

2015 SIMBANG GABI THEMES

Archdiocese of Chicago

30th Anniversary Simbang Gabi Celebration: December 15-23, 2015

The Archdiocese of Chicago, through the Dept. of Parish Life and Formation and participating host parishes, coordinates the yearly inter-parish celebrations of Simbang Gabi. This unique Filipino tradition of a nine-day novena of Marian masses before Christmas has become a source of joy and anticipation for more than 70 parishes in Lake and Cook Counties. The nine masses follow the liturgy of votive masses in honor of the expectant Mother of God. Simbang Gabi masses are celebrated as festive masses (except those scheduled as anticipated or Sunday masses) – the **Gloria** is sung and the color of vestments is **white**, not purple of Advent. The texts of the masses are those of the votive masses for Mary “tempore adventus” (In Advent). This multicultural parish community celebration shares a rich Filipino tradition with the whole Church and has become a catalyst for evangelization and continued call to mission.

*The overall theme of the novena of masses this year focuses on the **Jubilee Year of Mercy** in solidarity with the whole Church and with the larger faith community. This overall theme, along with Pope Francis’ exhortation on **Ecclesial Communities** (in his book, *Joy of the Gospel*), inform the development of the daily Scriptural Themes of the 9-day novena of masses. The reflections and themes serve as discussion points for host-parish planning teams as they reflect on the evangelization and inculturation concerns of Filipino Americans and other culture groups in the practice of their faith. Each host parish is strongly encouraged to incorporate the Scriptural Theme of the day of their Simbang Gabi in planning their celebration.*

December 15, Tuesday

1st Reading: Zephaniah 3:1-2, 9-13

Psalm: Ps 34:2-3, 6-7, 17-18, 19, 23 The Lord hears the cry of the poor.

Gospel: Matthew 21:28-32

Gospel background: The parable of the two sons as told by Jesus describes a man with two sons whom he told to “go out and work in the vineyard today”. The first son said no but later changed his mind and went. The other son said yes, but did not go.

- *The outcasts, the poor, the lowly, and the sinners are more favored by God and would enter the kingdom of God because they had a change of heart, converted, and believed in John the Baptist than the religious leaders of the time.*
- *Do we listen and respond to the will of our Father, our God, or our own will?*
- *Which son are we? Are we like the first son quick to say no, but afterwards upon contemplating changes our mind and does what was asked of us? Or are we like the other son quick to say yes to look good in front of others and to “show face” that we’re dutiful, but then does not follow through on that “yes”?*

Theme: Do not let our hearts abide far from God’s Will and Love; we must strive to show a real and complete “yes” to God’s invitation.

TAGALOG: *Huwag ilayo and ating mga puso sa kalooban at pagmamahal ng Diyos; dapat magsikap ipakita ang lubos na pagsangayon sa anyaya ng Diyos.*

December 16, Wednesday

1st Reading: Isaiah 45:6c-8, 18, 21c-25

Psalm: Ps 85:9ab, 10, 11-12, 13-14 Let the clouds rain down the Just One, and the earth bring forth a savior

Gospel: Luke 7:18b

Gospel background: It should not be hurtful or disrespectful to get a second opinion when it relates to things of God. When John the Baptist sent emissaries to Jesus to ask the question “Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?” Jesus responds to the question with the only obvious evidence. John knows Isaiah and so Jesus responds referencing Isaiah’s prophecy.

- *The poor are given good news. The Lord God comes with power. He heals the sick, gives sight to the blind, cures the lepers, and raises the dead. Jesus also says “Blessed are those who are not offended by me”.*

Theme: The Lord God is almighty. He comes with power and glory.

TAGALOG: *Ang Panginoong Diyos ay Makapangyarihan. Nasa kanya ang kapangyarihan at kaluwalhatian.*

December 17, Thursday

1st Reading: Genesis 49:2, 8-10

Psalm: Ps 72:1-2, 3-4ab, 7-8, 17 Justice shall flourish in time, and fullness of peace for ever.

Gospel: Matthew 1:1-17

Gospel background: Matthew details the ancestral lineage of Jesus Christ. Two major names prominent here are Abraham and David. Abraham, the father of Israel who received the promise of unsurpassable blessing; David, from the tribe of Judah, the head of the dynasty to whom the kingdom was promised forever. Jesus is both the Son of Abraham and the Son of David. The line of Abraham and David culminates with Joseph, the husband of Mary.

- *By blood we cannot claim we are Jews. But by Spirit we are adoptive brothers and sisters of Jesus. The promises made and given to the people of Israel, the Jewish people, can be attained by us and all peoples called to enhance faith and Christ's salvation.*

Theme: To know Jesus requires knowing the story and characters of the Old Testament. This is the ancestry of all people of faith who descend from Abraham.

