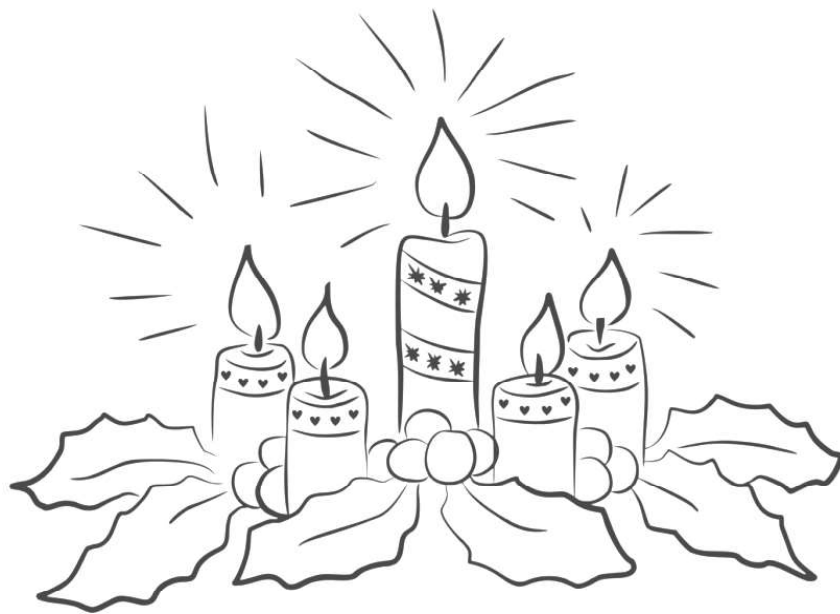




**The Episcopal Church of Jerusalem
and the Middle East
The Diocese of Jerusalem**



**Daily Meditations Booklet
Advent 2023**

*The Most Reverend Hosam E. Naoum
Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem
The Fifteenth Bishop of the Episcopal
Anglican Diocese of Jerusalem*



المطران حسام الياس نعوم
رئيس الأساقفة الأنجليكاني في القدس
الأسقف الخامس عشر لمطراينة القدس الأسقفية العربية

Pastoral Letter and an Advent Appeal

Advent 2023

"For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders, and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

(Isaiah 9:6, NRSV)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Grace and peace to you all.

As we arrive at the Season of Advent, we begin a new liturgical year. During this time our primary focus shifts towards preparing to welcome our Savior Jesus Christ into each of our lives. We do this by praying and staying alert: **"Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come"** (Mark 13:33, NRSV). The liturgical readings that accompany us during this season consistently echo this call to vigilant expectation. They do so through the voices of witnesses such as the Virgin Mary, Simeon the Elder, the prophetess Anna, John the Baptist, and others.

Due to the current situation in our beloved Holy Land and the heartbreaking scenes that have shattered our hearts, we have decided this year to limit our celebrations to prayers, liturgies, and carols within our churches. In a spirit of solidarity within the Body of Christ, I invite you to join us in this discipline by reflecting on the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ more than two thousand years ago, as well as on the conditions prevailing in the land at that time.

In doing so, we will find that they were no better than the circumstances here today. During the first Christmas, the Holy Family had difficulty finding a place for their son's birth. There was the killing of children. There was military occupation. And there was the Holy Family becoming displaced as refugees. Outwardly, there was no reason for celebration and joy other than the birth of the Lord Jesus. In our day, let us likewise find our cause for celebration from fixing our eyes on the Child lying in the manger. Let Advent be for us a time of expectation through prayer, worship, and acts of kindness: **"Our soul waits for the Lord; he is our help and shield. For our heart is glad in him, because we trust in his holy name. Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us, even as we hope in you"** (Psalm 33:20-22, NRSV).

As our beloved partners in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, I invite you to join the 2023 Advent and Christmas Project as a means of living into the true meaning of Christmas by giving to those in need in the Holy Land. This Christmas season, we aim to bring smiles to the faces of as many children as possible, as well as support to struggling families. And so we would welcome and greatly appreciate your love, support, and generous contributions towards this fund for needy families at Christmas. Your assistance will have a significant impact on making Christmas joyful, allowing us to distribute gifts to less fortunate children, and to offer help to their families.

With the release of this appeal and pastoral letter, I also present to you the "2023 Advent Calendar." It is a booklet of daily reflections and prayers for the Advent Season written by the clergy of our Diocese. We offer it as a spiritual guide and source of encouragement for your daily prayers and



meditations. As I have said, Advent is a pilgrimage towards celebrating Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace. Together as a Diocese—including our clergy, congregations, and institutions—and in unity with our sister churches and partners around the world, we pray and journey together in hope, peace, joy, and love. We focus our attention on encountering the person of Jesus Christ.

I therefore invite you to join us in meditating during this holy season on the virtues of the Gospel: "**Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.**" These four virtues are an integral part of Christian teaching. We highlight them in the booklet to assist and guide us all in the anticipation of the Lord's coming.

