

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

When a profound silence covered all things  
and night was in the middle of its course,  
your all-powerful Word, O Lord,  
bounded from heaven's royal throne.

**GLORIA**

Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to people of good will.  
We praise you,  
we bless you,  
we adore you,  
we glorify you,  
we give you thanks for your great glory,  
Lord God, heavenly King,  
O God, almighty Father.  
Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,  
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,  
you take away the sins of the world, have mercy  
on us;  
you take away the sins of the world, receive our  
prayer;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,  
have mercy on us.  
For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father.  
Amen.

**COLLECT**

Almighty ever-living God,  
splendour of faithful souls,  
graciously be pleased to fill the world with  
your glory,  
and show yourself to all peoples by the  
radiance of your light.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of  
the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.  
Amen.

**FIRST READING**

Ec 24:1-2. 8-12

Wisdom speaks her own praises,  
in the midst of her people she glories in  
herself.  
She opens her mouth in the assembly of the  
Most High,  
she glories in herself in the presence of the  
Mighty One;  
"Then the creator of all things instructed me,  
and he who created me fixed a place for my  
tent.  
He said, 'Pitch your tent in Jacob,  
make Israel your inheritance.'  
From eternity, in the beginning, he created  
me,  
and for eternity I shall remain.  
I ministered before him in the holy tabernacle,  
and thus was I established on Zion.  
In the beloved city he has given me rest,  
and in Jerusalem I wield my authority.  
I have taken root in a privileged people,  
in the Lord's property, in his inheritance."  
The word of the Lord.

**RESP. PSALM**

Ps 147

Response:

**The Word was made flesh, and lived among  
us.  
or Alleluia!**

- O praise the Lord, Jerusalem!  
Zion, praise your God!  
He has strengthened the bars of your  
gates,  
he has blessed the children with you. (R.)

- He established peace on your borders,  
he feeds you with finest wheat.  
He sends out his word to the earth  
and swiftly runs his command. (R.)
- He makes his word known to Jacob,  
to Israel his laws and decrees.  
He has not dealt thus with other nations;  
he had not taught them his decrees. (R.)

**SECOND READING**

Ep 1:3-6. 15-18

Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus  
Christ, who has blessed us with all the  
spiritual blessings of heaven in Christ. Before  
the world was made, he chose us, chose us  
in Christ, to be holy and spotless, and to live  
through love in his presence, determining  
that we should become his adopted sons,  
through Jesus Christ, for his own kind  
purposes, to make us praise the glory of his  
grace, his free gift to us in the Beloved.  
That will explain why I, having once heard  
about your faith in the Lord Jesus, and the  
love that you show toward all the saints, have  
never failed to remember you in my prayers  
and to thank God for you. May the God of  
our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory,  
give you a spirit of wisdom and perception  
of what is revealed, to bring you to full  
knowledge of him. May he enlighten the eyes  
of your mind so that you can see what hope  
his call holds for you, what rich glories he  
has promised the saints will inherit.  
The word of the Lord.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Alleluia, alleluia!

**Glory be to you, O Christ, proclaimed to the  
pagans;**

**Glory be to you, O Christ, believed in by the  
world.**

Alleluia!

**GOSPEL**

Jn 1:1-18

(For shorter form, read between ><)  
>In the beginning was the Word:  
the Word was with God  
and the Word was God.  
He was with God in the beginning.  
Through him all things came to be,  
not one thing had its being but through him.  
All that came to be had life in him  
and that life was the light of men,  
a light that shines in the dark,  
a light that darkness could not overpower. <  
A man came, sent by God.  
His name was John.  
He came as a witness,  
as a witness to speak for the light,  
so that everyone might believe through him.  
He was not the light,  
only a witness to speak for the light.  
> The Word was the true light  
that enlightens all men;  
and he was coming into the world.  
He was in the world  
that had its being through him,  
and the world did not know him.  
He came to his own domain  
and his own people did not accept him.  
But to all who did accept him  
he gave power to become children of God,  
to all who believe in the name of him  
who was born not out of human stock  
or urge of the flesh  
or will of man  
but of God himself.  
The Word was made flesh,

he lived among us,  
and we saw his glory,  
the glory that is his as the only Son of the  
Father,  
full of grace and truth.  
John appears as his witness. He proclaims:  
"This is the one of whom I said:  
He who comes after me  
ranks before me  
because he existed before me."  
Indeed, from his fullness we have, all of us,  
received—  
yes, grace in return for grace,  
since though the Law was given through  
Moses,  
grace and truth have come through Jesus  
Christ.  
No one has ever seen God;  
it is the only Son, who is nearest to the  
Father's heart,  
who has made him known.