TAGALOG: *Ang kaalaman at pagkakilala ukol kay Hesus ay hango sa mga kasaysayan ng bayan sa Matandang Tipan. Ito ang aklat ng lahi ni Abraham.*

December 18, Friday

1st Reading: Jeremiah 23:5-8

Psalm: Ps 72:1-2, 12-13, 18-19 Justice shall flourish in time, and fullness of peace for ever.

Gospel: Matthew 1:18-25

Gospel background: The annunciation to Joseph about the birth of Jesus Christ.

- *Mary, betrothed to Joseph, was "with child through the Holy Spirit".*
- *Joseph was a righteous man, not wanting to shame Mary.*
- *In this story we are told a second time that Mary has conceived her child through the Holy Spirit. This time though it is through the angel's words to Joseph. {The first time was the encounter of Mary with the angel of God.}*
- *Joseph was told by the angel "You are to name him Jesus". It is extremely important that Joseph receives Mary into his home and names Jesus because doing so establishes Jesus as being from the house of David (as seen/heard from the previous day's Gospel).*
- *Jesus will save God's people, not from the Romans, but from sin.*
- *The word "Emmanuel", which means "God is with us", also expresses that God will become incarnate.*

Theme: Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promise to his people.

TAGALOG: *Si Hesus ang katuparan ng pangako ng Diyos sa bayan.*

December 19, Saturday

1st Reading: Judges 13:2-7, 24-25a

Psalm: Ps 71:3-4a, 5-6ab, 16-17 My mouth shall be filled with your praise, and I will sing your glory.

Gospel: Luke 1:5-25

Theme: Same as December 20 – anticipated mass

1st Reading: Micah 5:1-4a
Psalm: Ps 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19 Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved.
2nd Reading: Hebrews 10:5-10
Gospel: Luke 1:39-45

Gospel background: The visitation - excited by the news that her cousin Elizabeth was pregnant, Mary traveled to the hill country in haste. When Mary greeted Elizabeth the child John leaps in her womb. Elizabeth blesses Mary and calls her the Mother of my Lord.

- One of the fruits of this Gospel is the love of neighbor.
- Welcome Mary into our home as Elizabeth did.
- Charity and social concern in visiting her aged cousin.
- John's joy is the appropriate response to God's fulfillment of promise to Jesus
- Think of an incident or situation when someone came to visit you during a difficult time. How did it feel?

Theme: Visitation – Mary showed us how we can help others simply by our reassuring presence.

TAGALOG: *Ipinakita ni Maria sa atin kung papaano tutulungan ang ating kapwa – sa pagbisita at pag-kalinga niya kay Isabel.*

December 21, Monday

1st Reading: Songs 2:8-14 or Zephaniah 3:14-18a
Psalm: Ps 33:2-3, 11-12, 20-21 Exult, you just, in the Lord! Sing to him a new song.
Gospel: Luke 1:39-45
Gospel – Same as Dec. 20

Theme: *Lives are transformed in the presence of God.*

TAGALOG: *Ang buhay ay nagbabago sa harap ng Diyos.*

December 22, Tuesday

1st Reading: 1 Samuel 1:24-28
Psalm: 1 Samuel 2:1, 4-5, 6-7, 8abcd My heart exults in the Lord, my savior.
Gospel: Luke 1:46-56

Gospel background: The Cantic of Mary (The Magnificat)- My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my Savior. The song (cantic) has two parts. The first expresses Mary's personal thanksgiving: lowly handmaid called blessed by all generations; God work through her for the salvation of many. The second part expresses the thanksgiving of the nation: scattered the proud, exalted the lowly, and filled the hungry. Has mercy on those who fear him.

- Let us not be afraid to say yes whatever God is telling us to do.
- Compare Mary's prayer to that of Hannah, the mother of Samuel.
- Model prayer for justice and used by the church at evening prayer

Theme: Let us bring Christ to the world through the witness of our lives.

TAGALOG: *Ating ipahayag si Kristo sa saksi ng ating buhay.*

December 23, Wednesday

1st Reading: Malachi 3:1-4, 23-24
Psalm: Ps 25:4-5ab, 8-9, 10, 14 Lift up your heads and see; your redemption is near at hand.
Gospel: Luke 1:57-66

Gospel background: Birth of John the Baptist – Elizabeth delivers her child. The promise of the angel is fulfilled. The account is characterized by two miracles First is the naming of the child and Zechariah who was struck dumb

was able to talk. What then will this child be?

- How are you going to prepare the way for the coming of the Lord?
- Seek God's call and mission for our life.

Theme: Be messengers of God's love by doing his works of mercy. Let us devote all our energy to seek out his call.

TAGALOG: Magsumikap tayong maging sugo ng pagmamahal ng Diyos. Isagawa natin sa lahat ng ating kakayanan ang mga tulong ng pagkaawang-gawa.

If you need more information, please send an email to Teri Nuval at tнуval@msn.com.

Thank you very much!

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