We are all concerned about the future and feel fear and uncertainty. But our faith is stronger than these anxieties and leads us to continue our ministries through our churches and institutions as a living witness. Indeed, every ministry we offer is nothing but a continuation of Jesus' ministry on earth. For he is the teacher, healer, and Savior. He continues to work through us as individuals and as a Church. Advent offers us a time for renewing these ministries, as well as for rededicating our individual and communal talents and spiritual devotions to God.

I wish each one of you abundant blessings and a spiritual life that is acceptable to the Lord. May the Lord bless you and grant you joy and peace.

With love and prayers,

++ Hosam E. Naoum
Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem
The Primate of the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East



How can I help in drawing a smile on the faces of children during the season of Christmas?

You can donate through our partners in ministry:

Australia

- Anglican Board of Mission
abmission.org/appeals/emergency-appeals/al-ahli-hospital-emergency-appeal
Anglican Overseas Aid: anglicanoverseasaid.org.au/our-work/emergency-appeal-ahli-arab-hospital

Canada

- Canadian Companions: anglican.ca/gr/provinces/jerusalem/companions

Germany

- Evangelische Mission in Solidarität (EMS):
ems-online.org/en/get-informed/news/according-to-gods-will-war-shall-not-be

New Zealand

- Anglican Missions: anglicanmissions.org.nz/humanitarian-emergencies/al-ahli-hospital-appeal

United Kingdom

- Jerusalem and Middle East Church Association (JMECA):
<https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/24666#!/DonationDetails>
- Friends of the Holy Land (Joint Anglican-Roman Catholic charity):
friendsoftheholylan.org.uk/donate/christmas

United States of America

- American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem: afedj.org/give/give-online

For more information contact the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem: info@j-diocese.org.

Advent Season 2023

1st Day – Hope

The First Sunday of Advent 3/12/2023



Verse of the Day

**I lift up my eyes to the hills from where will my help come? My help comes from the LORD,
who made heaven and earth. (Psalm 121:1-2)**

Reflection

In these unprecedented times of strife in the Holy Land, it is easy to lose hope. In times of hopelessness, we may feel helpless to cope with pain and suffering or to succor victims trapped in conflict zones. We usually await on or appeal to other humans or organizations for help. The well-known first two verses from Psalm 121 remind us that our help comes from the Lord. The psalmist links human need for help together with divine capacity to provide help. Help comes from God as Creator of all things in heaven and earth. The God who is able to create is capable of providing help. Helping, thus, is intrinsic to the nature of God, who not only creates but also takes care of his creation. In response to divine providence, humans lift up their eyes to the hills, to the very sanctuary of God. The psalmist does not exclude human responsibility to provide help for those in need. He reminds us that human responsibility originates from the very nature of God. Like God, humans are able and should be willing to help others. By lifting up our eyes to the hills, we exercise moving away from the self toward others. In this sense, our hope lies in God's ability and willingness to relate to human helplessness. God has promised to help his creation and He is faithful to his promises. God's faithfulness is the very source of human hope.

Prayer

Almighty God, our Creator and Support, we ask you to aid all those suffering and disheartened in times of distress and hopelessness. Guide us to reflect your compassion, enabling us to be a support to all who are around us. Amen.

Daily Cycle of Prayer

- The Most Revd. Hosam & Mrs. Rafa Naoum
- Archbishop Hosam Naoum's office and team
- Archbishop's Consultants and Advisors

Advent Season 2023

2nd Day – Hope
Monday 4/12/2023



Verse of the Day

Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer.

(Romans 12:12)

Reflection

Can humans live without oxygen? And can humans live without hope? An artist painted a picture of a forest in autumn just after sunset. The painting leans towards darkness with bare trees and an isolated house without lights standing alone and facing a severe storm. Everything in the painting reflects sadness and a loss of hope, but the artist wasn't done yet. He quickly dipped his brushes in yellow and placed a spot of light in the window of the house, coming from within. What a stunning transformation! The scene completely changed to convey security and hope despite the storms—a brightly lit house in the midst of darkness and turmoil. Doesn't Jesus assure us that He is with us in this dark and desolate world?

Our hope is that He is with us in this desolate world. As He said, 'I am with you always' (Matthew 28:20), and He also said, 'I have said this to you so that in me you may have peace. In the world you face persecution, but take courage: I have conquered the world!' (John 16:33).

Prayer

Lord, we have toiled all night and lost hope, but at your word, cast the net again to fill it with hope anew. Amen.

Daily Cycle of Prayer

- Diocesan Offices in Jerusalem, Amman, and Beirut
- Diocesan Office staff and their families

Advent Season 2023

3rd Day – Hope
Tuesday 5/12/2023



Verse of the Day

Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means, 'God is with us.' (Matthew 1:23)

Reflection

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 'The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel (which means "God with us")' (Matthew 1:22–23) (NIV). Today's reflection is on the most beautiful verses of hope in the midst of darkness and sadness.

