



23rd December



Date: Tuesday, December 23, 2025 | **Season:** Advent | **Year:** A

First Reading: Malachi 3:1–4, 23–24

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 25:4–5ab, 8–9, 10, 14 | **Response:** Psalm 21:28

Gospel Reading: Luke 1:57–66

Preached at: the Chapel of Emmaus House in the Archdiocese of Harare, Zimbabwe.

Brothers, we are close to Christmas now. The Church does not push us forward. She asks us to slow down and to notice what God is already doing.

The prophet Malachi speaks about a messenger sent ahead of the Lord. The images are ordinary ones. A fire that cleans metal. A soap that washes cloth. We see that God does not arrive to break things. God comes to clean what still matters and to restore what has been neglected. The promise is simple. Hearts will turn back. Relationships will begin to heal. God always starts close to home.

That speaks to us of our real lives and experiences. Families carry strain. Work pulls people apart. Money worries wear people down. Old silences harden into habits. Advent does not avoid this. God steps precisely into it. God works patiently, not loudly.

The psalm gives us the prayer that fits this season. Show me your ways, Lord. Teach me your paths. It is not a confident prayer. It is an honest one. It admits that we do not always know the way forward. God guides those who are willing to be taught. God walks with those who know they need help.

The Gospel takes us into a small house, crowded and noisy. Elizabeth gives birth. Neighbours turn up. There is joy and surprise. Elizabeth had waited a long time for this child. She had known disappointment. She had lived with questions. When the child is born, she does not talk about herself. She looks at what God has done. She knows this child is not a reward for good behaviour or long patience. She receives him as a gift.

Zechariah has been silent for months. That silence has changed him. When he is asked to name the child, he does not argue. He writes it clearly. John. The Lord is gracious. And his voice returns. He does not complain about the months he lost. He praises God. Sometimes God uses difficulty to teach us what we could not learn any other way.

Luke tells us that the neighbours are filled with fear. Not panic, but a quiet awe. They sense that God is close. They take these things to heart. They do not rush to explain them. They wait. They wonder. That is how wisdom begins. Not with quick answers, but with attention.

This is very close to how we pray as Jesuits. We notice what is happening. We pay attention to what stirs within us. We try not to control or explain too quickly. Advent invites us into that kind of prayer.

John will grow up pointing away from himself. He prepares the way by stepping aside. He knows he is not the light. He makes room for it. That is our work too. Not to draw attention to ourselves, but to clear a space for Christ.

Here in Zimbabwe, many people are tired. Work is uncertain. Prices keep rising. Some feel forgotten. Advent does not pretend this is not real. God comes into this exact situation. God does not overlook the poor. Waiting for Christ always changes how we live and how we treat others.

So we pray with the Church. Lord Jesus, King of all nations and keystone of the Church, come and save us, whom you formed from the dust of the earth and filled with your Spirit.

Now let us pause for a moment. Picture the room where John is born. Hear the voices. See the name being written. Notice what stays with you. What might God be doing quietly in your life right now.

And let us carry these questions with us this week:

- Which attitude do I need to grow in: rejoicing in God's mercy, praising God even when things are hard, or taking time to sit with what God is doing in my life.
- Where has grace already been at work in my life, without my noticing.
- And what small, faithful step can I take this week to make more room for Christ in our community and in our world.

Source: <https://sj.mcharlesworth.fr/homilies/2025-12dec-23-ya-at-04/>

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In preparing this homily, I consulted various resources to deepen my understanding of today's readings, including using Magisterium AI for assistance. The final content remains the responsibility of the author.