

In Between

Monday December 22nd, 2025

Scripture: Luke 1: 46-48a And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant."

Observation: The beginning portion of what is often called Mary's Prayer or Song, or the Magnificat. Positioned by the author of Luke within the emotional and spiritual encounter of Mary when she travels to visit her relative, Elizabeth...both of whom are with child.

Narrative: Focusing here on humility and servant, they do not mean that one is a "doormat" or a person who does not think much of themselves. Yes, in scripture, Mary was initially afraid, bewildered, and had doubts. Once convinced and accepting of her mission/situation, she showed courage, fortitude, and great resolve. As the saying goes, "being humble does not mean thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less."

Question: What example from yourself or from someone else comes to mind when the above was lived out (humility and service), or a common saying lived in reality such as, "they gave or would give the shirt off their back..."

Tuesday December 23rd, 2025

Scripture - Luke 1:59-63 Now it happened that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; they were going to call him Zechariah after his father, but his mother spoke up. 'No,' she said, 'he is to be called John.' They said to her, 'But no one in your family has that name,' and made signs to his father to find out what he wanted him called. The father asked for a writing-tablet and wrote, 'His name is John.' And they were all astonished.

Observation: It was customary to name a male child after the father or certainly after someone in the family; blood lines/lineage was very important in first century Palestine. Even more "astonishing" was that Elizabeth spoke up, as a woman, and proclaimed the name to be given to the Child; which coincides with Zechariah not being able to speak at the time. Finally, John comes from the Hebrew name Yochanan which means "Yahweh is gracious."

Narrative: Indeed John's introduction in this gospel lays the foundation for how unique his life and mission would be.

Question: Who are the people in your life, who by word or deed laid the foundation for the type of person you would eventually become?

Wednesday December 24th, 2025

Scripture – Luke 1:76-77 And you, little child, you shall be called Prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare a way for him, to give his people knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins.

Observation: This is the portion of the prayer of Zechariah, partially regarding his son, John (the baptist).

Narrative: John was to “prepare” for Jesus' coming and provide “knowledge” of salvation through forgiveness. John was to leave his own ego and aspirations aside.

Question: When have you paved the way, or played purely a supportive role, in a situation to the point that any self-interest or ego needed to be set aside?

Thursday December 25th, 2025 (Christmas)

Scripture: Depending on when you attend, you will have a different reading

- Nativity of the Lord (Day) - John 1:1-18 The Divination and Coexistence of Jesus
- Vigil Mass - Matthew 1:1-25 Genealogy, angel visits Joseph, Mary taken in
- Mass during the Night - Luke 2:1-14 Census, Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem, Angels visit the Shepherds
- Mass at Dawn - Luke 2:15-20 After the angels' visit, the Shepherds visit the manger

Observation: There are different Christmas readings for the vigil and the day or night depending on the time of the celebration. So, choose what you wish, and on the heels of this preparation period of Advent, I offer the invocation that a bishop will proclaim upon entrusting priests and deacons with the Word of God at their ordination. “Believe what you read, preach what you believe, and practice what you preach.”

Narrative: Very simply - Have a blessed Christmas.

Question: What gets in your way of believing in the Good News, professing in some way what you believe, and walking that talk?

Friday December 26th, 2025 (Feast of St. Stephen)

Scripture – Matthew 10:21-22 'Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; children will come forward against their parents and have them put to death. You will be universally hated on account of my name; but anyone who stands firm to the end will be saved.'

Observation: The first reading for the day is from Acts 6-7 concerning the stoning and martyrdom of Stephen. In Matthew, these verses are a portion of Jesus' warning to his disciples that followers of His will be hated, imprisoned, scourged, and killed because of their belief. The larger reading for the day (verses 17-22) also gives encouragement during such times, through the power of the Spirit, in what to say and do.

Narrative: During the Christmas season, the Church wastes little time in proclaiming the link between preparation for, arrival of, and belief in the Goods News through Jesus...and the cost of discipleship > where the rubber meets the road, as the saying goes. Great faith would be necessary to take the first steps into apostolic mission by the followers of Jesus... for which they were moderately, at best, prepared to handle.

Question: When have you felt outmatched/overwhelmed by a challenge or individual, through which great faith or fortitude got you through the most difficult first stages of the challenge?

Saturday December 27th, 2025 (Feast of St. John, Apostle and Evangelist)

Scripture – Now on the first day of the week Mary Mag'dalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. So she ran, and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him."

Observation: In the resurrection of Jesus, the stone did not need to be rolled away to let Jesus out, but that we would be able to look inside.

Narrative: Jesus came asking for and proclaiming a re-formation (repentance) of individual lives. Once done, the old self is no longer entombed and lifeless. "You have become a new creation," as one part of a prayer during baptism states. The heavy stone that keeps one entombed in the previous self, is rolled back so others can see, believe, and witness a transformed individual.

Question: Have you or someone you know, re-formed their life and outlook to the extent that one that seemed lifeless has become a "new creation?"