Immanuel: This is interpreted as 'God with us,' the hope and promise from God to the world since the beginning of the prophecies spoken from the tongue of the Prophet Isaiah. When one becomes a father to a new baby, his whole life changes and he begins to think about naming the boy or girl who will accompany him throughout his life. When God decided to name his son Immanuel, he wanted to not leave human beings alone on earth or in heaven. The word hope signifies the light and goodness of God to remaining with us. It is He who protects us, blesses us, and gives us strength and courage in the hope of eternal salvation.

Prayer

Your birth, Lord, is the birth of hope and optimism. Come and look at our situation, Lord. Come and touch our hearts, our lives, our country, and our world. Come and be with us because we trust in the hope that you have given us in your Son who was born in Bethlehem, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Daily Cycle of Prayer

- St. George's Cathedral - Jerusalem
 - Pastor to the Arabic-speaking Congregation / Rev'd Canon Wadie Far
 - Pastor to the English-speaking Congregation / Rev'd Canon Donald & Mrs. Christine Binder
- Christ Church—Jerusalem / Rev'd David & Mrs. Carol Pileggi

Advent Season 2023

4th Day – Hope
Wednesday 6/12/2023



Verse of the Day

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. (Matthew 11:28-30)

Reflection

Walk to the spring; you will be gainful and will come back joyful

The Lord Jesus Christ calls us to carry his yoke through bonding with him. In this way, we carry the gentleness and humility of his heart so that he exudes peace and comfort in our lives like an endless spring. The season of Advent is an opportunity to search again for the way of the Lord in our lives so that we may walk as **servants of God by commending ourselves in every way: in great endurance, afflictions, hardships, calamities, and beatings** (2 Corinthians 6:4-5). The hope that we live by is that Christ bore our aches, pains, and sorrows, and defeated and crushed evil through His resurrection. Let us have confidence in God, who has not and will not abandon His people—the Church.

Prayer

Come baby Jesus, and let the light of your glorious birth shine in our hearts so that we may have the hope of glory that Christ will be among us and all the nations.

Daily Cycle of Prayer

- Christ Church–Nazareth / Rev'd Nael & Mrs. Mira Abu Rahmoun
- Church of the Holy Family–Raineh / Rev'd Hanna & Mrs. Anita Dally

Advent Season 2023

5th Day – Hope
Thursday 7/12/2023



Verse of the Day

For nothing will be impossible with God.
(Luke 1:37)

Reflection

The angel Gabriel's words to the Virgin Mary carry a message of hope. It was a crucial moment for a fresh start for humanity: a new covenant to mend the previous one tainted by human corruption. The choice fell upon the Virgin Mary to bring about salvation and restoration through Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word, born from her womb.

Mary wondered, 'How can this be? How can the Son of God come through me to initiate his revolution against falsehood and restore the lost image of God in humanity?' She questioned the possibility, a question we all ask when facing challenging circumstances and enduring crises, entering a realm of doubt and confusion about what awaits us and how our salvation will unfold. Gabriel's response emphasized that nothing is impossible for God.

The essence of hope lies here: God is capable of everything, no matter how impossible it may seem. As Job expressed in the past, 'I know that you can do all things.' Jesus affirmed this to his disciples, stating, 'With God, all things are possible.' The Christmas season symbolizes hope and a time to restore the lost image of God in humanity. This is not only possible but has already been fulfilled.

Prayer

O God, we thank you for making the impossible possible, by assuming our nature and being born of a pure virgin, and granting us the blessings of a new life. Amen.

Daily Cycle of Prayer

- Church of the Redeemer, Amman
 - Pastor to the Arabic-speaking Congregation / Rev'd Canon Faeq & Mrs. Duaa Haddad
 - Pastor to the English-speaking Congregation / Rev'd Deacon Chris & Mrs. Joanna White
- St. Luke's Episcopal Church—Marka / Rev'd George & Mrs. Mary Al-Kopti

Advent Season 2023

6th Day – Hope
Friday 8/12/2023



Verse of the Day

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

Reflection

We live in a world full of frustration and despair, of killing and destruction, of shedding the blood of the innocent. Hearts are broken, human minds are bewildered, searching for hope in a new day. Yet we won't find a solution because we are searching in the wrong place. Jesus calls us today with His sweet voice, whispering to our lost hearts to come and receive genuine, living hope. He wants to offer us a hope vibrant with life and sincere promises. Jesus wants to give us a certain hope, a firm hope that opens the horizon for us to move forward with strength and determination. The reason is that the hope of the Lord is certain; it pushes sadness aside to replace it with marvelous peace that surpasses our human understanding. Today, Jesus wants to provide us with an unseen hope, intangible at the moment, but as the days unfold, we will discover that the Lord Jesus cares about the details of our lives and desires the best for us in everything.

