



Christ in Our Neighborhood

Prayer

Loving Father, as we prepare for the season of Christmas, open our hearts to welcome Your Son in our lives. May we celebrate His presence within us and rejoice that He is truly Emmanuel - God with us. We ask this Christ our Lord. Amen.

Commentary

1st Reading: 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8-12, 14, 16

David loved the Lord so much that he could not consider having the Ark of the Lord dwelling in some tent while he himself lived in a palace. Upon David's command, the people were to build a more suitable place for the Ark.

The Ark itself and the tent which contained it was designed by the Lord Himself. But, the Lord was moved by David's desire to give Him honor. In return, God promised David an even greater house - not of cedar - but of a kingship that would last forever.

The Lord blesses David and says, "Your house and your kingdom shall endure forever before me; your throne shall stand firm forever."

This kingship would include a great heir who will be God's son. Of course, as Christians, we know that this heir is Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God. He is the King of kings and Lord of lords.

But, far from being the end of the line, Jesus is the beginning for all who choose to dwell in His kingdom. For His kingdom lasts forever.

Question

How do you see yourself as a part of Christ's kingdom?

Commentary

2nd Reading: Romans 16:25-27

"Forever and ever." These words from Romans are the way we often end our prayers. Indeed! The Lord Jesus lives forever and ever.

As we read in the 1st Reading, His kingdom has no end.

The great John Newton hymn, *Amazing Grace*, reminds us of this eternal kingdom of which we are a part:

"When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise

Than when we'd first begun."

Forever and ever is a long time. But, this great gift of everlasting life begins with Jesus who died so that we might enjoy eternity with God. This Christmas, let us give thanks to the Lord for such a wonderful gift!

Question

How will you thank the Lord this Christmas for all the good He has done for you?

How are you, your friends, and family preparing for Christmas?

Why not have a family/friends gathering around the Christmas Day commentary of Christ in Our Neighborhood?

Visit:

dphx.org/Christ-in-our-neighborhood

Commentary

Gospel: Luke 1:26-38

In our 1st Reading, we recall the beauty of the Ark which bore the Law of God. The very essence of God was within the ark.

Our Gospel today tells of another ark. However, more than just a container of God, this motherly ark gave to Jesus her real human DNA. More than the Ark of the Covenant made of human hands in which was placed the divine law, Mary is the new Ark in which was conceived the God-man, Jesus Christ.

Something radically new has begun. This is news worth pondering and proclaiming.

Yet, as we proclaim Christ born of a Virgin, we should also proclaim his very presence within us. For, we are the temple of Christ dwelling within us. As Church we reveal the presence of God with us - Emmanuel.

To acknowledge Christ within us, we must be ready to act as His servants. As Mary said, "I am the handmaid of the Lord," we should respond, "We are servants of the Lord. Let it be done to us according to his will."

Question

How do you see the Lord abiding in you?

This Week's Task

There is a gift that you can give to others which does not need to be wrapped.

Your gift of inviting friends or relatives to Christmas Mass with you and/or inviting them to be a part of your Christ in Our Neighborhood group may forever change their lives.

Ask someone who has not been to Church in a while and give the gift of an invitation to come back for Christmas!

Group Prayer

Pray or sing this traditional Advent hymn:

O come, Thou Key of David, come
And open wide our heav'nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

The prayer continues with Psalm 89

Psalm

Response: For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

The promises of the LORD
I will sing forever;
through all generations my mouth shall
proclaim your faithfulness.
For you have said,
"My kindness is established forever";
in heaven you have confirmed your

faithfulness.

R. For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

"I have made a covenant with my chosen one,
I have sworn to David my servant:
Forever will I confirm your posterity
and establish your throne for all generations."

R. For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

"He shall say of me, 'You are my father,
my God, the Rock, my savior.'
Forever I will maintain my kindness toward him,
and my covenant with him stands firm."

R. For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

Conclude with an Our Father

Merry Christmas!