

MIDNIGHT MASS**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

The Lord said to me: You are my Son.
It is I who have begotten you this day.

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

O God, who have made this most sacred
night
radiant with the splendour of the true light,
grant, we pray, that we, who have known the
mysteries of his light on earth,
may also delight in his gladness in heaven.
Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of
the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

Is 9:1-7

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

RESP. PSALM

Ps 95

Response:

**Today a saviour has been born to us;
he is Christ the Lord.**

SECOND READING

Tt 2:11-14

A reading from the letter of St Paul to Titus.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

**I bring you news of great joy:
today a saviour has been born to us, Christ
the Lord. Alleluia!**

GOSPEL

Lk 2:1-14

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
Luke.

THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,

(all bow during the next two lines)

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the
Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living
and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,

the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

May the oblation of this day's feast
be pleasing to you, O Lord, we pray,
that through this most holy exchange
we may be found in the likeness of Christ, in
whom our nature is united to you.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**The Word became flesh, and we have seen
his glory.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Grant us, we pray, O Lord our God,
that we, who are gladdened by participation
in the feast of our Redeemer's Nativity,
may through an honourable way of life
become worthy of union with him.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
Amen.

DAWN MASS**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

**Today a light will shine upon us, for the Lord
is born for us;
and he will be called Wondrous God,
Prince of peace, Father of future ages:
and his reign will be without end.**

COLLECT

Grant, we pray, almighty God,
that, as we are bathed in the new radiance of
your incarnate Word,
the light of faith, which illumines our minds,
may also shine through in our deeds.
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

Is 62:11-12

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

RESP. PSALM

Ps 96

Response:

**This day new light will shine upon the earth:
the Lord is born for us.**

SECOND READING

Tt 3:4-7

A reading from the letter of St Paul to Titus.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

**Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and peace to men who enjoy his favour.
Alleluia!**

GOSPEL

Lk 2:15-20

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
Luke.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

May our offerings be worthy, we pray, O Lord,
of the mysteries of the Nativity this day,
that, just as Christ was born a man and also
shone forth as God,
so these earthly gifts may confer on us what
is divine.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**Rejoice, O Daughter Sion; lift up praise,
Daughter Jerusalem:
Behold, your King will come, the Holy One
and Saviour of the world.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Grant us, Lord, as we honour with joyful
devotion
the Nativity of your Son,
that we may come to know with fullness of
faith
the hidden depths of this mystery
and to love them ever more and more.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

MASS DURING THE DAY**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

**A child is born for us, and a son is given to us;
his sceptre of power rests upon his shoulder,
and his name will be called Messenger of
great counsel.**

COLLECT

O God, who wonderfully created the dignity
of human nature
and still more wonderfully restored it,
grant, we pray,
that we may share in the divinity of Christ,
who humbled himself to share in our
humanity.

FIRST READING

Is 52:7-10

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

RESP. PSALM

Ps 97:1-6

Response:

**All the ends of the earth have seen the
salvation of our God.**

SECOND READING

Heb 1:1-6

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

**A hallowed day has dawned upon us.
Come, you nations, worship the Lord,
for today a great light has shone down upon
the earth. Alleluia!**

GOSPEL

Jn 1:1-18

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
John.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Make acceptable, O Lord, our oblation on this
solemn day,
when you manifested the reconciliation
that makes us wholly pleasing in your sight
and inaugurated for us the fullness of divine
worship.
Through Christ our Lord.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**All the ends of the earth have seen the
salvation of our God.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Grant, O merciful God,
that, just as the Saviour of the world, born
this day,
is the author of divine generation for us,
so he may be the giver even of immortality.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
Amen.

Christmas Message

THE WORD

Year A • Season Colour: White • Psalter week 1



WE ARE PRESENT!

MIDNIGHT MASS LUKE 2:1-14 DAWN MASS LUKE 2:15-20 DAY MASS JOHN 1:1-18

The Word became flesh. Jesus is the Son of God and son of Mary, fully divine and fully human.

God came into our world in the most vulnerable way possible, as a helpless infant. Mary is the guarantee of the doctrine of the Incarnation, the Enfleshment of the Word of God. Today we celebrate and contemplate this mystery. A mystery is something which we can explore but never fully comprehend.

In the Catholic mind, there are two events which have made a deep impression: these are Christmas, especially Midnight Mass and First Holy Communion. Christmas is one of the times when people who do not attend Mass regularly make a special effort to come. Christmas and First Communion are among the memories which for many of us evoke a time when faith seemed natural, when the existence of God was taken for granted, before the questions and problems of later life came crowding in.

This is not simply a matter of sentimentality, a wish to return to a world which has vanished. Perhaps, rather, it is the voice of faith, or at least the desire to believe in Something or Someone who can make sense of our human existence, calling to us at these times. Whatever the reason we are here may be, it is not really important: the simple fact that we are present is what matters. In the crib we see the lengths God was prepared to go to reach out to human beings. As one of the New Testament writers puts it, Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by the Son. Word suggests communication and it is God who takes the initiative in communicating with human beings. The child in the crib is God's clearest word to us, telling us that God, in Jesus, became one of us, lived a real human life and experienced all that we experience except sin. The event we celebrate at Christmas, the birth of Jesus is a deep mystery, overshadowed by the cross, but perhaps today we should look at and listen to a baby near us and remember that God was prepared to become such a one so that God could reach out to each one of us and invite us into a relationship of friendship with the Lord. ■

LEARN

The stories of the birth of Jesus belong to a later part of the Gospel tradition. We are not told when Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

We celebrate the birth of Christ in December because that was the time of the Roman winter festival of Saturnalia. As the Christian Church could not suppress the pagan celebrations, it adopted and adapted them for its own purposes.

When people talk about the virgin birth, they really mean the virginal conception of Jesus. Jesus had a human mother but no human father. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary.

Mary is presented not as a passive instrument used by God, but as freely co-operating in the work of our salvation through faith and obedience. She is our model as one who listens to God's word, meditates upon it and puts it into practice.

SAY

The Word was made flesh and lived among us.

DO

Visit the crib: look beyond the figures to the mystery of God's love for you which they are being used to express. Meditate on the Word becoming flesh, perhaps by saying the Third Joyful Mystery of the Rosary.

REFLECT

After a rather noisy Sunday Mass, a certain parishioner asked the priest who had led the celebration how he coped with restless children. The priest replied, "When that happens, I cast my mind back to the synagogue in Nazareth about two thousand years ago. It is a hot afternoon, the rabbi is droning on, expounding one of the more obscure passages from the book of Deuteronomy. A little boy is amusing himself at the side of the building, not making too much noise but causing a distraction to some of the worshippers. Eventually, his exasperated mother hisses at him, "Jesus! Sit down and behave!" ". ■