Prayer

Lord, you are the foundation of our trust and faith, the source of our hope and joy. We ask You to fill our hearts with hope, our minds with confidence, and our wills with complete reliance upon You. Amen

Daily Cycle of Prayer

- Christ School–Nazareth / Archdeacon Samuel & Mrs. Susan Barhoum
- St. John's School–Haifa / Mrs. Grace Salameh
- Tabitha School–Jaffa / Rev'd Fares Naoum

Advent Season 2023

7th Day – Peace
Saturday 9/12/2023



Verse of the Day

Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours! (Luke 2:14-13)

Reflection

The meeting of heaven with earth, the announcement of the divine promise to humanity, the fullness of time has come, and the appointed time for God's presence among God's people has arrived. The salvific plan laid out by the Father in His sovereignty to rescue humans from the bonds of Satan is now being realized. In this divine preparation of the cosmos, God sends an angel to the shepherds of Bethlehem to inform them of the Lord's coming. A heavenly choir accompanies the angel, proclaiming, 'Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on earth.' Joy fills humanity with the birth of the Savior, Jesus.

Amidst the pain of the present day, especially in our land and in Gaza; amidst the test of global conscience, and the challenge to speak the truth; amidst the heavenly demand of peace: Jesus prays for peace and seeks peace. Moreover, He shows the status of those who seek peace. He reveals the hearts of believers today who stand waiting for the Lord to change everyone's hearts and to establish a state of peace among humans. May our lives be filled with peace, tranquility, and harmony; may we work to build bridges of love instead of walls of hatred and revenge; and may everyone strive to spread the culture of peace in hearts, minds, and nations.

Prayer

Lord, with your grace, illuminate the hearts of humans towards your lasting peace in our lives and in the life of the world. Amen

Cycle of Prayer

- St. Luke's Hospital–Nablus / Rev'd Jamil Maher Khader
- The Ahli Arab Hospital–Gaza / Ms. Suhaila Tarazi, Ms. Samira Farah, Dr. Maher Ayyad
- The Penman Clinic–Zababdeh / Mr. Isam Khader
- EMMS Hospital–Nazareth / Mr. Richard Mayhew, Dr. Fahed Hakim
- Medical Center–Ramallah / Mrs. Dima Awwad

Advent Season 2023

8th Day – Peace

The Second Sunday of Advent 10/12/2023



Verse of the Day

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)

Reflection

Isaiah's prophecy of the birth of Christ deeply draws our hearts to the meaning of the powerful words with which Isaiah described the coming of the Savior. It wonderfully illuminates the birth of the Child of Peace in our world that thirsts for peace. Jesus came to illuminate our darkness and to offer salvation and peace to humanity.

These words resonate with the promise of hope, highlighting the greatness of Christ's birth, as we see God's love for humanity. The peace of Christ is not just an absence of turmoil, but a peace that reaches deep into our souls and hearts that no one can take away from us. It is a peace that transcends all understanding. In this Christmas season, let us be agents of reconciliation, reflecting the love, peace, and light of Jesus, and rejoicing in the promise of peace fulfilled for us by the birth of our Savior and Redeemer Jesus Christ. Let us promote the spirit of tolerance, giving, and loving others.

Prayer

We pray to the Prince of Peace Jesus Christ to fill our hearts and lives with his peace and love. Amen

Cycle of Prayer

- St. Andrew's Church–Ramallah / Rev'd Fadi & Mrs. Ruba Diab
- St. Peter's Church–Bir Zeit / Rev'd Fadi & Mrs. Ruba Diab

Advent Season 2023

9th Day – Peace
Monday 11/12/2023



Verse of the Day

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. (John 14:27)

Reflection

I look around and all I hear are the drums of war. All I see is more violence. Our world is in turmoil, and I struggle to clearly hear the words of Jesus: ‘You are in the world, but not of the world. My peace I give to you, not as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not be afraid.’ I try to understand this contradiction between the promised peace and the supposed reality.

As I carefully listen to what Jesus says in this verse, I understand the following:

1. Jesus gives this promise to his disciples, that is, to the Church that lives, moves, and testifies for Him in this troubled world.
2. It is a specific promise giving the Church an internal peace that helps it fulfil its assigned mission. This peace provides clarity of mind, heart, and conscience, enabling thoughtful action and a prophetic voice to bring the world back to the principles of truth, justice, and peace.
3. It is a challenge to seek the power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish its work.

We pray to God to grant us this peace, both as individuals and a community.

Prayer

O Lord, shower us with your peace. Amen.

Cycle of Prayer

- St. Paul’s Church–Shefa’amr / Rev’d Canon Fuad & Mrs. Hana Dagher
- Church of the Savior–Kufr Yasif / Rev’d Bilal & Mrs. Lina Habiby
- Church of Christ the King–Tarshiha / Rev’d Hatim & Mrs. Renate Jiryis

Advent Season 2023

10th Day – Peace
Tuesday 12/12/2023



Verse of the Day

I have said this to you, so that in me you may have peace. In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world!’ (John 16:33)

Reflection

A biblical promise: ‘I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart: I have overcome the world.’ Jesus Christ didn’t hide from redeemed believers that they would have distress because they differ from the people of this world and because they had chosen the narrow way.

When we resist, we sing. When we are persecuted and marginalized, ‘we declare openly’ that we have a Lord who defends us and that we are not afraid of what others will do to us (Psalm 56:11). This is true simply because we have taken the path that our Lord Jesus walked on. This is true because he told us about the distress we would face, but promised us that we would have peace in him.

