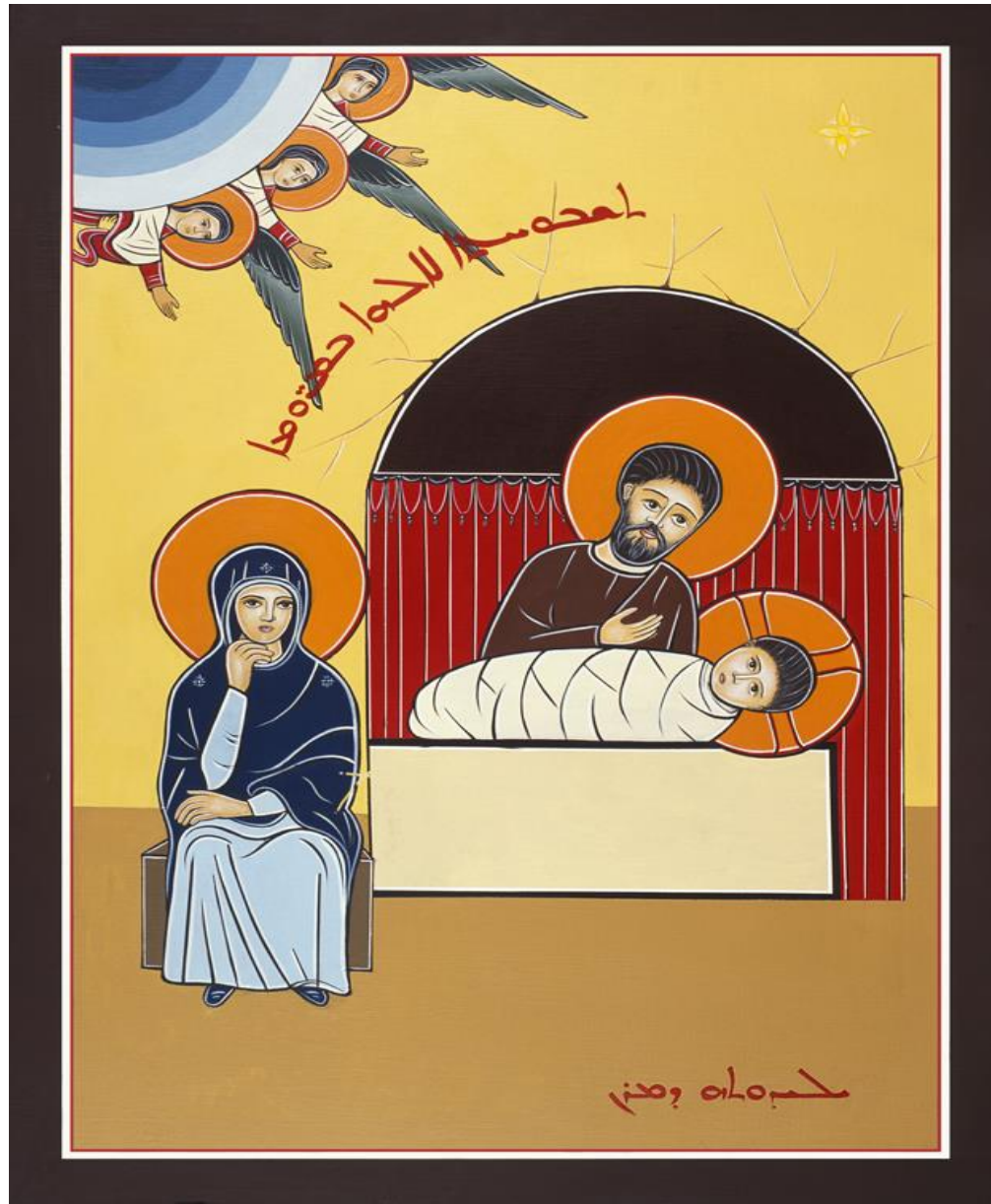


The Christmas Novena of the Glorious Feast of The Lord's Birth

Evening prayers-Readings-The Christmas Novena prayers and Benediction-Christmas Hymns



Saint Charbel's Monastery, Sydney

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Prayers of the Christmas Novena

Ramsho (Evening)

DOXOLOGY

STAND

Cel: Peace be with the Church and Her children.

Cong: Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace and good hope to all.

OPENING PRAYER

Cel: O Divine child, our Lord Jesus, on the night of your birth, the feast of salvation, peace and love amongst mankind, the entire earth became one pure heart, shining forth beauty and happiness in the darkness of night in order to welcome you, her gentle Heavenly guest. We ask you, in memory of your birth, to instil peace and understanding between the nations, and we shall praise you with the angels: “Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth and goodwill to all”, now and forever.

Cong: Amen.

SIT

Cant: Barekhamor (with your Blessing Lord), have mercy on us O Lord and help us. Glory to you, Our Lord Jesus Christ, Eternal Light. Today you shone your Divine Light in Bethlehem, as was prophesied by Micah: “There shall come a shepherd, who is Saviour and Lord who shepherds the people and the nations”. His words have truly been fulfilled. The people who acknowledge your salvific birth raise glory to you, to your Father and to your Holy Spirit, now and forever.

First Hymn: Ngido

*The angels of Seraphim, with the ranks of Cherubim
Sing glory to God our King, for the Lord who shines on high
was a baby in a crib!

** The powers of heaven high could not see the face of Christ
but mortals sing hymns of praise for we saw the Lord of light
who has made our dreams come true

*/**The fruit that destroyed mankind, Adam took in paradise
But Mary in Bethlehem gave to us the Fruit of life
Christ who brings the dead to life.

