

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.

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.

All kneel at the words *and by the Holy Spirit
was incarnate.*

PROFESSION OF FAITH

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 three 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. **Amen.**

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.

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.
Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of
the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

FIRST READING

Is 52:7-10

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

PSALM

Ps 97

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. **Amen.**

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 (or Gold) • Psalter: Proper



FORTUNES REVERSED (LUKE 2:1-14)

The reason for the season

The Christmas Gospel (Luke 2:1-14 used at Midnight Mass) must be one of the world's best-known stories. Stripped of the sentimental additions it has acquired over the years, it tells a story of hardship and uncertainty, yet it holds out a message of hope. A homeless young couple, far from their families and friends, give birth to their first child in the corner of a stable shared with domestic animals. The baby's first visitors are not adoring grandparents or aunts and uncles, but some curious shepherds whose night watch had been disturbed by angels telling them to go in search of a newborn child in the town of Bethlehem. In the animal's food trough lies a child, wrapped tightly in bands of cloth, the baby clothes of the poor. The shepherds have been told that this child is the new King David, Israel's legendary hero who had been anointed as King of Israel in this very town a thousand years before. Despite the promises made to him by God, David's royal line appeared to have petered out, as Israel became a colony, now of one super-power, now of another. ■

DO

Visit the crib in a church this week and allow your imagination to recreate the scene

SAY

"By the mystery of this water and wine, may we come to share the divinity of Christ, who humbled himself to share in our humanity."

REFLECT

Christmas is a time for poetry and song. One of the best-known English Christmas poems was written by a poet called John Betjeman. It begins as a light-hearted, and even slightly mocking account of Christmas most of us will recognise from experience. Gift-giving at Christmas has become so compulsory that surly teenagers spend their cash on gifts, even if they are just "bath salts and inexpensive scents and hideous tie (so kindly meant)." Betjeman is a believer. In all the gift-giving and good spirits of the season, he wonders, has the most important gift of all been forgotten?

And is it true, and is it true,
This most tremendous tale of all,
Seen in a stained glass window's hue,
A baby in an ox's stall?

He knows that the child in the manger went on to become the Saviour of humanity. His presence in our story was not confined to a poor down-trodden land for a few decades at the beginning of the first century of our era, but "God was man in Palestine, and lives today in bread and wine."

The old English name for today's feast was originally two words – Christ Mass – the Mass at which we celebrated the birth of Christ. The Mass is integral to the celebration of today's feast. Apart from All Souls, it is the only feast that has three distinct Masses celebrated at different times during the day, from midnight until midday.

One of the finest sermons in history was preached at midnight Mass in Rome one Christmas in the middle of the fifth century by Pope St Leo the Great. All these years later, it still catches something of the great mystery of Christmas. "Christian, acknowledge your dignity, and becoming a sharer in God's nature. Do not go back to an old way of life. Remember who is the Head of the Body of which you are a member. Remember that you were rescued from the power of darkness and brought out into God's light and kingdom. By the mystery of Baptism you became the temple of the Holy Ghost: do not put such a guest to flight by sinful acts, or make yourself once more a slave of the devil. You were purchased by the blood of Christ. He will judge you in truth, the one who ransomed you in mercy." ■

LEARN

The great truth of Christmas is that in a frail child, God has taken on our humanity.

The other side of that mystery is that Christ shares his divine being with us.

The prayer the priest says as he puts the drop of water into the chalice is a reminder of this mystery (see left).