



**Fourth Sunday of Advent –  
St. Peter's Pence  
December 18, 2016**

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

**The Church of the Poor, through the Basic Ecclesial Communities, makes Jesus the God who saves and God-with-us accessible by defending the people and creation.**

In light of today's theme: "The Church of the Poor, through the Basic Ecclesial Communities, makes Jesus the God who saves and God-with-us accessible by defending the people and creation", let us continue to reflect on PCP-II's vision of a Church Renewed when it says:

**"PART III. A  
RENEWED INTEGRAL  
EVANGELIZATION**

**B. ANNOUNCING A  
MESSAGE OF LIBERATION**

**5. A Spirituality of Social  
Transformation**

**d) Some Characteristics of  
Following Jesus**

**(281)** It is a spirituality that listens to and heeds God's word,

discerns and follows the Spirit in the Scriptures, in the Church and in history, in the voices of the voiceless and powerless and finds in the Eucharist not only its full nourishment but also its total prayerful communion with the Lord of salvation and liberation. It urges one to care for the earth as God's gift.

**(282)** Such are some of the major elements of the spirituality that the pilgrim community of disciples needs today. Spirituality is a radical living of what we preach, a witnessing to the radical demands of the Gospel.

**Points for Reflection:** What does a Spirituality of Social Transformation ask of you so that you can hear "God's word, discern and follow the Spirit in the Scriptures, in the Church and in history, in the voices of the voiceless and powerless and find in the Eucharist its full nourishment and also its total prayerful communion with the Lord of salvation and liberation"? What do you see as the "radical demands of the Gospel"? How do you care for the earth as God's gift? ■

## Entrance Antiphon: Cf. Is 45: 8

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

### Introductory Rites

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

C: *Amen*

P: The grace of our Lord's Hope, Love, Joy and Peace be with you all.

C: *And with your spirit.*

### Introduction and Welcome

P: Dear brothers and sisters: it will be Christmas Day a week from today. In this last Sunday of Advent, we focus our active waiting for the coming of the Messiah by meditating on God's call: have faith in Jesus as our only liberator and savior; evangelize human friendships, political relations and international alliances so that they will become instruments of God's love, holiness and solidarity rather than an exercise of power that takes advantage and exploits the other. Let us joyfully march into the Temple of God and behold Jesus Christ: the God who saves, the God-with-us in each of us.

### Blessing of the Advent Wreath

Lord God, your Church joyfully awaits the coming of its Savior, who enlightens our hearts and dispels the darkness of ignorance and sin. May this candle of peace continue to be aflame forever.

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

R. *Amen.*

## Penitential Act

P: Brothers and sisters, let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries.

P: I confess..

*A: to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do (striking their breast) through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.*

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

C: *Amen.*

P: Lord, have mercy.

C: *Lord, have mercy.*

P: Christ, have mercy.

C: *Christ, have mercy.*

P: Lord, have mercy.

C: *Lord, have mercy.*

## Collect

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

C: *Amen.*

## LITURGY OF THE WORD

### First Reading: Is 7:10-14

**L: The first reading is taken from the prophet Isaiah.**

The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying: Ask for a sign from the LORD, your

God; let it be deep as the netherworld, or high as the sky! But Ahaz answered, "I will not ask! I will not tempt the LORD!" Then Isaiah said: Listen, O house of David! Is it not enough for you to weary people, must you also weary my God? Therefore the Lord himself will give you this sign: the virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel.

L: The Word of the Lord.

C: *Thanks be to God.*

**Commentary on Is 7:10-14:**

Isaiah wanted to convince Ahaz: before the threats of the northern alliance of Damascus and Samaria and the invasion of Assyria, Ahaz should not trust any earthly power but God. The request for a sign meant that Ahaz should ask God directly for guidance. But Ahaz's answer was ambivalent: on the one hand, it seemed he did not want to test the Lord, which signified respect; but, it seemed he already chose to side with Assyria, on the other. To ask for a sign was, thus, superfluous. By siding with Assyria, Juda consequently lost her freedom. She was reduced into a vassal while her sister-state Israel in the north was destroyed. Ahaz's impending fall was also the moment of God's display of fidelity to His promise: He would restore the royal dynasty of David and defend His people, by the birth of a child: Immanu-el – Emmanuel – God with us!

**Responsorial Psalm: Ps 24:1-2. 3-4. 5-6**

***R: Let the Lord enter; he is king of glory.***

The LORD's are the earth and its fullness; the world and those who dwell in it. For he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers.