Psalm two

* Why do the nations conspire, and the peoples plot in vain?
** The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel
together, against the LORD and his anointed, saying:
* "Let us burst their bonds asunder, and cast their cords from us."
** He who sits in the heavens laughs; the LORD has them in
derision.
* Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his
fury, saying:
** "I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill."
* I will tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to me, "You are my
son, today I have begotten you.
** Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends
of the earth your possession.
* You shall break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces
like a potter's vessel."
*/** Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now
and forever.

Cant: Barekhamor (with your Blessing Lord), have mercy on us O Lord and help us. To you be thanks, O only one of the Father Begotten of Him before the formation of the world. Out of love for us you were born in time of Mary in the flesh for our salvation. And for this reason we raise all glory and praise to you, and to your Father and to your Holy Spirit, now and forever.

Second Hymn: Hassoyo ouQadisho

* Alleluia

God took flesh in Bethlehem and was made human
In Jerusalem He then became the Victim
Let us worship Christ Our Lord; the Redeemer we adore

** Alleluia,

Mary in her tender Spirit humbly proclaimed,
“thou art He, my Lord and God, I am a poor maid.
Son Your Father’s majesty has enriched my poverty”.

*/** Alleluia

From the east a star appeared unto the wise men
Bearing gold and myrrh and incense to this infant
So the whole world may believe that in Christ we are redeemed

Evening Psalms

Psalm 141:

- * Let my prayer rise before You like incense, the raising of my hands like an evening oblation.

Response:

Let my prayer rise before You like incense, the raising of my hands like an evening oblation.

- * I have called to You Lord; hasten to help me! Hear my voice when I cry to You. **(R)**
- * To You Lord God my eyes are turned; in You I take refuge; spare my soul. **(R)**
- * Around me the just will assemble because of Your goodness to me. **(R)**

Psalm 119:

- * Your word is a lamp for my steps and a light for my path.

Response:

Your word is a lamp for my steps and a light for my path.

- * I have sworn and made up my mind to obey your decrees. **(R)**
- * Your will is my heritage forever; the Joy of my heart. **(R)**
- * Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, forever. **(R)**

Third Hymn: Soughito

** Emmanuel: Our God abides
delightfully among mankind
The Living Love, the Truth we heard
the Light inspiring the whole world!

*The Father Great could not be known
but by the Firstborn He was shown
all things from which the Light did raise
abide in Him: let us sing praise!

**O God today you are ignored;
Your people, help us remain Lord.
You are the heart which beats in man
to water love in this dry land!

*/**You were not formed by flesh and blood
but you were born of a Virgin
Now by the Son mankind can be
the children of God Almighty!

Cantor: Stomin Kaalous (Let us all stand)

Cong: Kyrie Eleison.

HOOSOYO

STAND

PROEMION

Cel: Let us raise glory, honour and praise to Him who is begotten of the Father before the beginning of the world, and born of the Holy Spirit in the midst of time from the Virgin Mother. To the miraculous Son, who, through His Father, raises above all ages and rules the course of time. Through His Mother He sanctified the ages and consecrated humanity.

To the Good One, are due glory and honour this evening, and all the days of our lives, now and forever.

Cong: Amen.

SEDRO

Cel: Oh Divine Child, “Lamb of God”, you have come to this earth, carrying with you the mystery of eternity: that the depth of God is love, and the fruit of love is sacrifice. On the night of your birth, the universe was filled with the fragrance of redemption. The heavenly psalms spread to all the corners of time. Creation then woke up, to find that its mystical dreams had come true. Your birth gave fragrance to Jasmine, a splendorous light to the morning dawn, a smile to the face of the mothers, zeal to the apostles, courage to the martyrs, knowledge to the enlightened minds and love to generous hearts.

On the night of your birth, the earth became fertile, bringing forth love, truth and peace. You descended from above, became man, hiding your Divinity from our eyes and truth from our human minds. You are first to reach the highest, for nothing can ascend higher than you. You have come closest to us, for there is none closer than you.

Today, we have seen the glory of God and have come to know His mysterious will in being made incarnate among us, for He still works within us. God is with us! Who can be against us? God has loved us! How can we not love him in return? Oh God embody us in your Incarnate Word through the Holiness of your Divinity, Oh Sanctifier and keeper of all. The joy of this feast will be fulfilled once we reach your glory, for you have desired this of us since your Incarnation. O Lord our God, to you be glory forever.

Cong: Amen.

SIT

Hymn (Qolo): *Korozooto*

Cong: Let us cry unto the Lord our God.

Cantor 1: You told Isaiah “The Lord Himself shall grant you a sign;
a virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and shall call his name Emmanuel.

Cong: We call out in prayer to You O Lord answer us.

Cong: Let us cry unto the Lord our God.

Cantor 2: “He will be called the Wondrous Counselor,
and He will be called Almighty God,
Eternal Father, the Prince of Peace”

Cong: We call out in prayer to You O Lord answer us.

Cong: Let us cry unto the Lord our God.

Cantor 3: O infant child, redeemer of mankind
your birth brings salvation to us and all the world

Cong: We call out in prayer to You O Lord answer us.

ETRO

Cel: We adore, Son of the Father and Son of the Virgin. By your birth in the flesh, you revealed God to be witnessed by mankind. You have brought near to us He who dwells in the Highest. You unveiled the truth of God’s love. You enlightened us with the knowledge of Him whom we could not grasp. Accept our incense and grant us the light of your knowledge and the forgiveness of our sins. Give rest to the faithful departed. We raise glory to you, now and forever.

Cong: Amen.

MAZMOORO (Psalm) of the Readings: Ramrimayn

******Night has brought fear and trembling to the heart of all the earth
where is he, the Beloved who will shine to mark his birth?

