

Monday in 3rd Week of Advent – 15th December 2025:

'Numbers' gives us a familiar image - a star - a prophetic reference to David and his star, giving rise to an early Messianic interpretation. The Church Fathers interpreted the star Balaam saw as the same one the Magi saw and followed, deducing that a heavenly event was taking place. Today, people follow '*stars*' of a different kind, a form of celebrity which, when taken to extreme, leads people away from heaven. Instead, we take to heart the psalmist's song: '*O Lord, make me know your ways, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me; for you are the God of my salvation.*'

Tuesday in 3rd Week of Advent – 16th December 2025:

In recent years the pontifical message has been one of God's mercy – and that is most certainly one that people need to hear, but it is possible that the balancing message of justice and taking responsibility of our actions has been diminished. The prophets of old had no such worries about upsetting people's sensibilities. They would often denounce community leaders (officials, judges, other prophets, priests and people), for not listening to the voice of the Lord, for oppressing others and for not drawing near to their God in their hour of need. As we examine our conscience, we might realize that it is not the things we have done wrong that will trouble us greatly on the day of our judgement, for we will know about these things and will have wrestled with the consequences of our actions for some time. What may distress us most at our encounter with the Almighty, will be the things we have not done that we should have done, and we will see how we left Christ unattended in his hour of need.

Wednesday 17th December: O Sapientia: O wisdom:

Jesus Christ is the Word of God who governs all creation. '*Through him all things were made*' and are sustained by his grace; for only He is the way to salvation. Isaiah showed us that the spirit of the Lord will rest on him. And he will have '*a spirit of wisdom and of understanding, a spirit of counsel and of strength, a spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord, and his delight shall be the fear of the Lord*' (Isaiah 11:2-3). These same attributes he shares with us in the Sacrament of Confirmation, and how could we possibly imagine journeying through this passing world without these divine helps!? The genealogy of Jesus proves his legitimacy to be the Messiah, the long-awaited true King of Israel. Matthew is situating Jesus within the history of Israel: to the royal line of David but also further back to the covenant that God made with Abraham.

Thursday 18th December 2025: O Adonai: O Sacred Lord!

Jesus is the Christ, *'the one who is, and who was and who is to come'*. He is the same Lord of Israel who showed himself to Moses in the burning bush, who gave the holy law on Mount Sinai, who stretched out his hands to endure his passion; and now continues *'to open for his people the way from death into life'*. The entire account of Jesus' birth shows us the fulfilment of the Messianic prophecy. Joseph provides legally and properly Jesus' legitimacy to the line of King David, not just by blood but by the integrity of his actions concerning Mary. Joseph was a just man because he did what the Lord wanted him to do in each and every event of his life, making him a good and faithful servant of God, someone who fulfils the divine will, a fitting patron of the universal Church. Like Joseph, all Christians seek the protection of the innocent and vulnerable, perhaps the true measure of one who has faith in their divine inheritance.

Friday 19th December 2025: O Radix Jesse: O Flower of Jesse's stem:

Jesus is the Christ, the one who is the *'vine'* onto which we have been grafted in Holy Baptism; in him we continue to flourish and have new life. In a secular world that turns its back on God, we find God has a tender care for the remnant that have remained faithful to their baptismal calling. Those who do not learn from history, will continue to make the same mistakes over and over again. God's people never seem to learn that infidelity loses the Lord's favour. Even so, when they are on the brink of defeat, God shows his abundant mercy and sends them a liberator – Samson, of the tribe of Dan. Samson's parents are told he is to be consecrated to God, reminding parents that children are God's gift to be looked after until they can discern what the Lord asks of them. Samson was a rather empty-headed fellow, more interested in worldly passions than he should be, trapping him and for a time, prevents him from fulfilling his role as liberator. Even so, our reading reminds us of God's exceptional patience and mercy, who forgives his people, who struggle to learn the lessons of history.

Saturday 20th December: O Clavis David: O Key of David:

It is the dignity of a Christian in knowing that they are part of a royal and noble house. We have been *'found worthy to be in God's presence and minister to him'*; we feel comfortable to be in the Royal Palace, because through the sanctifying grace in our soul we have royal blood and are blessed to see heaven as our true home. In baptism we became a dwelling place for the Spirit who prepares us to live in the Father's house.