of all social classes, faith traditions, nationalities and ethnic origins and varied sexual identities and orientations. Let us pray to the Lord.

R: Lord, help us to love you in others.

L: For our Holy Father, Pope Francis I, for the bishops, priests, deacons, for those in consecrated life and for all those who are entrusted with the care and administration of the church

as People of God: that, by sharing the sentiments of the heart of Christ, they may continue to serve as missionaries of God's love, justice and peace by working together with all people of different faith traditions, different political ideologies, theists and atheists through genuine dialogue for the care of our inhabited earth and the whole creation. Let us pray to the Lord.

R: Lord, help us to love you in others.

L: For world leaders and all those entrusted with governance and administration of the goods of the earth: that they may continue to promote the common good by providing spaces for differences of beliefs and religions, uphold freedom of religion and human rights and promote inter-cultural dialogue and genuine mutual respect in human encounters. Let us pray to the Lord.

R: Lord, help us to love you in others.

L: For all of us, inhabitants of the earth and citizens of heaven: that we may inspire one another to envision and build a future human community as communion, by promoting social movements that address the rights and welfare of peoples, social reform and radical change in the structures of society through meaningful dialogue and effective action as our share in preparing the way of the Lord. Let us pray to the Lord.

R: Lord, help us to love you in others.

L: For our beloved dead: that in the forgiveness of their sins, they may find eternal rest in the heart of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Let us pray to the Lord.

R: Lord, help us to love you in others.

L: For our special intentions, in the silence of our hearts. (*pause*)... Let us pray to the Lord.

R: Lord, help us to love you in others.

P: Lord God of love and compassion, listen to the prayers of your people. Help us to prepare the way of your Son when he comes again in glory. We ask this through the Christ our Lord.

R: Amen

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Preparation of the Altar and the Gifts

P: Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation,

C: Blessed be God forever.

P: Pray, brethren (brothers and sisters), that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

C: May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offerings

P: May the Holy Spirit, O Lord, sanctify these gifts laid upon your altar, just as he filled with his power the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Through Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

Prayer of the Eucharist

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And with your spirit.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them up to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right and just.

P: It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord.

For all the oracles of the prophets foretold him, the Virgin Mother longed for him with love beyond all telling, John the Baptist sang of his coming and proclaimed his presence when he came.

It is by his gift that already we rejoice at the mystery of his Nativity, so that he may find us watchful in prayer and exultant in his praise.

And so, with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions, and with all the hosts of Powers of heaven, we sing the hymn of your glory, as without end we acclaim:

A: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Acclamation

P: The mystery of faith.

We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

(Concluding the Eucharistic Prayer, the priest says:)

Through him, and with him, and in him, O God, almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, for ever and ever.

C: Amen.

Communion Rite

The Lord's Prayer

Doxology

C: For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever and ever.

Sign of Peace

P: Lord Jesus Christ, who said to your Apostles; Peace ... Who live and reign for ever and ever.

C: Amen.

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: And with your spirit.

P: Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

Breaking of the Bread

A: Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world ... grant us peace.

Communion

P: Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

A: *Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.*

Communion Antiphon:

(Is 7:14)

Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son; and his name will be called Emmanuel.

Prayer after Communion

P: Let us pray: Having received this pledge of eternal redemption, we pray, almighty God, that, as the feast day of our salvation draws ever nearer, so we may press forward all the more eagerly to the worthy celebration of the mystery of your Son's Nativity. Who lives and reigns forever and ever.

C: *Amen.*

Final Blessing

P: The Lord be with you.

C: *And with your spirit.*

P: Bow down for the blessing: May the almighty and merciful God, by whose grace you have placed your faith in the First Coming of his Only Begotten Son and yearn for his coming again, sanctify you by the radiance of Christ's Advent and enrich you with his blessing.

C: *Amen.*

P: As you run the race of this present life, may he make you firm in faith, joyful in hope and active in charity.

C: *Amen.*

P: So that, rejoicing now with devotion at the Redeemer's coming in the flesh, you may be endowed with the rich reward of eternal life when he comes again in majesty.

C: *Amen.*

P: And may the blessings of almighty God, + the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, come down upon you and remain with you forever.

C: *Amen.*

Dismissal

P: Go in the peace of Christ.

C: *Thanks be to God.* ■

Join Fr. Ben Alforque, MSC of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in **GOSPEL BREAK**, a short yet entertaining and insightful discussion of this Sunday's Gospel on YouTube.

Visit gospelbreak.wordpress.com. Or scan this QR code with your Smartphone or tablet.



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