***** We have waited for so long and the universe now fades
but the promise eternal waters us with dew to save

/* Now the promise of Christ sings to the hope of all mankind
sing ye tribes and ye nations come in haste O Lord Divine

(Here, follow the readings of the day (see pages 14-22) and/or epistles and Gospel of the day)

Supplication Hymn: *Ba'out mar Ya'qoub*

***O** Son of God You came to earth to grant us life
hear love cry out be merciful Saviour Divine.

O great refuge of those on high and man below
safeguard Your flock, direct the lost to Your abode.

Hallel, Hallel, Halleluiah

****O** Birth of Christ you are the feast of all the world
that wondrous bridge that did unite Heaven and Earth.

God joins mankind in its nature; in its deform
that in His grace He may give us His wondrous form.

Hallel, Hallel, Halleluiah

***The** purest love from the Heart of Our Father poured
to bless us with His precious Son Jesus our Lord.

The Son has come to give the world the Paraclete
so we give thanks endless unto the Trinity.

Hallel, Hallel, Halleluiah

*/**O Lord you ask us to love our parents on earth
this love accept from us children in all the world.
O Lord exalt the Virgin Queen and all the Saints
and mercy show to all the dead who wait in hope.
Hallel, Hallel, Halleluiah

STAND

HOOTOMO

Cel: Let us thank the Holy and Glorified Trinity and let us Adore Him
and Praise Him, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit Amen.

Kyrie Eleison, Kyrie Eleison, Kyrie Eleison.

Qadishat aloho, qadishat hayeltono, qadishat lomoyouto.

Cong: MshiHo detiled men bayt daweed itraHam ‘alain (*O Christ born of
the house of David, Have mercy on us*) (3 times)

Cong: Our Father who art in Heaven...

Cel: Accept our prayers Oh Divine Child, you who carry in your body
the fragrance of the universe, the scent of the way, and the sacred dust
of the earth, so that you became visible to Angels and to humanity. You
are our older brother and our companion on the road of glory: your
face was mixed with the lost, the oppressed, the hungry, the lonely, the
naked and the sick. In you was gathered all of the sufferings of
humanity, so that there will remain for us a place within your
embracing arms, that we may reach your Eternal glory, and there we
shall praise you, with your Father and your living Holy Spirit, now and
forever.

Cong: Amen.

(*Christmas Benediction page 23*)

The Daily Readings

December 15

A reading from Saint Sophronious (+638)

Meeting the light

Let us all make haste to meet Christ. We who honour His mystery with much adoration, let us present ourselves before Him with all our hearts...let us carry with us our bright candles to show forth the glorious coming of the Divine. In Him, the brightness of our candles glimmers and shines with eternal light, taking away the darkness of evil. Let us give our souls the brightness that befits this meeting. The most pure Virgin Mother of God carried in her arms the true light, and presented Him to those who stumble in darkness. And so, guided by her light and carrying within us the light seen by all, let us also make haste to meet Christ. The light came to a world steeped in darkness, illuminating it. The light came from on high to visit us and illuminate us while we were living in darkness. This is our mystery. And so it is befitting of us to march with our candles and make haste carrying our torches, showing forth the Light which first shone upon us and the brightness that is to come. Let us make haste together! Let us all make haste to God, or else our sloth will make us ungrateful or cause us to commit the dreadful crime of despising Him. Let us also recall His words of old to the Jews who were drowning in darkness and refusing the light: “the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil”. Evil keeps the soul in darkness, forbidding it to see the light. For the Gospel also says: “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness could not comprehend it”.

The light which enlightens every human who enters this world has come. Oh Brothers and sisters, let Him shine upon us and enlighten us all, so that there will not remain anyone far from this Light or drowning in darkness. Let us rather go forth to meet the light and accept it as Simeon the righteous: He is the “Light that shines with eternal brightness”.

Let us rejoice with Him wholeheartedly, and sing psalms of thanksgiving to the Lord, the Father of the light, who sent to us the true light to pull us out of darkness and into the light. God worked Salvation which He prepared in the presence of all

peoples; a light for revelation to the nations, and for the glory of His people Israel. In Him, we too have seen and have become free of our past failings, just as Simon was freed from the shackles of this life upon seeing the Christ.

December 16

A reading from Saint Gregory Nazianzen (+390)

What miraculous unity; what strange conjunction between God and man!

Now the Creator, the Word, determining to produce a single living being out of both the visible and the invisible creations, fashions Man; and taking a body from already existing matter, and placing in it a Breath taken from Himself which the Word knew to be an intelligent soul and the Image of God, as a sort of second world. He placed him, great in littleness on the earth; a new Angel, a mingled worshipper, fully initiated into the visible creation, but only partially into the Divine Mystery; King of all upon earth, but subject to the King above. He refused the Commandment which had been given to him. He yielded to the malignant fruit; and for his sin he was banished, at once from the Tree of Life, and from Paradise, and from God; and put on the coats of skins...that is, perhaps, the more common flesh, both mortal and contradictory. This was the first thing that he learnt—his own shame; and he hid himself from God. Yet here too he makes a gain, namely death, and the cutting off of sin, in order that evil may not be immortal. Thus his punishment is changed into a mercy; for it is in mercy, I am persuaded, that God inflicts punishment.

And having been first chastened by many means, by word, by law, by prophets, by benefits, by threats, by plagues, by waters, by fires, by wars, by victories, by defeats, by signs in heaven and signs in the air and in the earth and in the sea, by unexpected changes of men, of cities, of nations (the object of which was the destruction of wickedness), at last he needed a stronger remedy, for his diseases were growing worse; mutual slaughters, adulteries, perjuries, unnatural crimes, and that first and last of all evils, idolatry and the transfer of worship from the Creator to the Creatures.

