DECEMBER 6: SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Is 40:1-5, 9-11 | 2 Pt 3:8-14 | Mk 1:1-8| CCC 668-674, 680

THE KINGDOM NOW: ANTICIPATION

- With his Incarnation and Paschal mystery Christ inaugurates the kingdom of God
- This kingdom will find its fulfillment when Christ returns
- In the meantime, the kingdom is already present in "seed" form in the Church
- The Christian life is one of hope and anticipation

How does the Lord Jesus now reign? As the Lord of the cosmos and of history, the head of his Church, the glorified Christ mysteriously remains on earth where his kingdom is already present in seed and in its beginning in the Church. One day he will return in glory but we do not know the time. Because of this we live in watchful anticipation, praying "Come, Lord" (Rv 22:20). (*Compendium #133)*

DECEMBER 13: THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Is 61:1-2a, 10-11 | 1 Thes 5:16-24 | Jn 1:6-8, 19-28| CCC 675-677, 680

THE KINGDOM TO COME: THE PAROUSIA

- At the end of time, Jesus will come again in triumphant glory
- This is the time of the Last Judgment, of which no one knows the day or the hour (*see* Mt 24:36)
- With the Lord's coming, the Kingdom of God will be realized
- The Second Coming of Christ is referred to as the "Parousia"

How will the coming of the Lord in glory happen? After the final cosmic upheaval of this passing world the glorious coming of Christ will take place. Then will come the definitive triumph of God in the Parousia and the Last Judgment. Thus, the kingdom of God will be realized. (*Compendium #134)*

DECEMBER 20: FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a| Rom 16:25-27 | Lk 1:26-38| CCC 1042-1050, 1060

GOD'S SAVING WILL

- Christians hope for "new heavens" and a "new earth" (2 Pt 3:13)
- This final fulfillment of God's saving plan is also fulfilment of all human hope
- God desires the salvation of all humanity
- God's saving plan is made accessible to all in Christ and the offer of salvation is extended to all through his Church

What is the hope of the new heavens and the new earth? After the final judgment the universe itself, freed from its bondage to decay, will share in the glory of Christ with the beginning of "the new heavens" and a "new earth" (2 Pt 3:13). Thus, the fullness of the kingdom of God will come about, that is to say, the definitive realization of the salvific plan of God to "unite all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth" (Eph 1:10). God will then be "all in all" (1 Cor 15:28) in eternal life. (*Compendium #216)*

DECEMBER 25: THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

Vigil: Is 62:1-5 | Acts 13:16-17, 22-25 | Mt 1:1-25 or 1:18-25 | *Night*: Is 9:1-6 | Ti 2:11-14 | Lk 2:1-14 | *Dawn*: Is 62:11-12 | Ti 3:4-7 | Lk 2:15-20 | *Day*: Is 52:7-10 | Heb 1:1-6 | Jn 1:1-18 or 1:1-5, 9-14 | CCC 525-530, 563-564

THE COMING OF SALVATION

- At Christmas, the Church celebrate the birth of Christ, when the glory of heaven is displayed in the weakness of a baby
- Because of the Incarnation, which is made manifest in the Nativity, God's saving presence is made accessible to humanity
- Salvation for humanity is possible because of God's humility
- In the Incarnation God enters human history, transforming it forever

What does the Gospel teach about the mysteries of the birth and infancy of Jesus? At Christmas the glory of heaven is shown forth in the weakness of a baby; the circumcision of Jesus is a sign of his belonging to the Hebrew people and is a prefiguration of our baptism; the Epiphany is the manifestation of the Messiah King of Israel to all the nations; at the presentation in the temple, Simeon and Anna symbolize all the anticipation of Israel awaiting its encounter with its Savior; the flight into Egypt and the massacre of the innocents proclaim that the entire life of Christ will be under the sign of persecution; the departure from Egypt recalls the exodus and presents Jesus as the new Moses and the true and definitive liberator. (*Compendium #103)*

DECEMBER 27: THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 | Col 3:12-21 or 3:12-17 | Lk 2:22-40 or 2:22, 39-40 or, in Year B, Gn 15:1-6; 21:1-3 | Heb 11:8, 11-12, 17-19 | Lk 2:22-40 or 2:22, 39-40 | CCC 525-530, 563-564

THE HOLY FAMILY AND THE HOLINESS OF THE FAMILY

- Jesus entered human history as a child in Nazareth
- Much of Jesus' life is hidden in the ordinary life of a family, the Holy Family
- Jesus' obedience to his earthly parents, Mary and Joseph reflect his obedience to the heavenly Father
- By entering family life Jesus sanctifies the family

What does the hidden life of Jesus in Nazareth teach us? In the course of his hidden life in Nazareth, Jesus stayed in the silence of an ordinary existence. This allows us to enter into fellowship with him in the holiness to be found in a daily life marked by prayer, simplicity, work and family love. His obedience to Mary and to Joseph, his foster father, is an image of his filial obedience to the Father. Mary and Joseph accepted with faith the mystery of Jesus even though they did not always understand it. (*Compendium #104)*