***R: Let the Lord enter; he is king of glory.***

Who can ascend the mountain of the LORD? or who may stand in his holy place? One whose hands are sinless, whose heart is clean, who desires not what is vain.

***R: Let the Lord enter; he is king of glory.***

He shall receive a blessing from the LORD, a reward from God his savior. Such is the race that seeks for him, that seeks the face of the God of Jacob.

***R: Let the Lord enter; he is king of glory.***

**Commentary on Ps 24:1-2. 3-4. 5-6:**

This is a liturgical psalm used in the entry into the temple. There are two groups involved: those who ask: what are the requirements to be able enter the temple, and those who have the authority to answer. There is no requirement for the Lord, he is the king of glory. For those visiting the temple, they must be sinless, clean in heart and are not vain. In the temple, the visitors and God are united, but with God giving the blessing. Two levels are involved in the liturgical scene: (1) the world of creation which belongs to the Lord, and (2) the dwelling place of God to which one may ascend. The movement is a procession from a universal setting to a more specific place: the Temple. We live as inhabitants in God's world, but we enter as visitors into the Temple of God.

**Second Reading: Rom 1:1-7**

**L: The second reading is taken from the letter of St. Paul to the Romans:**

Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised previously through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, the gospel about his

Son, descended from David according to the flesh, but established as Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness through resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord. Through him we have received the grace of apostleship, to bring about the obedience of faith, for the sake of his name, among all the Gentiles, among whom are you also, who are called to belong to Jesus Christ; to all the beloved of God in Rome, called to be holy. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

L: The Word of the Lord.

C: *Thanks be to God.*

### **Commentary on Rom 1:1-7**

This is Paul's opening greeting to the Christian community in Rome which he did not found. But the greetings – containing the sender, the receiver and the purpose - seem to be an elaborate formal beginning of his letter. He introduces himself with his three credentials: 'slave of Christ Jesus, an apostle and chosen to preach the Good News'. Right away he presents the summary of his gospel concerning Jesus Christ, from the Old Testament prophecy down to its fulfillment in the resurrection, in a Trinitarian formula. His mission is to provoke faith in Jesus among all the gentiles and the church in Rome. All of them are called beloved of God and holy!

### **Gospel: Matt 1:18-24:**

P: The Lord be with you.

C: *And with your spirit.*

P: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew

C: *Glory to you, O Lord.*

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about.

When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together,

she was found with child through the Holy Spirit. Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly. Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means "God is with us."

When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home.

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

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

### **Commentary on Matt 1:18-24:**

Matthew's account on the birth of the Messiah concludes his version of the genealogy of Jesus: Jesus is the historical Messiah that the Jews have been waiting for, according to the lineage of David, going as far back as Abraham. But now, the culmination of the generations focuses on Joseph, the last in the line leading to the Messiah, but with a twist: Jesus was born to a virgin to fulfill the prophecy from of old, following faithfully the Jewish tradition (Is 7,14). And Mary's conception of Jesus was not the work of Joseph but an intervention of the Holy Spirit. Joseph responded initially to this situation as a just man would: not expose Mary to shame by divorcing her quietly. But following the prophetic dream-fulfillment formula, he realized his

responsibility as commanded by God: it is not his child, yet he, the father, following Jewish tradition, would be the one to give the child's name. His name articulated his mission: Jesus means "God saves". By being born into the human race, God would now be accessible, fulfilling the traditional prophecy: Emmanuel – God is with us! Joseph now would be transformed, touched very profoundly by the mysterious works of the God that he believes in. By agreeing to take Mary in, he would now begin to serve God as the silent keeper and protector of the mystery of salvation! That was his vocation!

**Homily: The Church of the Poor, through the Basic Ecclesial Communities, makes Jesus the God who saves and God-with-us accessible by defending the people and creation.**

Summary of the Sunday Reading Message	Concrete description of the poor people and their situation	Reflection/ Points for reflection/ Call/ Challenge
The Church of the Poor, through the Basic Ecclesial Communities, makes Jesus the God who saves and God-with-us accessible by defending the people and creation.	In your parish and BEC, where are the places you most found dirty and unclean? Why? What is the impact of this dirt and uncleanness on the people and the environment?	The Spirituality of Social Transformation "urges one to care for the earth as God's gift." It is a radical living of what we preach, a witness to the radical Gospel demands.