Solving our problems won’t achieve peace. Peace comes through the presence of Christ in our lives. There is no true and permanent peace without Christ. The result of our struggle is guaranteed: peace that transcends all understanding followed by triumph. The faithful church, ‘the body of Christ,’ has gone through countless trials. It overcame, it is overcoming, and it will continue to overcome all future challenges. The secret is in the peace that Christ left for her because of her faithfulness and holiness. Her inheritance in glory is fixed and permanent: ‘And the gates of Hades will not overcome it’ (Matthew 16:18).

Prayer

Jesus strengthen my resolve; will and let my heart long for you more. Amen.

Cycle of Prayer

- Church of the Savior–Zarka / Rev’d Khalid & Mrs. Rana Freij
- Christ Chapel at Theodore Schneller–Al-Rsifa / Rev’d Khalid & Mrs. Rana Freij
- St. Peter & St. Paul’s Mission to Seafarers–Aqaba

Advent Season 2023

11th Day – Peace

Wednesday 13/12/2023



Verse of the Day

And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. (Colossians 3:15)

Reflection

Most of what Paul wrote to the suffering and persecuted churches was to encourage them to hold fast to their faith and to live in peace, as a way to be holy. In Colossians 3:15, Paul encourages the people to let the peace of Christ rule in their hearts. And when Christ's peace rules, that means the Kingdom of God becomes a reality to those who invited Christ in their hearts, lives, homes, and churches.

Peace, in my Christian understanding, is not the absence of war. War, unfortunately, is a definite result of human sin. People want to be lords over their brothers and sisters through use of power and aggression. The first consequence of the fall of Adam and Eve was a horrible crime: Cain killed his brother. Peace is to live in harmony and reconciliation with oneself, with others, and with the whole creation of God through a strong relationship with our Creator.

When Paul insisted on Christ's call for the church to live in peace in one body, he highlighted the importance of unity, solidarity, love, and forgiveness within the church—the church that had suffered internal struggles between Judaizers and Gentiles. When God's peace rules in our hearts and his kingdom becomes a reality in our minds, our hearts and lips will start to thank God for his gracious gifts, one of which is a deep peace within: peace despite all human evil and oppression as we live it in these days.

Prayer

Come Holy Spirit and rule in my heart, give me real peace, fill my mouth with thanks for your grace in my life. Amen.

Cycle of Prayer

- St. George's School–Jerusalem / Mr. Richard Zananiri
- St George's College–Jerusalem / Dean Richard & Mrs. JulieAnn Sewell

Advent Season 2023

12th Day – Peace
Thursday 14/12/2023



Verse of the Day

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:7)

Reflection

It may seem difficult for us to understand the meaning of ‘the peace of God, which surpasses . . .’ because peace is not just tranquility but a state that makes a person feel inner peace through prayer and prostration to the Lord. However, challenges, wars, and famines may not have a solution within our limited human minds. The peace crafted by humans remains limited and subject to change. Therefore, we must pray with believing and humble hearts—or we may pray fervently and cry out to the Lord until He grants us the peace that brings harmony to the soul, body, mind, heart, and our behavior. This peace guards our hearts and protects our minds from the evil of this world. Job, the prophet, serves as an example of this. Despite all his suffering and loss, Job did not lose his faith. He did not compromise his relationship with the Lord. The peace of the Lord does not create discord, conflict, or disputes; instead, it brings peace and security.

Prayer

O Lord, as I approach You in my prayers, enlighten my mind and guide my heart to love all people in the name of Jesus Christ, I pray. Amen.

Cycle of Prayer

- Princess Basma Centre for Disabled Children–Jerusalem / Mrs. Violette Mubarak
- St. Luke’s Centre for the Mentally Handicapped–Beirut / Mrs. Micheline Gebrayel

Advent Season 2023

13th Day – Joy
Friday 15/12/2023



Verse of the Day

Finally, brothers and sisters, farewell. Put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. (2 Corinthians 13:11)

Reflection

The Apostle Paul concludes his Second Letter to the Corinthians with commandments that he presents to us so that we can truly live them despite all the challenges and difficulties we face. He recommends beginning with joy, because there is nothing greater than rejoicing in our salvation through Jesus Christ who redeemed us. He gave us joy because we are his children. Let us rejoice that he lives among us and commands us to continue in his service without ceasing. We should not hesitate, despite the trials that surround us. We should not turn back, but take comfort so that the Lord may fill our hearts with heavenly consolation in the midst of all the circumstances we are exposed to. In this way, we do not lose faith. Therefore, He says that we should be concerned with one thing only, and that is Christ—not the world and its temptations. Christ should be whom we always think about so that we can live in peace with our brothers and sisters, casting away evil and hatred, and allowing the God of love and peace to be with us. If a Christian lives out love, he or she will overcome sin and live in peace with all people.

Prayer

O Lord, give us joy, peace, love, and consolation despite all the hardships, trials, and wars going on in our world. Amen.

