



12 Days of Christmas with *St. Josemaria Escrivá*

Set apart 10 - 15 minutes each day to recollect yourself in the presence of God, read the Gospel of the day and the brief reflection, and then talk with God asking Him for His light and grace to enter deep into your soul.

From our friends at the St. Josemaria Institute

GOSPEL: John 1:1-18

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race; the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. A man named John was sent from God. He came for testimony, to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came to be through him, but the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, but his own people did not accept him.

But to those who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to those who believe in his name, who were born not by natural generation nor by human choice nor by a man's decision but of God. And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth. John testified to him and cried out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, The one who is coming after me ranks ahead of me because he existed before me." From his fullness we have all received, grace in place of grace, because while the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. The only Son, God, who is at the Father's side, has revealed him.

12 Days of Christmas with St. Josemaría Escrivá

December 25
The Nativity of Our Lord

REFLECTION

"There is only one race in the world: the race of the children of God. We should all speak the same language, taught us by our Father in heaven, the language Jesus spoke with his Father. It is the language of heart and mind, which you are using now, in your prayer, the language of contemplation, used by men who are spiritual, because they realize they are children of God. This language is expressed in a thousand motions of our will, in the clear insights of our minds, in the affections of our heart, in our commitment to lead a virtuous life, in goodness, happiness and peace.

"You must look at the Child in the manger. He is our Love. Look at him, realizing that the whole thing is a mystery. We need to accept this mystery on faith and use our faith to explore it very deeply. To do this, we must have the humble attitude of a Christian soul. Let us not try to reduce the greatness of God to our own poor ideas and human explanations. Let us try to understand that this mystery, for all its darkness, is a light to guide men's lives."

St. Josemaría Escrivá
Christ Is Passing By, no. 13

CLOSING PRAYER

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen.

12 Days of Christmas with St. Josemaría Escrivá

December 26

Feast of St. Stephen, First Martyr

GOSPEL: Matthew 10:17-22

Jesus said to his disciples:

"Beware of men, for they will hand you over to courts
and scourge you in their synagogues,
and you will be led before governors and kings for my sake
as a witness before them and the pagans.

When they hand you over,
do not worry about how you are to speak
or what you are to say.

You will be given at that moment what you are to say.

For it will not be you who speak
but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

Brother will hand over brother to death, and the father his child;
children will rise up against parents and have them put to death.

You will be hated by all because of my name,
but whoever endures to the end will be saved."

12 Days of Christmas with St. Josemaria Escrivá

December 26

Feast of St. Stephen, First Martyr

REFLECTION

"He has called us too and asks us, as he asked James and John: 'Are you ready to drink the cup', that cup which means giving yourself fully to the will of the Father, 'which I am going to drink?' Possumus!: 'Yes! We are ready!' is the reply of John and James. Are you and I really ready to carry out, in everything, the will of our Father God? Have we given our Lord our whole heart, or are we attached to ourselves and our interests and comfort and self-love? Is there anything in our lives out of keeping with our Christianity, something which makes us unwilling to mend our ways? Today we are given a chance to set things straight."

St. Josemaria Escrivá
Christ Is Passing By, no. 15

CLOSING PRAYER

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
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Amen.

12 Days of Christmas with St. Josemaría Escrivá

December 27
Feast of St. John,
Apostle & Evangelist

GOSPEL: John 20:1-8

On the first day of the week,
Mary Magdalene ran and went to Simon Peter
and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them,
"They have taken the Lord from the tomb,
and we do not know where they put him."
So Peter and the other disciple went out and came to the tomb.
They both ran, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter
and arrived at the tomb first;
he bent down and saw the burial cloths there, but did not go in.
When Simon Peter arrived after him,
he went into the tomb and saw the burial cloths there,
and the cloth that had covered his head,
not with the burial cloths but rolled up in a separate place.
Then the other disciple also went in,
the one who had arrived at the tomb first,
and he saw and believed.

