

LET IT BE  
*done to me according to*  
YOUR WORD



WALKING TO  
*bethlehem*

WEEK 4 - LOVE

FOR WITH GOD  
*nothing will be  
impossible*

LUKE 1:37



# Gospel Reading

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Hail, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of

# Gospel Reading

his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end." And Mary said to the angel, "How shall this be, since I have no husband?" And the angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, your kinswoman Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible." And Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.



# Reflection

*“Let what you have said be done to me”.*

This simple response from Mary was not just the yes of one moment, but the result of a lifetime of yeses to the Lord. It entailed preparation spiritually, emotionally, and physically over the period of her entire life up to that point.

We see the fullness of God’s perfect love manifest in the yes that Mary gave to the Lord in spite of fear, in spite of anxiety, in spite of not having the full knowledge of just how much it was going to cost her. This yes opened her up to new life, new life that has given us the most precious gift of being made new ourselves, as sons and daughters of the Most High through Jesus, who comes to us this season as an unassuming baby.

# Reflection

This image of a woman holding a child in her body until the time comes to give birth, is a powerful one. The love between a husband and wife does not simply culminate in the marital act and end there. The woman opens up her body to new life. As this new life begins to grow in her, the woman's body prioritises the baby growing in it. Resources are diverted to sustain and feed the baby, organs are pushed out of their original positions as the baby grows bigger and later on, even bones begin to move and open up to prepare for birth. In bringing forth new life, a mother truly gives of her WHOLE body and self.

# Reflection

In agreeing to hold Jesus in her body and birth Him into the world to be our living sacrifice and salvation, Mary gave a yes that truly meant giving EVERYTHING so that all of us may live. Her reputation, her body, her relationship with Joseph, the promise of future heartbreak; she said yes to it all. How differently might this story of salvation have gone without her yes?

When opportunities come for us to share God's love with others or step out of our comfort zone, we often wrestle with our thoughts and doubts. "Am I able to do this? Will this even work out? What if I fail?". We know that Mary was "deeply disturbed" from the gospel, but what makes her extraordinary is her courage

# Reflection

and obedience to say yes to God's will for her because of what it would mean for mankind. This obedience can only come from her immense trust in, and love for God, a love that gave Mary the courage to say Yes to God's will regardless of the future, uncertainty, or circumstances. As we approach the birth of Jesus, let us too continue to practice saying Yes to God's will in our lives, to persevere like Mary, so that others may live. Amen.



*watch and pray*

# watch and pray

## *Prayer Journaling*

*Before you begin, you may want to click on the Spotify playlist link below to help you enter into prayer.*

Read and re-read Gospel passage  
(Luke 1:26-38) slowly

Today, I thank God for ...

As you read this passage, what do you feel inspired to thank God for? Counting the Lord's blessings no matter how small, positively changes our attitude to praise and adoration of God's character.



*The Journey to Bethlehem*

# watch and pray

I am sorry for ...

As we draw nearer to God, we become more aware of our sins. Noting them down reminds us to mention it the next time we avail of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and helps us to see the progress we are making.

From the Gospel passage choose a verse or phrase as your verse for the week.

Prayer is often likened to having a conversation with the Lord. As with any conversation, there needs to be room for listening.

# watch and pray

The Lord reveals Himself to us through Scripture time and again. What troubles you, moves you, resonates with you in this passage? Ask the Lord to reveal what He is saying to you through these particular portions of the passage that have impacted you.

I want to pray for ...

Jesus wants us to come to Him with anything, and everything. He is interested in each of us in a very specific way. What is on your heart at this moment? Is there a person or situation on your heart that needs prayer? Take this to the Lord in faith, knowing that He hears you, and responds in love.



call to action

“Love cannot remain by itself - it has no meaning.  
Love has to be put into action,  
and that action is service.”

*St Teresa of Calcutta*



# Call to action

*Christian love is not complete until it is given away. Just as Mary's love for the Lord allowed her trust in Him and obey His will for her life despite the great cost, we too can be moved to greater love and trust in the Lord so that others may live. Ask the Lord to help you identify a family member, friend, colleague that you struggle with, that you can commit to loving for the duration of the coming year and in a spirit of prayer, commit to this in writing in your journal:*

Lord, I commit to love ....

I struggle to love this person because ...

Lord, I know this person is broken, and needs you and your healing love in their lives. Today I want to say a prayer of blessing over their lives ...

# Call to action

*Christian love is not complete until it is given away. Just as Mary's love for the Lord allowed her trust in Him and obey His will for her life despite the great cost, we too can be moved to greater love and trust in the Lord so that others may live. Ask the Lord to help you identify a family member, friend, colleague that you struggle with, that you can commit to loving for the duration of the coming year and in a spirit of prayer, commit to this in writing in your journal:*

Lord, I commit to love ....

I struggle to love this person because ...

Lord, I know this person is broken, and needs you and your healing love in their lives. Today I want to say a prayer of blessing over their lives ...

# Call to action

\*Today I commit to loving them (name the person) in this way for the coming year by ...

You may want to show God's love to the person that God has placed in your heart by:

- Helping out with chores more at home (if it is a family member)
- Making/buying (if you cannot cook) their favourite food for them
- Take an interest in something they like and try to engage them about it

# Call to action

If the person on your heart is someone that you can no longer have in your life, you may want to try the following:

- Committing to pray for them once a week, sincerely claiming blessings over their life
- Anonymously send them a hand made card with a prayer

*\*This list is not exhaustive. Please feel free to move in generosity as you are inspired.*



Checkpoint

# Checkpoint

To end the Season of Advent, let us bring to light what we have learned and grown from during Advent. Share with someone (accountability partner/dear friend) on how your Advent Journey has been.

Write a prayer of commitment to Jesus, on what guidance and graces you need on your journey into the new year. Let this prayer signify that you have welcomed the Messiah with open arms into your life.

You may choose to decorate your commitment on a piece of art paper and display it somewhere visible in your room so that it can serve as a reminder of what you have committed to. It may be a nice way to help you review where you are with this commitment at the end of next year.

# Journey Checkpoints