As these defects of sin required a greater aid, they obtained this greater aid. And that was that the Word of God Himself—Who is before all worlds, the Invisible, the Incomprehensible, the Bodiless, Beginning of Beginning, the Light of Light, the Source of Life and Immortality, the Image of the Archetypal Beauty, the immovable Seal, the

unchangeable Image, the Father's Definition and Word. He came to His own Image, and took on Himself flesh for the salvation of our flesh, and mingled Himself with an intelligent soul for my soul's salvation, purifying like by like; and in all points, except sin, He was made man. Conceived by the Virgin, who first in body and soul was dignified by the Holy Spirit, (for it was needful both that Childbearing should be honoured, and that Virginité should receive a higher honour), He came forth then as God with that which He had assumed, One Person in two Natures, Flesh and Spirit, of which the latter divinized the former.

What miraculous unity; what strange conjunction! Existence comes into being, the Uncreated is created and born. That which cannot be contained is contained, by the intervention of an intellectual soul, mediating between the Deity and the physicality of the flesh. And He Who gives riches becomes poor, for He assumes the poverty of my flesh, that I may assume the richness of His Godhead. He that is full empties Himself, for He empties Himself of His glory for a short while, that I may have a share in His Fullness. What are the riches of His Goodness? What is this mystery that is around me? I had a share in the image; I did not keep it; He partakes of my flesh that He may both save the image and make the flesh immortal. He communicates a second Communion far more marvelous than the first, inasmuch as then He imparted the better Nature, whereas now He Himself partakes of the inferior flesh. This is more godlike than the former action. This is superior in the eyes of all men of understanding.

December 17

A reading from Pope Saint Leo the Great (+461)

The birth of Christ brings peace to the Christian people

On all days and at all times, dearly beloved, does the birth of our Lord and Saviour from the Virgin-mother occur to the thoughts of the faithful, who meditate on divine things, that the mind may be raised to the acknowledgment of its Maker, whether it be occupied in the groans of supplication, or in the shouting of praise, or in the offering of sacrifice. May the mind employ its spiritual insight on nothing more frequently and more trustingly than on the fact that God, the Son of God, begotten of the co-eternal Father, was also born by a human birth. But this Nativity which is to be adored in heaven and on earth is suggested to us by no day more than this when, with

the early light still shedding its rays on nature, there is borne in upon our senses the brightness of this wondrous mystery.

Although the state of infancy, which the majesty of the Son of God did not disdain to assume, developed with the passage of time into the maturity of manhood, and although after the triumph of the passion and the resurrection all his lowly acts undertaken on our behalf belong to the past, nevertheless today's feast of Christmas renews for us the sacred beginning of Jesus' life, his birth from the Virgin Mary. In the very act in which we are reverencing the birth of our Savior, we are also celebrating our own new birth. For the birth of Christ is the origin of the Christian people; and the birthday of the head is also the birthday of the body.

Though each and every individual occupies a definite place in this body to which he has been called, and though all the progeny of the church is differentiated and marked with the passage of time, nevertheless as the whole community of the faithful, once begotten in the baptismal font, was crucified with Christ in the passion, raised up with him in the resurrection and at the ascension placed at the right hand of the Father, so too it is born with him in this Nativity.

December 18

A reading from Pope Saint Leo the Great (+461)

The birth of Christ brings peace to the Christian people

For every believer regenerated in Christ, no matter in what part of the whole world he may be, breaks from that ancient way of life that derives from original sin, and by rebirth is transformed into a new man. Henceforth he is reckoned to be of the stock, not of his earthly father, but of Christ, who became Son of Man precisely that men could become sons of God; for unless in humility he had come down to us, none of us by our own merits could ever go up to him.

Therefore, may those *“who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God”*, offer to the Father their harmony as sons united in peace; and may all those whom he has adopted as his members meet in the firstborn of the new creation who came not to do His own will but the will of the one who sent him; for the grace of the Father has adopted as heirs neither the contentious nor the

rebellious, but those who are one in thought and love. The hearts and minds of those who have been reformed according to one and the same image should be in harmony with one another.

The birthday of the Lord is the birthday of peace, as Paul the Apostle says: “*For he is our peace, who has made us both one*”; for whether we be Jew or Gentile, “*through him we have access in one Spirit to the Father*”.

December 19

A reading from Saint Augustine (+430)

The Desire of the nations

“*My soul has failed for Your salvation*” (Psalm 118:81), that is, longing for Your salvation. This *failing*, or *weakness*, is therefore good: for it indicates a longing after good, not as yet indeed gained, but most eagerly and earnestly desired. But who can say these words, other than the chosen generation, the royal priesthood, the holy nation, the particular people longing for Christ from the origin of the human race even unto the end of this world, in the persons of those who, each in his own time, have lived, are living, or are to live here?

As a witness to this longing, we turn to Simeon the saintly old man who, upon embracing Christ in his arms, acclaimed: “*Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation*”... for “*it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ*”. The longing of this old man is, according to our faith, the longing of all the saints in olden times. As the Lord Himself said to His disciples, “*many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it*”. These, of whom our Lord speaks, are to be counted among those who chant: “*My soul has failed for Your salvation*”. The desire of the saints has never ceased, and will never cease from now on within the Body of Christ which is His Church, until the end of time and the coming of Him whom all the nations long for, the one promised by the prophet. Thus, Paul is able to cry out: “*Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.*” This longing we are experiencing stems from our desire to see the Christ transfigured. On

this transfiguration, Paul also says: *“When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory”*.