**PROFESSION OF FAITH**

**I believe in one God,  
the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all things visible and invisible.**

**I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Only Begotten Son of God,  
born of the Father before all ages.  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made, consubstantial with  
the Father;**

**through him all things were made.**

**For us men and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,  
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin  
Mary,  
and became man.**

**For our sake he was crucified under  
Pontius Pilate,  
he suffered death and was buried,  
and rose again on the third day  
in accordance with the Scriptures.**

**He ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again in glory  
to judge the living and the dead  
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,  
the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is adored and  
glorified,**

**who has spoken through the prophets.  
I believe in one, holy, catholic and  
apostolic Church.**

**I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness  
of sins**

**and I look forward to the resurrection of the  
dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

**PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Sanctify, O Lord, the offerings we make  
on the Nativity of your only Begotten Son,  
for by it you show us the way of truth  
and promise the life of the heavenly Kingdom.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

**To all who would accept him,  
he gave the power to become children of  
God.**

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Lord our God, we humbly ask you,  
that, through the working of this mystery,  
our offences may be cleansed  
and our just desires fulfilled.  
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



**"AND LIVES  
TODAY IN  
BREAD AND  
WINE"**

GOSPEL JOHN 1:1-18

The Gospel according to St John has no account of the birth and childhood of Jesus. Instead, it opens with a majestic poem on how 'the Word was made flesh' and dwelt among us.

These words look back to the beginning of the very first book of the bible, Genesis. Genesis is a meditation on creation. It tells how in the beginning God created the universe by his word. The first thing to be created is light and the last thing is the human couple, man and woman. In John's poem, that Word now comes to "pitch his tent" among his creation. This is the precise meaning of the word usually translated as 'dwell.' It emphasizes the fragility of this new-born child. Just as a flickering candle flame can be quenched by a gust of wind, the darkness of sin and unbelief threaten to overcome this fragile Word become flesh, but they will not succeed. This Word made flesh is the son of Mary, whose birth we remember on these days of the Christmas season. The Jews believed human beings could never see God. Even the great Moses only managed to catch a glimpse of God's back, as he stood huddled in a cleft of the holy Mountain of Sinai. It is Jesus, the Word and only Son, nearest the very heart of God from the beginning, who has made him known by taking on a human body like ours. ■

### LEARN

The heart of the Christmas story is that God took our human flesh.

When St John uses the word 'flesh', he means human weakness and limitation.

The bread we share in the Eucharist is Jesus' flesh, given for the life of the world.

### SAY

"God was man in Palestine: and lives today in bread and wine."

### DO

When you make a visit to the crib today, spend some time also in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament.



### REFLECT

**M**y favourite Christmas poem was written by an English poet called John Betjeman. It runs humorously through all the usual things we associate with Christmas, well-stocked shops, traditional decorations in churches and even the useless presents of 'hideous ties, so kindly meant.' But Betjeman was a poet who prized his Anglican faith and knew that the real meaning of Christmas was that the maker of the earth and sea, has become a child for you and me. Our modern culture may celebrate Christmas with extravagant spending and excess of food and drink, but the greatest truth for the believer, the heart of 'this most tremendous tale of all,' was that:  
"God was man in Palestine  
And lives today in Bread and Wine."

There are many things about Christmas that suggest links to the Eucharist. The place where the child was born is called Bethlehem, 'the house of bread.' His cradle is a manger, a place where animals get their food. He, the eternal Son of God, now depends on a young woman for the milk that will sustain him. ■