



Mariana,
Colombia



Reflections for the 4th Week of Advent

Monday 19th December

The impossible made possible

Tuesday 20th December

“Here am I”



Read Luke 1:5–25

A remarkable account of an elderly couple unable to have children, but visited by Gabriel, God’s messenger. Gabriel appeared to Zechariah with the news that Elizabeth would conceive and give birth.

Their son, John, would prepare the way for Jesus’ ministry. John would “make ready for the Lord a people prepared” Luke 1:17.

We can all have doubts and even Zechariah, a priest, questioned Gabriel and asked ‘how can this happen? We are old.’ “But with God all things are possible.” Matthew 19:26.

One of the ways we can ‘prepare’ for Jesus this Advent is to learn how to trust in God’s will for our lives, even in the face of doubt.

Heavenly Father.

You are with me always.

Help me this Advent to trust you more as I prepare my heart for your coming.

In the face of doubt and uncertainty, give me your peace and remind me that all things are possible with you.

In Jesus’ name.

Amen.

Read Luke 1:26–38

Picture the scene of a young woman getting ready for marriage and an angel appears and delivers to her the most amazing, life-changing, incredible news. “You will bear a son and you will name him Jesus... He will be called the Son of God.”

What is incredible is Mary’s response to this news!

“Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” Luke 1:38.

It couldn’t have been easy to humbly accept this calling from God. It took great faith. The word ‘servant’ today is taken to be a bad thing, but we would do well to have the same servant heart as Mary. Jesus said in Matthew 20:28 that he “came not to be served but to serve.” Be servants!

Heavenly Father.

You have given me so many blessings.

Help me to have a servant heart, to serve others and to serve you.

I pray this in Jesus’ name.

Amen



Wednesday 21st December

Leaping for joy

Read Luke 1:39-45

When was the last time you leapt for joy? At the football; your child's dance competition; receiving good news?

Elizabeth's baby, John, leapt for joy at the sound of Mary's greeting. Being in the very presence of the Son of God, Jesus their Lord, was enough for Elizabeth to feel John leaping for joy in her womb.

When was the last time you leapt for joy because of what Jesus has done, and can do, for you?

Take time to leap!

Father God.

**I may go through challenging times,
but help me to know the joy of knowing you.**

In Jesus' name.

Amen.

Thursday 22nd December

My soul magnifies the Lord



Read Luke 1:46-56

The Magnificat is a song of praise from Mary. It is an expression of her thanksgiving to God for looking on her with favour and blessing her with this incredible responsibility.

Mary inspires us to serve with humility while praising God for the privilege.

This is a beautiful song that has been used for centuries in different forms to praise God. A favourite particularly in Scotland is the 'Scottish Magnificat' set to the traditional Scottish folk tune used for the song 'Wild Mountain Thyme.' Why not take time to search for it and listen to it in a moment of reflection.

Heavenly Father.

Holy is your name throughout all generations.

Your mercy is sufficient for all.

**Help me Lord to serve you with humility
and praise your name always.**

Amen



Training on the Pacific Coast,
Colombia

Friday 23rd December

“The hand of the Lord was with him”

Read Luke 1:57–66

Scripture tells us that Elizabeth’s neighbours and relatives heard of their gift of a child, and they rejoiced with them. This was an unusual birth given that Elizabeth was so old, but their community recognised God’s mercy and they rejoiced with them.

Zechariah and Elizabeth followed God’s command to name him John and the community waited expectedly and wondered “what then will this child become?”

We know that throughout Scripture, God gives good gifts. No more so than the gift of Jesus to us. A gift we don’t deserve, but a gift given in God’s Mercy.

Merciful God.

Thank you for the gift of Jesus.

Help me to praise you for this precious gift, and not to doubt your goodness to me.

Amen.

Isidro, fisherman,
Colombia



Saturday 24th December

Preparing the way



Read Luke 1:67–79

I’m sure you will have been busy over these weeks preparing for Christmas. Preparing menus, deciding who is doing what, buying presents etc. All valid activities in preparation for Christmas but Zechariah, in today’s Gospel, prophesied very different preparations for his son John.

Zechariah praises God and then we witness an intimate moment as we imagine Zechariah turning to his baby son as he addresses him. “And you, child, will be called the prophet of the most high; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways.” Luke 1:76.

We see later in the Gospels that John prepares the way for Jesus. He helps prepare the hearts and minds of those he meets. He lets them know that the Kingdom of Heaven is near and that they need forgiveness.

I’m sure all your preparations for Christmas will bring joy to many but let us remember to also prepare our hearts for Jesus. Have a happy and Holy Christmas.

Loving Father.

Thank you for Jesus and thank you for loving me.

Help prepare my heart for your service, and help me to serve willingly.

I pray for those that will have little this Christmas.

In particular, I pray for the work of SCIAF and their partners.

That they experience your peace and provision.

I pray this in the name of Jesus.

Amen

**“For a Child has been born
for us, a son given to us;
authority rests upon his
shoulders; and he is named
Wonderful Counsellor,
Mighty God, Everlasting
Father, Prince of Peace.”**

Isaiah 9:6

Las Marianas,
village scenes,
Colombia

Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund

SCIAF is the official relief and development agency
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7 West Nile Street, Glasgow G1 2PR.

Tel: 0141 354 5555. Scottish Charity No: SC012302.

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