12 Days of Christmas with St. Josemaría Escrivá

December 27
Feast of St. John,
Apostle & Evangelist

REFLECTION

"You might have thought occasionally, with holy envy, about the adolescent Apostle, John *quem diligebat Iesus* – whom Jesus loved.

"Wouldn't you like to deserve to be called 'the one who loves the Will of God'? Then take the necessary steps, day after day."

St. Josemaría Escrivá
The Forge, no. 422

CLOSING PRAYER

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen.

12 Days of Christmas with St. Josemaria Escrivá

December 28

Feast of the Holy Innocents, Martyrs

GOSPEL: Matthew 2:13-18

When the magi had departed, behold,
the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said,
"Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt,
and stay there until I tell you.

Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him."

Joseph rose and took the child and his mother by night
and departed for Egypt.

He stayed there until the death of Herod,
that what the Lord had said through the prophet might be fulfilled,

Out of Egypt I called my son.

When Herod realized that he had been deceived by the magi,
he became furious.

He ordered the massacre of all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity
two years old and under,

in accordance with the time he had ascertained from the magi.

Then was fulfilled what had been said through Jeremiah the prophet:

*A voice was heard in Ramah,
sobbing and loud lamentation;
Rachel weeping for her children,
and she would not be consoled,
since they were no more.*

12 Days of Christmas with St. Josemaria Escrivá

December 28

Feast of the Holy Innocents, Martyrs

REFLECTION

"I am not at all stretching the truth when I tell you that Jesus is still looking for a resting-place in our hearts. We have to ask him to forgive our personal blindness and ingratitude. We must ask him to give us the grace never to close the door of our soul on him again.

Our Lord does not disguise the fact that his wholehearted obedience to God's will calls for renunciation and self-sacrifice. Love does not claim rights, it seeks to serve. Jesus has led the way."

St. Josemaria Escrivá
Christ Is Passing By, no. 19

CLOSING PRAYER

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
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Amen.

GOSPEL: Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

When the magi had departed, behold,
the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said,
"Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt,
and stay there until I tell you.

Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him."

Joseph rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed for Egypt.
He stayed there until the death of Herod,
that what the Lord had said through the prophet might be fulfilled,

Out of Egypt I called my son.

When Herod had died, behold,
the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream
to Joseph in Egypt and said,
"Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel,
for those who sought the child's life are dead."

He rose, took the child and his mother,
and went to the land of Israel.

But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea
in place of his father Herod,
he was afraid to go back there.

And because he had been warned in a dream,
he departed for the region of Galilee.

He went and dwelt in a town called Nazareth,
so that what had been spoken through the prophets
might be fulfilled,

He shall be called a Nazorean.

12 Days of Christmas with St. Josemaría Escrivá

December 29

Feast of the Holy Family
of Jesus, Mary & Joseph

REFLECTION

"Let's not forget: we need humility if we are to obey. Look again at the example Christ gives us: he obeys Joseph and Mary. God has come to the world to obey, and to obey creatures. Admittedly they are two very perfect creatures: Holy Mary, our mother, greater than whom God alone; and that most chaste man Joseph. But they are only creatures, and yet Jesus, who is God, obeyed them. We have to love God so as to love his will and desire to respond to his calls. They come to us through the duties of our ordinary life: duties of state, profession, work, family, social life, our own and other people's difficulties, friendship, eagerness to do what is right and just."

St. Josemaría Escrivá
Christ Is Passing By, no. 17

CLOSING PRAYER

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12 Days of Christmas with St. Josemaría Escrivá

December 30
The Sixth Day of Christmas

GOSPEL: Luke 2:36-40

There was a prophetess, Anna,
the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher.
She was advanced in years,
having lived seven years with her husband after her marriage,
and then as a widow until she was eighty-four.
She never left the temple,
but worshiped night and day with fasting and prayer.
And coming forward at that very time,
she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child
to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem.