Therefore, the Church, in its earliest of times, before the Virgin's delivery, boasted Saints who desired the coming Christ in His Incarnation. In these times, since He has ascended into Heaven, the Church equally boasts Saints who desire His manifestation to judge the living and the dead. The Church has been awaiting Christ since the beginning and will do so until the end of time. Its only reprieve was the period of time when Christ lived on earth among His disciples. And so, the entire body of Christ, suffering in this life, is worthy to chant with the psalmist: *“My soul has failed for Your salvation, and I have hoped because of your word”*.

December 20

A reading from Saint Bernard (+1153)

The Whole World Awaits Mary's Response

You have heard, O Virgin, that you will conceive and bear a son; you have heard that it will not be by man but by the Holy Spirit. The angel awaits an answer; it is time for him to return to God who sent him. We too are waiting, O Lady, for your word of compassion; the sentence of condemnation weighs heavily upon us.

The price of our salvation is offered to you. We shall be set free at once if you consent. In the eternal Word of God we all came to be, and behold, we die. In your brief response we are to be remade in order to be recalled to life.

Tearful Adam with his sorrowing family begs this of you, O loving Virgin, in their exile from Paradise. Abraham begs it, David begs it. All the other holy patriarchs, your ancestors, ask it of you, as they dwell in the country of the shadow of death. This is what the whole earth waits for, prostrate at your feet. It is right in doing so, for on your word depends comfort for the wretched, ransom for the captive, freedom for the condemned, indeed, salvation for all the sons of Adam, the whole of your race.

Answer quickly, O Virgin. Reply in haste to the angel, or rather through the angel to the Lord. Answer with a word, receive the Word of God. Speak your own word, conceive the divine Word. Breathe a passing word, embrace the eternal Word.

Why do you delay, why are you afraid? Believe, give praise, and receive. Let humility be bold, let modesty be confident. This is no time for virginal simplicity to forget prudence. In this matter alone, O prudent Virgin, do not fear to be presumptuous. Though modest silence is pleasing, dutiful speech is now more necessary. Open your heart to faith, O blessed Virgin, your lips to praise, your womb to the Creator. See, the desired of all nations is at your door, knocking to enter. If he should pass by because of your delay, in sorrow you would begin to seek him afresh, the One whom your soul loves. Arise, hasten, open. Arise in faith, hasten in devotion, open in praise and thanksgiving. *“Behold the handmaid of the Lord, she says, be it done to me according to your word”*.

December 21

A reading from Pope Saint Leo the Great (+461)

O Christian, recognize your dignity!

Dearly beloved, today our Savior is born; let us rejoice. Sadness should have no place on the birthday of life. The fear of death has been swallowed up; life brings us joy with the promise of eternal happiness.

No one is shut out from this joy; all share the same reason for rejoicing. Our Lord, victor over sin and death, finding no man free from sin, came to free us all. Let the saint rejoice as he sees victory at hand. Let the sinner be glad as he receives the offer of forgiveness. Let the pagan take courage as he is summoned to life.

In the fullness of time, chosen in the unfathomable depths of God's wisdom, the Son of God took for himself our common humanity in order to reconcile it with its Creator. He came to overthrow the devil, the origin of death, in that nature by which he had overthrown mankind.

And so at the birth of our Lord the angels sing in joy: Glory to God in the highest, and they proclaim peace to men of good will as they see the heavenly Jerusalem being built from all the nations of the world. When the angels on high are so exultant at this marvelous work of God's goodness, what joy should it not bring to the lowly hearts of men?

Beloved, let us give thanks to God the Father, through his Son, in the Holy Spirit, because in his great love for us he took pity on us, and when we were dead in

our sins he brought us to life with Christ, so that in him we might be a new creation. Let us throw off our old nature and all its ways and, as we have come to birth in Christ, let us renounce the works of the flesh.

Christian, recognize your dignity, and now that you share in God's own nature, do not return by sin to your former base condition. Bear in mind who is your head and of whose body you are a member. Do not forget that you have been rescued from the power of darkness and brought into the light of God's kingdom.

Through the sacrament of baptism you have become a temple of the Holy Spirit. Do not drive away so great a guest by evil conduct and become again a slave to the devil, for your liberty was bought by the blood of Christ. It is He who shall judge you in truth. It is He who ransomed you in His mercy.

December 22

A reading from Saint John of the Cross (+1591)

In Christ, God has spoken all things

The principal reason why the Old Law permitted us to ask questions of God, and why prophets and priests had to seek visions and revelations of God, was because at that time faith had no firm foundation and the law of the Gospel was not yet established; and thus it was necessary that men should enquire of God and that he should speak, whether by words or by visions and revelations or whether by figures and images or by many other ways of expressing His meaning. For all that he answered and revealed belonged to the mysteries of our faith and things touching it or leading to it.

But now that the faith is founded in Christ, now that in this era of grace the law of the Gospel has been made manifest, there is no reason to enquire of God in that manner, nor for him to speak to us or answer us as he did then. For, in giving us, as he did, his Son, who is his one and only Word, he spoke to us once and for all, in this single Word, and he has no occasion to speak further.

And this is the meaning of that passage with which the Letter to the Hebrews begins, trying to persuade the Hebrews that they should abandon those first ways of dealing and communicating with God which are in the law of Moses, and should set their eyes on Christ alone: *“At various times in the past and in various different ways,*

God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets; but in our own time, in the last days, he has spoken to us through his Son". That is, God has said so much about so many things through his Word that nothing more is needed, since that which he revealed partially in the past through the prophets, he has now revealed completely by giving us the All, which is his Son.

December 23

A reading from Saint John of the Cross (+1591)

In Christ, God has spoken all things

Therefore if someone were now to ask questions of God or seek any vision or revelation, he would not only be acting foolishly but would be committing an offence against God – for he should set his eyes altogether upon Christ and seek nothing beyond Christ.