Cycle of Prayer

- St. Philip's Church–Nablus / Rev'd Jamil & Mrs. Loma Khader
- Church of the Good Shepherd–Rafidia / Rev'd Jamil & Mrs. Loma Khader
- St. Matthew's Church–Zababdeh / Rev'd Saleem & Mrs. Adma Dawani

Advent Season 2023

14th Day – Joy
Saturday 16/12/2023



Verse of the Day

But let all who take refuge in you rejoice; let them ever sing for joy. Spread your protection over them, so that those who love your name may exult in you. (Psalm 5:11)

Reflection

Do we have the right to rejoice when we see and live with injustice and oppression around us? Yes, we rejoice in taking refuge in the Lord, because our celebration of Christmas delights us. For God is with us, He loves and cares for us. He sustains us when we lay our burdens before him. And He takes care of our affairs and gives us wisdom for our lives. It is through taking refuge in Him that our hearts are filled with joy.

Every person has problems, but the joy of the Lord transcends sorrow and oppression, driving out evil and freeing us. And if the Lord is with us, who can be against us? How beautiful it is that the God of joy lives in us as we strive to strengthen the love between Christ and humanity. The Lord is our shepherd, the source of our joy. He instills reassurance, peace, and hope within our hearts.

Yes, we rejoice in taking refuge in God, who can change us and, with His wisdom and companionship, fill us with joy. Yes, it is right for us to rejoice in taking refuge in God, despite the pain we are experiencing, for from Him, we derive the strength to face life's difficulties. This joy then enhances our responsibility. Yes, when the Lord embraces us with his joy and love, change happens, and we live in hope and peace. We become part of the message of Advent.

Prayer

O God of love and joy, we entrust you with our souls. We cast our burdens before your throne, so fill our hearts with reassurance and peace and make us a part of your birth! Amen.

Cycle of Prayer

- Church of St. Mary–Irbid / Rev'd Canon Samir & Mrs. Sabah Esaid
- Church of St. John the Baptist–Al Husun / Rev'd Ibrahim & Mrs. Vera Nairoz
- Retired Bishops, Clergy and their families

Advent Season 2023

15th Day – Joy

The Third Sunday of Advent 17/12/2023



Verse of the Day

Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. (Philippians 4:4-6)

Reflection

Since the beginning of time, God created everything and created man to enjoy his creation, advising him to 'be altogether joyful,' until the hour came for the heavens to announce the nature of the true joy with the coming of the only-begotten Son, granting through his Incarnation peace to our souls, declaring through his crucifixion the joy of resurrection and the salvation of humanity, and giving us the Holy Gospel, 'the Good News,' the source of our spiritual joy, love, and hope. The goal of the true believer is to constantly seek after the Kingdom: 'Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,' which is 'not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.' In the midst of the painful events that we are witnessing today, the Apostle Paul, from behind the bars of oppression, pain, captivity, and injustice, calls us along with the Philippians to rejoice with him in the Lord at all times, because spiritual joy in Christ is one of the characteristics of the true believer. So, in order for us to live a true Christian life within the kingdom, we must embrace the commandment of heaven and rejoice with that spiritual joy all the time, despite everything. Joy is a heavenly gift, a breeze that caresses the sails of life, steering us away from the horrors of the night, the darkness of despair, and the loss of destiny, and anchoring us on the shores of true life, adorning us with the veil of the dawn of hope and expectation.

Prayer

In the midst of the horrors of this life that are ravaging us from every direction, we kneel before your glorious throne, gazing towards the heavens, with hearts exalted to You, O Lord, in prayers of thankfulness for the gift of joy that is the balm for our wounds, praying so that we might be worthy of Your eternal kingdom and always praying with invocation in everything and at all times to You, the source of all joy, peace, and contentment. Amen.

Cycle of Prayer

- The Arab Episcopal School–Ramallah / Mr. Iyad Rafidi
- The Technological & Vocational Training Center / Mr. Giovanni Anbar
- The Christian National Kindergarten–Nablus / Mrs. Rula Khalil

Advent Season 2023

16th Day – Joy
Monday 18/12/2023



Verse of the Day

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. (Thessalonians 5:16-18)

Reflection

When the Angel Gabriel appeared to the Blessed Virgin Mary in Nazareth, he greeted her saying, 'χαῖρε' (chaire) which means 'rejoice' according to the original Greek text of the New Testament (Luke 1:28). What a wonderful greeting that was, a greeting that delivers the good news not only to Mary but also to all mankind: the Incarnation and birth of Christ were great joy (Luke 2:10), and God invites us still to live this joy everywhere and always, and to share it with others so that it may grow even more.

And now in the season of Advent, we live in a spiritual state of waiting, expecting, and preparing to celebrate the birth of our Lord, and to welcome Christ's Second Coming. We wait with joy because we know whom we are waiting for, and we know—even while we're still waiting—that He is the granter of real joy. Indeed, no one can give us inner joy besides Him, and no one can take it away (John 16:22). In the midst of the storm, the challenges and hardships, we receive the message of the angel, a message of joy, hope, peace, and comfort. Stand up as a Christian and accept this message! Don't let sorrow, despair, frustration and fear be stronger than you, but rather let your life be filled with joy and happiness.

