

December 19

Priest: In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was a descendant of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years. Once when he was serving as priest before God and his section was on duty, he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and offer incense. Now at the time of the incense offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside. Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified; and fear overwhelmed him. But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord." (Lk 1:5-14)

Reflection

Lector: The infant king will stand as a sign in full view of all the nations. This king will be a sign not only for the Israelites, but also for the Gentiles. All people shall come to him. Our hearts call out, "Come Lord, save your people, do not delay, for we are ready to receive you; we desire to see you face to face."

Antiphon

Priest: O root of Jesse, standing an ensign of the people, before whom even kings silent will remain, whom the Gentiles, too, shall beseech, come now to deliver us all; delay no longer. (cf. Is 11)

Magnificat

All: My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.

His mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;

he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.

He has helped his servant Israel
in remembrance of his mercy,
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever. (Lk 1:46-55)

Intercessions

Priest: Son of Man, may we celebrate your birth, you who are the
Lamb of God;

All: you take away our sins and the sins of the world.

Priest: Son of Mary, while in your Mother's womb you were
welcomed by Elizabeth and her infant son, John;

All: though hidden, may we always recognize you and welcome
you into our hearts.

Priest: God our Counselor, come; tell us that your kingdom is at
hand;

All: protect the Church and the Pope. Keep the Church as your spotless bride.

Priest: Root of Jesse, you humbled yourself to share our human nature;

All: come and save us without delay.

Closing Prayer

Priest: Christ goes before us. He is the Lamb without sin who will open to us the gates of heaven. He is the high priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech. He is the king of justice and his reign is eternal.

You who live and reign with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, world without end.

All: Amen.

The final Marian hymn on page 8.