When they had fulfilled all the prescriptions
of the law of the Lord,
they returned to Galilee,
to their own town of Nazareth.
The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom;
and the favor of God was upon him.

12 Days of Christmas with St. Josemaría Escrivá

December 30
The Sixth Day of Christmas

REFLECTION

"Doing God's work is not just a pretty phrase. It is an invitation to spend ourselves for Love's sake. We have to die to ourselves and be born again to a new life. Jesus Christ obeyed in this way, even unto death on a cross; that is why God exalted him. If we obey God's will, the cross will mean our own resurrection and exaltation. Christ's life will be fulfilled step by step in our own lives. It will be said of us that we have tried to be good children of God, who went about doing good in spite of our weakness and personal shortcomings, no matter how many.

"And when death comes as it undoubtedly will, we will greet it with joy, as I have seen so many people greet it in the ordinary circumstances of their life. With joy: for if we have imitated Christ in doing good, in obeying and carrying the cross in spite of our personal deficiencies, we will rise like Christ: 'for he has truly risen.'

"Jesus, who became a child, overcame death. Just think of it. Through his annihilation, through his simplicity and obedience, by divinizing the everyday, common life of men, the Son of God conquered.

"That is the triumph of Jesus Christ. He has raised us to his level, the level of children of God, by coming down to our level, the level of the children of men."

St. Josemaría Escrivá
Christ Is Passing By, no. 21

CLOSING PRAYER

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen.

GOSPEL: John 1:1-18

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race; the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. A man named John was sent from God. He came for testimony, to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came to be through him, but the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, but his own people did not accept him.

But to those who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to those who believe in his name, who were born not by natural generation nor by human choice nor by a man's decision but of God. And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth. John testified to him and cried out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, The one who is coming after me ranks ahead of me because he existed before me." From his fullness we have all received, grace in place of grace, because while the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. The only Son, God, who is at the Father's side, has revealed him.

REFLECTION

"Jesus Christ teaches us this divine way and wants us to follow it, for he has made it human and accessible to our weakness. That is why he lowered himself so.

'Here is the reason why he brought himself so low, taking the nature of a slave; he, the Lord, who as God was equal to the Father; he lowered himself in majesty and power, but not in goodness or mercy.'

"The goodness of God wants to make the way easy for us. Let us not reject Jesus' invitation; let's not say 'no' to him, turning a deaf ear to his voice. There is no excuse, we can no longer think we aren't able. He has shown us by his example. 'Therefore, I ask you with all my heart, brothers, not to let this precious example go unheeded: rather, follow him and renew your soul in the spirit.'"

St. Josemaría Escrivá
Christ Is Passing By, no. 15

CLOSING PRAYER

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
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Amen.

12 Days of Christmas with St. Josemaría Escrivá

January 1

Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary,
the Mother of God

GOSPEL: Luke 2:16-21

The shepherds went in hast to Bethlehem
and found Mary and Joseph,
and the infant lying in the manger.
When they saw this,
they made known the message
that had been told them about this child.
All who heard it were amazed
by what had been told them by the shepherds.
And Mary kept all these things,
reflecting on them in her heart.
Then the shepherds returned,
glorifying and praising God
for all they had heard and seen,
just as it had been told to them.

When eight days were completed for his circumcision,
he was named Jesus, the name given him by the angel
before he was conceived in the womb.

12 Days of Christmas with St. Josemaría Escrivá

January 1

Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary,
the Mother of God

REFLECTION

"Christ was humble of heart. Throughout his life he looked for no special consideration or privilege. He began by spending nine months in his Mother's womb, like the rest of men, following the natural course of events. He knew that mankind needed him greatly. He was longing to come into the world to save all souls, but he took his time. He came in due course, just as every other child is born. From conception to birth, no one, except our Lady, St Joseph and St Elizabeth, realized the marvelous truth that God was coming to live among men.

