

## **Reflection for January 2024 (Liturgical Year - Cycle B, Year II)**

### **Community Word:**

Jesus is the Star that lights our path to God's kingdom

### **Order:**

"Rise up in splendor, your light has come, the glory of the Lord shines upon you." (Is 60:1)

### **Reflection:**

From the moment of Jesus' birth, His light came and God's glory shone over the darkness of the world. Jesus is not only the Savior for Israel, but the Savior of all mankind. There was too much chaos and suffering during the past year that left many in despair and hopelessness. But for us Christians, we begin the New Year with a sense of renewed hope and a brighter future. The celebration of the birth of Jesus always reminds us that He is truly the Emmanuel – God with us. Life on earth will never be perfect and fair as we want it to be. But Jesus came to save us and restored our rights as co-heirs of heaven. The mystery of God's grace has been revealed to us in the promise in Christ Jesus through the Good News of our salvation. Thus, as the order of the month tells us, let us "rise up in splendor, your light has come, the glory of the Lord shines upon you," (Is 60:1). Truly, Jesus is the Star that lights our path to God's kingdom. The Lord tells us to walk in the radiance of His light and to have faith in Him who is our Light of Hope.

Let us reflect on the Star who is our light and hope in the days ahead.

For the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord, our theme is – Jesus lights our path when we recognize that we are all co-heirs in Christ. Like the magi from the east, we should be relentless in seeking and pursuing our Lord. In our faith journey, even how difficult it may be, we can only look at our Guiding Star, Jesus, who lights our path towards Him. When we are in the Lord's presence, there is joy in our heart and we just want to worship Him and offer Him our life in service and as a living sacrifice. Because of His birth, we have become His co-heir of God's kingdom and we are given this promise, "...you shall be radiant at what you see... the wealth of nations shall be brought to you," (Is 60:5).

For the 2nd Sunday of Ordinary Time, Jesus lights our path when we discern His call and faithfully follow Him. We know that in the world we live in there is so much noise, there are so many voices and messages that as Christians, we need to distinguish the truth from lies. Just because some actions are socially and legally acceptable, it does not mean these are morally right. Immorality is on the rise because it has been tolerated. Thus, we need to wait on the Lord and discern His will through His words in the Holy Scriptures, in the Catechism of the Catholic Church and moral teachings, so that we will be able to follow Jesus. St. Paul tells us, "Whoever is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him," (1 Cor 6:17).

For the Feast of Sto. Niño, Jesus lights our path when we allow the kingdom of God to reign in our heart, like a child. In the gospel narration, Jesus embraced and blessed the children who came to Him and even set them as the standard for one to belong in the kingdom of God. Jesus is telling us that we should be like innocent children who have a heart that is peaceful, pure and full of love. If we want to be in God's kingdom, then we need to be holy and blameless in His sight. By doing so, this promise will be for us, "...whoever... accept(s) the kingdom of God like a child will...enter it." (Mk 10:15).

For the 3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Jesus lights our path when we turn away from sin and follow His ways. St. Paul tells us, "The time is running out...for the world in its present form is passing away," (1 Cor 7:29a, 31b). Jonah was instructed by God to call on the people of Nineveh to repent, otherwise God will destroy them. In like manner, John the Baptist proclaimed that the kingdom of God is at hand and to repent and believe in the gospel. There is no other way but to follow the Lord, leave our old life and become worthy "fishers of men." When we respond to the call of Jesus to be His followers, we receive God's promise in Psalm 26, "...the Lord shows sinners the way...teaches the humble his way," (Ps 25:8b, 9b).

Finally, for the 4th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Jesus lights our path when we speak God's word with authority. For Christians, Jesus is the ultimate authority, not only by the authority of His teachings and works, but more so by the authority of His life, death and resurrection as God's Son who redeemed the world. There is no power greater than the power of God's spoken word. When we believe that His word is our highest authority, we claim God's promise to us, "I will raise up for them a prophet... and will put my words into his mouth; he shall tell them all that I command him," (Dt 18:18).

### **Prayer**

Father God, thank You for manifesting Your presence in Your Son, Jesus Christ, the Light who shines upon the darkness of our world. We have experienced His Light in our lives and we have been empowered and inspired to go out and share His Light to others. Continue to sustain us so that the Light of Jesus may remain forever in our hearts and in the hearts of many, guiding us through our dark moments and finally leading us to Your glory in eternity. This we pray through Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **Sunday Readings: (Cycle B - Year II)**

January 7 – Is 60:1-6/ Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13/ Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6/ Mt 2:1-12

January 14 – 1 Sm 3:3b-10, 19/ Ps 40:2, 4, 7-8, 8-9, 10/ 1 Cor 6:13c-15a, 17-20/ Jn 1:35-42

January 21 – (Philippines) – Is 9:1-6/ Ps 98:1-6/ Eph 1:3-6, 15-18/ Mk 10:13-16

January 21 – (International) – Jon 3:1-5, 10/ Ps 25:4-5, 6-7, 8-9/ 1 Cor 7:29-31/ Mk 1:14-20

January 28 – Dt 18:15-20 / Ps 95:1-2, 6-7, 7-9/ 1 Cor 7:32-35 / Mk 1:21-28

### **Suggested Directions:**

1. Be immersed constantly in God's word that you may be a guiding light to others.
2. Be more committed to evangelize and bring more people to Christ.
3. Empower the young people to follow and serve the Lord.
4. Be generous in offering your resources to God through your tithes and love offering.
5. Support the education of poor children through the Scholarship of Hope program.