God might answer him after this manner, saying: *"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; listen to him"*. I have spoken all things to you in my Word. Set your eyes on him alone, for in him I have spoken and revealed to thee all things, and in him you shall find more than you ask for, even more than you want.

I descended upon him with my Spirit on Mount Tabor and said *"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; listen to him"*. You have no reason to ask for new teaching or new answers from me because if I spoke to you in the past then it was to promise Christ. If people asked questions of me in the past then their questions were really a desire of Christ and a hope for his coming. For in him they were to find all good things, as has now been revealed in the teaching of the Evangelists and the Apostles.

Christmas Benediction

KNEEL

(Here commences the Christmas Benediction, where the Celebrant incenses as per usual, after exposing the Holy Eucharist)

Glory to the Voice (in Syriac phonetics and English)

(Syriac Phonetic)

*

shubHo l-how qolo dahwo ghoushmo
wal melat romo, dahwo faghro.
Sham'oi off edne Hzaiyo 'aine
moshoi off ide wakhleh foumo

**

Hadome wregh she hab towdito
l-howdeto waHi khouleh ghoushmo
T'ino wot maryam 'oulo shalyo
kad behouksin wow khoul leshonin

*/**

T'in wo leh yowsef waksewo beh
kyono 'atiqo dmen khoul qashih
rme wo aksh shabro waksewo beh
gazo dHekmoto dal-khoul sofeq

(English)

* Glory to the Voice, the Word made man
who has come to earth to dwell with us.
we have heard and seen and touched our Lord
our mouths have received his flesh and blood.

** Let us thank our Lord who came to us.
He gave hope and life. He saved the world.
Jesus, Mary's child, spoke not a word;
though, as God, he knew the tongues of all.

*/** The Eternal Word, the Ancient One,
Joseph's arms embraced with joy and love.
Christ was but a child, so meek and poor;
yet so wise and strong, our King and God.

Prayers of the Novena

The celebrant and his assistants remain kneeling.

The celebrant prays the appropriate Novena prayer of the day followed by the concluding prayer.

Day One: First Prayer (15th of December): For true love of God

O most beautiful of all children, out of Your great love for us, you wished to become man to show us the hidden beauty of Your Divinity in the splendour of Your visible body. Through it You have drawn people to Your Divine Love. O Beloved of the Father and the sole joy of His heart, we implore You, through your pure nativity and through the intercession of Your mother and Saint Joseph, Your chosen one, to inflame our hearts with Your love, and to enlighten our minds with the heavenly rays of Your Grace, so that we may love You with all our hearts, and love everyone through You and for You, for You alone deserve the love of all hearts. Amen.

(Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be. Concluding prayer on page 27)

Day Two: Second Prayer (16th of December): For dependence on God

O Hope of the Fathers and expectation of the people, through Your birth You have given us hope. By the sweetness of Your hope, You have drawn the shepherds, the magi, and all who believe in Your Holy Name to give the adoration that is due to you. We implore You, through Your pure nativity and through the intercession of Your Mother and Saint Joseph, Your chosen one, to keep us, by Your grace, from attachment to earthly things, from false reliance on our personal works, and from unnecessary worries. May we rely only on Your fatherly direction and Your divine providence. Draw our hearts and minds to contemplate on heavenly gifts, so that we may place all our desires only on them. Amen.

(Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be. Concluding prayer on page 27)

Day Three: Third Prayer (17th of December): For joyful obedience to God

O Admirable Leader, You have guided the people to obey You, not by harshness but by the tenderness of Your love. We implore You, through Your pure nativity and through the intercession of Your Mother and Saint Joseph, Your chosen one, to teach us perfect obedience to Your holy commandments and to our superiors, not for fear of punishment, or constraint, or external force, but by the assent of our minds, the surrender of our hearts, the enthusiasm of our spirits, and the joy of our souls. Amen.

(Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be. Concluding prayer on page 27)

Day Four: Fourth Prayer (18th of December) For godly purity

O Lord, Wine of the Virgins and Lily of Purity, through Your body all bodies are purified and all souls are clothed in chastity. By dwelling in the womb of Your mother, You have made her the most pure and glorious of all virgins. We implore You, through Your pure nativity and through the intercession of Your mother and Saint Joseph, Your chosen one, to make our souls and bodies chaste and our thoughts and actions pure, that we may serve You all the days of our lives. Amen.

(Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be. Concluding prayer on page 27)

Day Five: Fifth Prayer (19th of December): For humility

O Mighty One, seated in the heavenly heights, You left the glory of Your divinity and loved the lowliness of our human nature to become our model of humility and lowliness. We implore You, through Your pure nativity and through the intercession of Your Mother and Saint Joseph, Your chosen one, to give us humility of heart and the denial of ourselves, that we may remove all pride which prevents us from knowing You. We would then realize the weakness of our condition and glorify You, for You alone are holy and great is Your name. To You be glory, power, and strength. Amen.

(Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be. Concluding prayer on page 27)

Day Six: Sixth Prayer (20th of December): For a love of the Holy Eucharist

O Word of God, You have come from the mouth of God to be the life for all people. You became the living bread and were born in Bethlehem, “the House of Bread”, to satisfy our hunger. We implore You, through Your pure nativity and through the intercession of Your Mother and Saint Joseph, Your chosen one, to grant us an insatiable hunger for Your pure Body and Blood. May we approach Your altars and with proper preparation receive Your Sacred Mysteries for our salvation and eternal life. Amen.

(Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be. Concluding prayer on page 27)

Day Seven: Seventh Prayer (21st of December): For a lively faith

O Lord, You are one person who has two natures, and have taught us what You have heard from the Father. We implore You, through Your pure nativity and through the intercession of Your Mother and Saint Joseph, Your chosen one, to grant us a living faith and good works in accordance with that faith. Do not permit us to lose the reward of our faith because of our wrong doings, but may we bear the fruits of true faith and good works. Amen.

(Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be. Concluding prayer on page 27)

Day Eight: Eighth Prayer (22nd of December): For Wisdom

O King of Great Counsel, You have united the magnificence of Your resplendent power with the prudence of human judgment when You, the almighty and powerful God, took flight to Egypt to escape Herod. We implore You, through Your pure nativity and through the intercession of Your mother and Saint Joseph, Your chosen one, to grant us sound judgment in all of our actions, that we may act in all wisdom and serve You all the days of our lives. Amen.

(Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be. Concluding prayer on page 27)

Day Nine: Ninth Prayer (23rd of December): For a love of poverty

O Lord, though You are rich by nature, You loved the poverty of our humanity when You became man like us. Though You were the descendent of kings and the heir of David, the venerable, You were satisfied with a grotto and a humble manger. We implore You, through Your pure nativity and through the intercession of Your mother and Saint Joseph, Your chosen one, to give us a love of voluntary poverty, that we may be satisfied only with what is necessary for our existence, avoiding waste and the love of an easy life, all the days of our lives. Amen.

(Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be. Concluding prayer on page 27)

Concluding prayer:

We have offered You, O Wonderful Child and only-begotten Son, the perfume of our incense, the desires of our hearts, the submission of our souls, the adoring reverence of our bodies, and the prayers of our lips. May this be a proper preparation for Your pure Nativity. May we be found worthy, on that holy day, for You to dwell in us through the mystery of your sacred Body and Blood, as You dwelt in Your mother's womb for nine months. May we be enlightened by the announcement of Your holy angels, as were the humble shepherds. May we worship You with true spiritual adoration, as did the blessed Magi, when we offer You, not gold, frankincense, and myrrh, but faith, hope, and warm love. May these virtues flourish in us and bring forth good works, pleasing to Your will. To You be glory and thanks, to Your blessed Father, and to Your Holy Spirit, now and for ever. Amen.

(Here, the two altar servers proceed with the censor and boat to the middle of the altar, standing facing the monstrance. The Celebrant makes his way also to the middle of the altar facing the monstrance, standing in between the two servers).

God Sent (Arsal Allah)

*God sent His only Son from the heavens to the earth
as the light for all the world.
God's Word has hid himself in the Virgin Mary's womb,
and from her he took his flesh.
His star was seen on high, shining brightly in the East,
as foretold in Balaam's words.
Wise men led by the star to the place where Jesus lay,
honoured Him with finest gifts.
Hallel, Hallel, Halleloonoy

** This child, Isaiah called "Wonderful and Mighty God"
and proclaimed Him as the Lord:
"Upon his shoulders rest full authority and power
over all the universe".
In truth, he is the Word and the Voice of God above,
roaring with a lion's strength.
Yet, as a gentle lamb, silently and peacefully,
he now dwells in Mary's womb
Hallel, Hallel, Halleloonoy

* Nine months within her womb, Mary carried Christ, our Lord,
he, who holds the universe.
She felt no weight at all while she bore the mighty One.
Truly, he is God and man!
Amazement filled the earth, since she had been made so pure
keeping her Virginity,
before the child was born, and at birth and afterwards,
and for all eternity.
Hallel, Hallel, Halleloony

(Here the celebrant places incense in the censor and begins to incense towards the Monstrance, preferably three times in a row, followed by a bow, doing this until the hymn concludes)

** His soul and body joined in a perfect unity
when he made the womb his home.
The oil of joy was poured by the Father from above
to anoint him as the Christ.
His life in Mary's womb, his conception and his birth,
these were great and wonderful.
We see the Spirit's work in the Son of God made man
As portrayed in Ephrem's words
Hallel, Hallel, Halleloony

*/** We sing to you, O Lord. From your mother you appeared;
Truly God and truly man!
In you two natures dwell; and in you two wills reside,
yet you are, in person, one.
We praise and give you thanks, God the Father, and the Son,
and the Spirit, three in one.
O Strong and Holy God, undivided Trinity,
you are blest from age to age.
Hallel, Hallel, Halleloony

(Here the celebrant ascends to the High Altar and raises the Monstrance with his hands in Benediction, while the congregation, kneeling, chants the following hymn)

KNEEL

Holy, Holy, Holy

Holy, Holy, Holy mighty Lord God of Hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of Your great glory.

Hosanna in the Highest

Blessed is He who has come and will come in the name of the Lord

Hosanna in the Highest

Have mercy, have mercy on us Almighty Father

Have mercy on us

We praise You, we bless You,
we adore You.

Have mercy on us, have mercy o Lord,
and hear us, and hear us.

(Here, the Celebrant removes the Eucharist from the monstrance, placing it in the Tabernacle. The Liturgy now ends with a final hymn.)

Christmas Hymns

Holy, Holy (Qoodoos, qoodoos)

Holy, holy, holy mighty Lord; only Son born of God the Father.
Holy, holy, holy mighty Lord; Christ the true Light who dawned from Mary

Holy, holy, holy hidden Lord; who became man for our salvation.
Holy, holy, holy hidden Lord; who in flesh dawned upon creation.

Holy, holy, holy saving Lord; angels came down and sang his praises.
Holy, holy, holy saving Lord; who is carried by Blessed Mary.

