

Pericope HiFi – GESC  
Song & Gospel  
Sunday III following Epiphany, 28<sup>th</sup> of January – 3<sup>rd</sup> of February 2024  
**"The Messiah Reveals Himself to Purify Men"**

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The message: The Epiphany, or manifestation of God, aims to purify His people so that they are not condemned, because they are sinners. Jesus considered the purification of His disciples as an important concern, so the Holy Scriptures declare: *"During supper Jesus [...] got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him"* Jn 13:2<sup>b</sup>,4-5. In fact, since the Lord is "a holy God", He does not love impurity, which reflects the works of sin, the devil, and worldliness (Jas 4:4/ 1 Jn 2:15). He does not want His people to clothe themselves with impurity, but with holiness and honor like Him, as He says: *"Be holy, for I am holy"* Lev 11:44<sup>c</sup>. And He commands: *"Purify yourselves, you who carry the vessels of the Lord"* Isa 52:11<sup>d</sup>. The apostle James also affirms: *"Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded"* Jas 4:8<sup>b,c</sup>. In the same vein, Jesus said: *"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God"* Mt 5:8. Indeed, without holiness *"no one will see the Lord"* Heb 12:14, because impurity gets in the way, just as dirty glasses prevent one to see the light. And, because He eagerly wants His people to see Him in order to be saved, He makes every effort to purify and sanctify them. This is achieved by His blood, which *"cleanses us from all unrighteousness"* 1 Jn 1:9, by His word, according to the prayer of Jesus, *"Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth"* Jn 17:17, and, above all, by the Holy Spirit, the power and the glory of God with whom He clothes His people, according to the following word, *"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you"* Acts 1:8<sup>a</sup>. In conclusion, the Lord declares: *"Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they will have the right to the tree of life and may enter the city by the gates"* Rev 22:14. To them Jesus says, *"Enter into the joy of your master"* Mt 25:21<sup>c</sup>,23<sup>c</sup>.

Monday, 29.01.24: The Messiah purifies the sinners.

*"I will cleanse them from all the guilt of their sin against me"* Jer 33:8<sup>a</sup>.

Reading 1: Jn 14:15-21. Reading 2: Jer 33:6-9. Preaching 1 (free choice). Preaching 2: Jer 33:8.

Introduction: Iniquity is the wrongdoing caused by unbelief and denial of God (Gen 3:6). This constitutes a barrier between Him and us, a barrier of our concealment from the face of God (Gen 3:8<sup>b</sup>), and a wall that is built to resist Him (2 Cor 10:5). Jesus came to redeem the sinners with His blood that cleanses them from all unrighteousness (1 Jn 1:9<sup>b</sup>).

Tuesday, 30.01.24: It is with long-suffering that God purifies men.

*"For just as the sufferings of Christ are abundant for us, so also our consolation is abundant through Christ"* 2 Cor 1:5.

Reading 1: Isa 53:7-12. Reading 2: 2 Cor 1:3-11. Preaching 1 (free choice). Preaching 2: 2 Cor 1:5.

Introduction: Impurity is so deeply imprinted in the lives of men that it has become one of the attributes of their sinful nature. In this way, if the time of the new birth that God offers them is a first step (Jn 3:3), their sanctification is also a long-term work. Here's what the apostle Paul urgently reveals on this subject: *"I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church"* Col 1:24.

Wednesday 31.01.24: The Messiah's manifestation, source of healing.

*"And he cured many who were sick with various diseases"* Mk 1:34<sup>a</sup>.

Reading 1: Isa 53:4-6. Reading 2: Mk 1:21-35. Preaching 1 (free choice). Preaching 2: Mk 1:34.

Introduction: The Holy Scripture relates that the multitude were amazed when they heard the gracious and authoritative words uttered by Jesus' mouth, and when they saw all the wonderful works He did. Therefore, they exclaimed, *"He has done everything well"* Mk 7:37<sup>b</sup>. Yes, He can really do all things, which man cannot do (Mt 19:26). So, whatever the pain and diseases, He healed them all, as He is God. The Malagasy hymn says, "Many are our ills, but You take them all away" (Song 469:3, FFPM).

Thursday, 01.02.24: The Messiah, assurance of redemption for believers.

*"He has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them"* Lk 1:68<sup>b</sup>.

Reading 1: Eph 1:1-14. Reading 2: Lk 1:66-80. Preaching 1 (free choice). Preaching 2: Lk 1:67-68.

Introduction: Jesus' atoning sacrifice by forgiving the sinners' transgressions is a form of purification. This is the fulfilment of David's words in the Psalms, spoken when he repented of his wrongdoing and asked: *"Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow"* Ps 51:7. For the psalmist affirms: *"Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven"* Ps 32:1, in that they are purified by God.

Friday, 02.02.24: God's redemption justifies the sinner.

*"They are now justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus"* Rom 3:24.

Reading 1: Mt 9:9-13. Reading 2: Rom 3:19-26. Preaching 1 (free choice). Preaching 2: Rom 3:23-24.

Introduction: "Justified" also means "purified so as to be blameless and faultless". This justification made by God comes about through the forgiveness of all sins, a gift that cannot be bought for money. Indeed, it is written: *"By grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God— not the result of works, so that no one may boast"* Eph 2:8-9.

Saturday, 03.02.24: Believe in Jesus' cleansing work.

*"This is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ [...]"* 1 Jn 3:23.

Reading 1: Heb 11:1-10. Reading 2: 1 Jn 3:18-24. Preaching 1 (free choice). Preaching 2: 1 Jn 3:23.

Introduction: The work of purification that Jesus did is complete, perfect and unique. Indeed, He gave up His life to save sinners (Jn 10:11), gave His word to sanctify them, so that they might walk in righteousness in accordance with the will of God (Jn 17:17), and sent His Spirit to renew their minds (Rom 12:2) and to intercede on their behalf (Rom 8:26). To those who thirst for purification, Jesus says: *"I am willing. Be made clean!"* Mt 8:3<sup>b</sup>.