**Profession of Faith**

A: I believe in one God, the Father

almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

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

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

**General Intercessions**

P: Dear sisters and brothers, let us now bring to God our petitions and prayers, our hopes, joys and sadness. For every prayer we respond: Be with us and liberate us always, O Lord.

**R: *Be with us and liberate us always, O Lord.***

L: For the Church, as the Church of the Poor, spread throughout the world: that She may continue to make Jesus the God who saves and God-with-us accessible to all by defending the people, especially the poor, the marginalized and the excluded and by protecting the environment and all of creation. Let us pray to the Lord.

**R: *Be with us and liberate us always, O Lord.***

L: For the People of God, and for all those who are searching for Him, and for life's meaning and direction: that they may cultivate a spirituality of social transformation that "listens to and heeds God's word, discerns and follows the Spirit in the Scriptures, in the Church and in history, in the voices of the voiceless and powerless and finds in the Eucharist not only its full nourishment but also its total prayerful communion with the Lord of salvation and liberation. " Let us pray to the Lord.

**R: *Be with us and liberate us always, O Lord.***

L: For our Holy Father, Pope Francis, for bishops, priests, deacons, brothers and sisters in consecrated life and for all the lay who are entrusted with the care and administration of the church as a community of God's people: that they may cultivate a spirituality of social transformation that is a radical living of what they preach, a witnessing to the radical demands of the Gospel that includes the defense of and "care for the earth as God's gift." Let us pray to the Lord.

**R: *Be with us and liberate us always, O Lord.***

L: For world leaders and all those entrusted with governance and administration of the goods of the earth: that they may exercise their office by listening to the cry of the poor and respond to their needs in the spirit of equitable distribution of goods and justice while preventing lies and deception, trolls and post-truth from further invading social media and modern means of communication. Let us pray to the Lord.

**R: *Be with us and liberate us always, O Lord.***

L: For the poor farmers and workers,

the indigenous peoples, national minorities and the environment that is slowly dying: that they may all learn to take good care of each other by finding land to till, clean waters to fish, a roof on their heads, work to do and reclaim and defend their ancestral lands and domains by rejecting the economy of exclusion effected by huge plantations, logging and mining companies that destroy their land and life, rich bio-diversity and healthy eco-system. Let us pray to the Lord.

**R: *Be with us and liberate us always, O Lord.***

L: For our beloved dead: that, by the forgiveness of their sins, they may receive the gift of eternal life. Let us pray to the Lord.

**R: *Be with us and liberate us always, O Lord.***

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

**R: *Be with us and liberate us always, O Lord.***

P: Dear God, these are the prayers we present to You today. Make of us Your willing instruments of love, truth, freedom, justice and care for creation by the power of Your Spirit. Mold us to become your heart on earth. Thank you for being with us always, through Christ our Lord.

*C: Amen.*

### **Liturgy of the Eucharist**

Preparation of the Altar and the Gifts

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

*C: Blessed be God forever.*

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

*C: May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and*

*glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.*

**Prayer over the Offerings:**

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

*C: Amen.*

**Prayer of the Eucharist**

P: The Lord be with you.

*C: And with your spirit.*

P: Lift up your hearts.

*C: We lift them up to the Lord.*

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

*C: It is right and just.*

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

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

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

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

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

**Acclamation**

P: The mystery of faith.

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

*(Concluding the Eucharistic Prayer, the priest says:)*

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

*C: Amen.*

**Communion Rite**

The Lord's Prayer

**Doxology**

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

**Sign of Peace**

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

*C: Amen.*

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

*C: And with your spirit.*

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

**Breaking of the Bread**

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

**Communion**

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

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

**Communion Antiphon:** **Is 7: 14**  
*Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son; and his name will be called Emmanuel.*

### **Prayer after Communion**

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

*C: Amen.*

### **Final Blessing**

P: The Lord be with you.

*C: And with your spirit.*

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

*C: Amen.*

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

*C: Amen.*

*So that, rejoicing now with devotion at the Redeemer's coming in the flesh, you may be*

endowed with the rich reward of eternal life when he comes again in majesty.

*C: Amen.*

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

*C: Amen.*

### **Dismissal**

P: Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.

*C: Thanks be to God. ■*

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Join Fr. Ben Alforque, MSC of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in **GOSPEL BREAK**, a short yet entertaining and insightful discussion of this Sunday's Gospel on YouTube. Visit [gospelbreak.wordpress.com](https://www.gospelbreak.wordpress.com). Or scan this QR code with your Smartphone or tablet.