Prayer

O Lord Jesus, come and fill our hearts and lives with joy; help us so that we can live it and share it with others. Amen.

Cycle of Prayer

- St. George's Guest House—Jerusalem / Mr. Mark Aboudi
- Schneller Guest House—Al-Rsefa / Rev'd Khalid Freij
- St. Margret's Guest House—Nazareth
- HLID Guest House—Salt / Rev'd Jamil Monir Khader
- Evangelical Home—Ramallah / Rev'd Fadi Diab

Advent Season 2023

17th Day – Joy
Tuesday 19/12/2023



Verse of the Day

My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance. (James 1:2-3)

Reflection

The earliest Christians were no strangers to persecution, as Jesus himself had predicted (Luke 21:12). It came in many forms and from many different directions. In order to bolster the faith of those suffering such attacks, St. James draws upon athletic imagery in this passage, much as the Apostle Paul did elsewhere (1 Cor 9:27). Thus Christians are to understand these ‘various trials’ as a kind of training exercise. We are to approach them like a runner preparing for a race, increasing our endurance by running each morning across harsh terrain. The more we push through the pain, the better prepared we will be on the day of the big race. Only in this case, the award at the finish line will not be an earthly prize, but a heavenly one. And so with this mindset, James implies, we are able to sustain our inner joy through the tribulations we face each day. By keeping our eyes on the prize, fully aware that Christ is running closely beside us, the Lord himself increases our joyful anticipation of ultimate victory and strengthens us for the journey that lies ahead.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you are the source of our joy and strength. Help us to run the race that is set before us, that we might receive the heavenly prize that you have already reserved for us by your glorious victory over sin and death through the cross and grave. Amen.

Cycle of Prayer

- Ahliyya & Bishop’s School–Amman / Dr. Alice Abboud
- Savior Arab Evangelical School–Zarka / Mrs. Duaa Bisharat
- Theodor Schneller School–Al Rsifa / Rev’d Khalid Freij
- The Arab Episcopal School–Irbid / Mrs. Sabah Esaid

Advent Season 2023

18th Day – Love

Wednesday 20/12/2023



Verse of the Day

For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline. (2 Timothy 1:7)

Reflection

Beloved, our Lord has granted us the spirit of love, which, in turn, drives away the spirit of failure. Nothing expels failure from our lives except an intimate relationship with God as a loving Father who continually accepts us and communicates with us tenderly.

We all possess the power of love, but what is required is that we pray and seek it because every good gift and every perfect gift descends from the Father of Light. We must pray that the Lord fills us with the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of strength, love, and counsel. It is the Spirit of holiness, justice, and authority that tramples upon the spirit of failure, fear, lack of faith, and anxiety. The Holy Spirit takes from the love and forgiveness of Christ and gives to us. Therefore, the spirit of love within us is stronger and greater than the spirit in the world. For this reason, we should never be afraid because we are soldiers of Christ. 'If war is waged against us, my heart shall not fear.' Christ's love is within us, and it fills our being.

Prayer

We pray that the Lord liberates us from our fear and failure, filling our lives with faith, trust, and love, for He loves us and desires what is best for us.

Cycle of Prayer

- Church of St. John the Evangelist & St. Luke's–Haifa / Rev'd Canon Hatem & Mrs. Elizabeth Shehadeh
- Church of the Savior –Akka / Rev'd Imad & Mrs. Dima Daibes
- Emmanuel Church–Ramla / Rev'd Fares & Mrs. Pascal Naoum
- St. Peter's Church–Jaffa / Rev'd Fares & Mrs. Pascal Naoum

Advent Season 2023

19th Day – Love
Thursday 21/12/2023



Verse of the Day

**‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’
There is no other commandment greater than these. (Mark 12:30-31)**

Reflection

Advent Season

The season of praise that we heard from heaven, saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest, and peace to all,’ and joy for all human beings of all sects and races, with a heart filled with the love called for by our living God. The love that cares for the self must be the same self-love that cares for the other: Love for God, and love for our neighbour.

Brothers and sisters, let love be unconditional and without hypocrisy, equal to the love of our living God. With his love, He was able to forgive and reconcile us to himself. In this hope-filled season, we all are called to love, to reconcile, and to forgive. After every labour, new life is born. After the darkness intensifies, the dawn comes. With His eternal light, the light came into the world so that we would not remain in darkness.

Prayer

We pray that love is woven through our actions and words and strengthens bonds that stand the test of time. May the warmth of love overwhelm us, creating a haven where understanding and compassion flourish. Amen.