All Glory to You (al Majdou laka)

**Ref: All glory to you Jesus Christ our Lord, Son of God
you came to earth born as the Son of man
glory, praise and honour to you.**

- Verse 1:** I bring you news of great joy,
For all the world to hear:
Born for you this day a Saviour,
He is Christ, the Lord.
- Verse 2:** O you people living in darkness,
You have seen a great light shine brightly.
- Verse 3:** The blind receive their sight,
The dead are raised to life,
The sick regain their health,
And the poor now hear the news proclaimed.

Christmas Oratorio

I
Father of Light, Alleluia!
Son of great might, Alleluia!
Spirit Delight, Alleluia!

II
Bards of the Gentiles, could not in fable
tell such a story, as we are able.
The gate of Heaven, glorious portal
bore our creator, come to be mortal.

III
The Son of God, Alleluia!
In Mary's womb, has found an inn, Alleluia!
With ample room.
And in her heart, Alleluia!
By love consoled, a tender warmth, Alleluia!
Amid the cold.

IV

Christ the Father's sole begotten
Born before the first of ages.
Through a mother, still a virgin
Brings man concord, while hell rages.
At His birthplace, in a stable
Where some shepherds, joined by sages
Hear a message, sung by angels
We may find in Gospel pages.

V

Within a stable, where shepherd enter
Within a manger, that fills the center.
There lies a baby, as angels told them
Whose arms extended, will someday hold them.

Lowly, Lowly Lord (*Lmalkoot rowmo*)

1. Lowly, lowly Lord,
with no diadem
do You come to dwell
in a cave at Bethlehem?
There Your mother wraps You up
in a baby's swaddling bands
and St Joseph guarding You
from the cold in a doorway stands.

2. Holy, Holy Lord,
herald Angels sing
and to shepherd boys
wondrous is the news they bring:
how to us this day is born
One to save us, Christ the lord
whence the shepherds rising ran
to the cave and with joy adored.

3. Slowly, slowly Lord,
Wise men wander west
following a star
on a fascinating quest;
and although the light goes out
when they reach Jerusalem,
to confirm a prophecy
it appears near to Bethlehem.

The Creator before all time (*Enono noohro shariro*)

The Creator before all time, has, in time, become a child.
Coming down from his throne of light, in a manger he now lies.
Praised by those who dwell on high, he wills to be praised on earth.
Magi and the shepherds come bowing down, they worship him,
giving honour to their King.

O exult, town of Bethlehem! David's city, sing with joy!
Born in you, from a virgin's womb, is creation's Lord and God.
Shepherds came to visit him and the wise men brought their gifts.
In the cave they worshipped him bowing down before their King.
They left, singing hymns of praise.

Baby Jesus, the Son of God, has been wrapped in swaddling clothes.
Though a great and a mighty King, he lives in humility.
Christ, whom heavens cannot hold, nor the seraphim behold,
from the Virgin was conceived and was fed so lovingly.
Praise our Saviour, God and King.

The Angelic Hosts of fire (*Bsafro Salli Dunyal*)

The angelic hosts of fire, join their praise with those on earth,
for God's Son is born for us, in Bethlehem's cave.
Those above cry, "Holy Lord!" Those below cry, "Blest are you,
a child wrapped in swaddling clothes. So humble your home."

This cave serves as heaven now, with a new angelic throne,
for One who fills heaven and cannot be contained.
Joseph and pure Mary are like the wheels of blazing fire,
they hold God and bear him up, like angels on high.

Come now let us lift up praise, to the hidden Father's Son,
the Word, born from Mary's womb, in God's chosen time.
Wise men journeyed from the East, bowing down they worshipped him,
the One who took flesh from us, our Savior and Lord.

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God (Soughito)

Holy, holy, holy Lord God; only Son born of the Father.
Holy, holy, holy Lord God; only Son who dawned from Mary.

Holy, holy, holy Lord God; though once hidden, seen in flesh now.
Holy, holy, holy Lord God; who in flesh dawned on creation.

Holy, holy, holy Lord God; angels came down, singing praises.
Holy, holy, holy Lord God; whom the Virgin purely carried.

The Litany of Christmas day

Refrain: By your wondrous birth Lord, save us all

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. God the word made flesh | For faithful souls |
| 2. At the Midnight Hour | Our Lord was born |
| 3. Adam's Guilt is cleansed | By this child's tears |
| 4. David has rejoiced | In this his Heir |
| 5. Herod and the Jews | Have been upset |
| 6. Magi from afar | Have brought their gifts |
| 7. Shepherds have been roused | By angel choirs |
| 8. To the world below | God's love is shown |
| 9. Richer now are we | Than those on high |
| 10. Mary has obtained | The fairest Son |
| 11. He her glory is | As she is ours |
| 12. To the holy cave | Adorers come |
| 13. As Michaeas said | in Bethlehem |
| 14. Darkness is dispelled | By Jacob's star |
| 15. Prophecies Fulfilled | Salvation comes |
| 16. All in wonder cry | "O wondrous God!" |
| 17. Poorest of the poor | You lie on straw |
| 18. To redeem Mankind | Becoming Man |
| 19. All who have been born | Should praise his birth |
| 20. Sing with great delight | The lovely songs |
| 21. Risen is the sun | To make us shout |
| 22. Let us thank our God | Who gives his Word |

The Divine Office prayers were translated from the 'Christmas Novena' Evening prayers according to the Maronite Catholic Church as produced by the Lebanese Maronite Order in the University of the Holy Spirit, Kaslik, Lebanon 1993.

Prepared and produced by Saint Charbel's Parish and Youth Association

Prayers subject to Ecclesiastical Approval

Benediction hymns and final hymns are in accord with the work produced by the Maronite Liturgical Commission based in the United States of America. Hymns also taken from the musical text, 'Cedars of Lebanon'.

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142 Highclere Avenue, Punchbowl, Sydney NSW