"There is a great simplicity also about his birth. Our Lord comes without any fanfare. No one knows about him. On earth only Mary and Joseph share in the divine adventure. And then the shepherds who received the message from the angels. And later on, the wise men from the East. They were the only witnesses of this transcendental event which unites heaven and earth, God and man.

"How can our hearts be so hard that we can get used to these scenes? God humbled himself to allow us to get near him, so that we could give our love in exchange for his, so that our freedom might bow, not only at the sight of his power, but also before the wonder of his humility."

St. Josemaría Escrivá
Christ Is Passing By, no. 18

CLOSING PRAYER

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen.

GOSPEL: John 1:19-28

This is the testimony of John.

When the Jews from Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to him to ask him, "Who are you?"

He admitted and did not deny it, but admitted, "I am not the Christ."

So they asked him, "What are you then? Are you Elijah?"

And he said, "I am not."

"Are you the Prophet?"

He answered, "No."

So they said to him,

"Who are you, so we can give an answer to those who sent us?"

What do you have to say for yourself?"

He said: "I am the voice of one crying out in the desert,

'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as Isaiah the prophet said."

Some Pharisees were also sent.

They asked him, "Why then do you baptize

if you are not the Christ or Elijah or the Prophet?"

John answered them, "I baptize with water;

but there is one among you whom you do not recognize,

the one who is coming after me,

whose sandal strap I am not worth to untie."

This happened in Bethany across the Jordan,

where John was baptizing.

12 Days of Christmas with St. Josemaría Escrivá

January 2

The Ninth Day of Christmas

REFLECTION

"The Son of God became man, and he is perfectus Deus, perfectus homo: 'perfect God and perfect man'. There is something in this mystery which should stir Christians. I was and am moved. I should like to go back to Loretto. I go there now in thought and desire, to relive those years of Jesus' childhood and consider once more those words: 'Here the Word was made flesh.'

"Iesus Christus, Deus homo: Jesus Christ, God-man. This is one of 'the mighty works of God', which we should reflect upon and thank him for. He has come to bring 'peace on earth to men of good Will,' to all men who want to unite their wills to the holy will of God, not just the rich, not just the poor, but everyone: all the brethren. We are all brothers in Jesus, children of God, brothers of Christ. His Mother is our mother."

St. Josemaría Escrivá
Christ Is Passing By, no. 13

CLOSING PRAYER

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen.

12 Days of Christmas with St. Josemaría Escrivá

January 3

The Tenth Day of Christmas

GOSPEL: John 1:29-34

John the Baptist saw Jesus coming toward him and said,
"Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.
He is the one of whom I said,
'A man is coming after me who ranks ahead of me
because he existed before me.'
I did not know him,
but the reason why I came baptizing with water
was that he might be made known to Israel."
John testified further, saying,
"I saw the Spirit come down like a dove from the sky
and remain upon him.
I did not know him,
but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me,
'On whomever you see the Spirit come down and remain,
he is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.'
Now I have seen and testified that he is the Son of God."

12 Days of Christmas with St. Josemaría Escrivá

January 3

The Tenth Day of Christmas

REFLECTION

"Whenever I preach beside the crib, I try to see Christ our Lord as a child wrapped in swaddling clothes lying on straw in a manger. Even though he is only a child, unable to speak, I see him as a master and a teacher. I need to look at him in this way, because I must learn from him. And to learn from him, you must try to know his life, reading the Gospel and meditating on the scenes of the new testament, in order to understand the divine meaning of his life on earth.

"In our own life we must reproduce Christ's life. We need to come to know him by reading and meditating on Scripture, and by praying, as we are doing now in front of the crib. We must learn the lessons which Jesus teaches us, even when he is just a newly born child, from the very moment he opens his eyes on this blessed land of men."

St. Josemaría Escrivá
Christ Is Passing By, no. 14

CLOSING PRAYER

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen.

12 Days of Christmas with St. Josemaría Escrivá

January 4

The Eleventh Day of Christmas

GOSPEL: John 1:35-42

John was standing with two of his disciples,
and as he watched Jesus walk by, he said,
"Behold, the Lamb of God."