Cycle of Prayer

- Church of the Good Shepherd–Salt / Rev’d Jamil & Mrs. Sandy Khader
- St. Luke’s Church–Salt / Rev’d Jamil & Mrs. Sandy Khader
- Fuheis Mission Center / Rev’d Ibrahim & Mrs. Vera Nairoz

Advent Season 2023

20th Day – Love
Friday 22/12/2023



Verse of the Day

'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. (John 3:16)

Reflection

Mankind has known about God's nature of unlimited love through his Incarnation—through His humanity in Jesus Christ. We humans love Him because He first loved us. And so our relationship with God is summed up in love. Therefore, God created us to love Him and be happy with this love.

Humanity fell through disobedience to God and lost the privilege of the image of God in us. So we became vulnerable to the end and vanished. But God, out of His love, refused to let us go into nothingness like this. This is not consistent with God's love and divine plan. Therefore, for our sake and for the sake of our salvation, God came down from heaven and redeemed us because God is love.

Prayer

O God, who created us in the image of your love, fill us with your Spirit so that we may love every human being, and so make us worthy to be called your children. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Cycle of Prayer

- All Saint's Church–Beirut Arab & English-speaking congregations / Archdeacon Imad & Mrs. Hind Zoorob
- All Saint's Church–Damascus / Archdeacon Imad & Mrs. Hind Zoorob
 - Sudanese & Arab Community / Mr. Alex Amaziah
 - English-speaking Community

Advent Season 2023

21st Day – Love
Saturday 23/12/2023



Verse of the Day

I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. (John 13: 34)

Reflection

At the Last Supper, on the brink of the terrifying moments of betrayal and passion, Jesus gives to his closest followers the commandment to love one another. It seems he knew that when times get really testing and fearful, people can fall out with and divide even from those closest to them. The pressures of life can inhibit the best intentions and aspirations. True then and also today. The commandment to love, beyond our Christian sisters and brothers to include also our 'neighbour', which Jesus defines broadly, should be the defining character of Christian disciples. Jesus reminds us that it can be easy to love those who love us, harder to love those who do not.

Prayer

O Lord, bless us with your Holy Spirit to infuse us with your love for those near and those far away; for those we cherish and those with whom we disagree, to draw us into your kingdom of love, joy, and peace. Amen.

Cycle of Prayer

- Holy Land Institute for the Deaf–Salt / Rev'd Jamil Monir Khader
- Al Kreimeh Rehabilitation Center–Kreimeh / Rev'd Jamil Monir Khader
- Jofeh Rehabilitation Center–Jofeh / Rev'd Jamil Monir Khader
- Rehabilitation Centers in refugee camps / Rev'd Jamil Monir Khader
- The Ahliyya & Bishop's Kindergarten–Al Husun / Mrs. Faten Azzar

Advent Season 2023

22nd Day – Love

The Fourth Sunday of Advent 24/12/2023



Verse of the Day

We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. (Romans 8: 28)

Reflection

The Advent and Christmas seasons remind us again of the attributes and principles that our Lord Jesus Christ proclaimed: goodness, hope, peace, joy, humility and love. Christ went about spreading love among the people and presenting them with a loving Father God caring for his children. Therefore, we call Him Father when we pray the Lord's Prayer. Christ commands us to love Him and keep his commandments, not out of fear of punishment, but out of love and faith in Him, because He first loved us. All the commandments are concentrated in one that is love: 'love your God . . . and love your neighbor as yourself.' But how can we rejoice and love in the midst of war, pain, and troubles? The Apostle Paul gives the answer in Romans 8:28: 'All things work together for good to those who love God'. This verse is a river that flows with love, comfort, encouragement, and fatherhood, especially in times of war, hardships, and trials. Everything ultimately turns to good according to the plan of the all loving and gracious God. Therefore love, believe, trust—and it will be given to you.

Prayer

I pray with you and for you that you enjoy loving God, loving and knowing Him with a true, heart-filled knowledge, through the saving work of His Son on the cross, so that all things will work out for good. Amen.

Cycle of Prayer

- St. Paul's Church–Ashrafiyya / Rev'd George & Mrs. Mary Al-Kopti
- The Home for the Elderly–Ashrafiyya / Mrs. Muna Oweis

Advent Season 2023

23rd Day – Christmas Day
Monday 25/12/2023



Verse of the Day

But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.’ (Luke 2:10-12)

Reflection

Finding love, peace, joy, and hope in the midst of suffering, bloodshed, and violence is a spiritual challenge. Our human experience and context call us to respond to our situation deeply motivated by our faith in Jesus Christ. The Incarnation story and its political, social, economic, and religious environment was not much different our current environment. Jesus was born in the midst of oppression, persecution, and violence in order to transform all evil structures into his all-encompassing peace. We are called to respond to the call of the Prince of Peace to bring love where there is hatred; peace, justice and reconciliation where there is war; joy where there is sadness; and hope where there is doubt and fear.

Prayer

May the Babe of Bethlehem fill our hearts and minds with his love, peace, joy, and hope, transforming the world into the likeness of God’s Kingdom. Amen.

Cycle of Prayer

- Our international partners in mission
- Women’s Ministries in the Diocese / Mrs. Rafa Naoum
- Youth Ministries in the Diocese





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