The two disciples heard what he said and followed Jesus.
Jesus turned and saw them following him and said to them,
"What are you looking for?"

They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher),
"where are you staying?"

He said to them, "Come, and you will see."

So they went and saw where he was staying,
and they stayed with him that day.

It was about four in the afternoon.

Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter,
was one of the two who heard John and followed Jesus.

He first found his own brother Simon and told him,
"We have found the Messiah," which is translated *Christ*.

Then he brought him to Jesus.

Jesus looked at him and said,

"You are Simon the son of John;
you will be called Cephas," which is translated *Peter*.

12 Days of Christmas with St. Josemaría Escrivá

January 4

The Eleventh Day of Christmas

REFLECTION

"We should let our Lord get involved in our lives, admitting him confidently, removing from his way any obstacles or complications. We tend to be on the defensive, to be attached to our selfishness. We always want to be top dog, even if it's only to be on top of our wretchedness. That is why we must go to Jesus, so that he will make us truly free. Only then will we be able to serve God and all men. This is the only way to realize the truth of St Paul's words: "But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the return you get is sanctification and its end, eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

St. Josemaría Escrivá
Christ Is Passing By, no. 17

CLOSING PRAYER

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen.

GOSPEL: Matthew 2:1-12

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying,

"Where is the newborn king of the Jews?

We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage."

When King Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

Assembling all the chief priests and the scribes of the people,

He inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it has been written through the prophet:

*And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
since from you shall come a ruler, who is to shepherd my people Israel."*

Then Herod called the magi secretly

and ascertained from them the time of the star's appearance.

He sent them to Bethlehem and said,

"Go and search diligently for the child.

When you have found him, bring me word,

that I too may go and do him homage."

After their audience with the king they set out.

And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them,

until it came and stopped over the place where the child was.

They were overjoyed at seeing the star,

and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother.

They prostrated themselves and did him homage.

Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod,

they departed for their country by another way.

12 Days of Christmas with St. Josemaría Escrivá

January 5
The Epiphany of the Lord

REFLECTION

"To remind a Christian that his life is meaningless unless he obeys God's will does not mean separating him from other men. On the contrary, the commandment God gives us is to love others as he has loved us, which in most cases means living alongside the rest of men and being their equals, giving ourselves to the service of our Lord in the world so as to make everyone know better the love of God, telling them that the divine paths of the world have been opened up.

God has not just said that he loves us. He has proved it with facts. Let's not forget that Jesus Christ became man in order to teach us to live as children of God. Do you remember the introduction to the Acts of the Apostles, where St Luke says: "I have spoken of all the most significant things Jesus did and taught"? He came to teach us, but he taught us by doing things. In teaching us, he was the model, being our teacher and setting us an example with his conduct.

Now, in front of the infant Jesus, we can continue our personal examination of conscience. Are we ready to try to make our life a model and an example to our brothers, the rest of men, our equals? Are we ready to be other Christs? It's not enough to say that we are. I am asking you now, as I ask myself: Can it be said also of you, you who have been called to be another Christ, that you have come to do and to teach, to do things as a son of God would? Are you attentive to the Father's will, so as to be able to encourage everyone else to share the good, noble, divine and human values of the redemption? Are you living the life of Christ, in your everyday life in the middle of the world?

St. Josemaría Escrivá
Christ Is Passing By, no. 21

CLOSING PRAYER

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen.

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The St. Josemaria Institute was founded in 2006 to promote the life and teachings of St. Josemaria Escrivá, a Spanish priest who founded Opus Dei and developed a spirituality through which people can form personal friendships with God through their everyday lives in the midst of the world.



Since its establishment in 1996, PAREF Springdale School, Inc., an all-boys educational institution in Cebu, is committed to provide a balanced and demanding academic and personal formation to Cebuano families inspired by the life and teachings of St. Josemaría Escrivá.

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