

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.

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 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. 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.

25 DECEMBER 2020

Sunday Message

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

THE WORD

Year B • Season Colour: White • Psalter Week 1



THE GREATEST GIFT OF ALL

(JOHN 1:1-18)

The stories on which we have been reflecting over the past few weeks from the accounts of Matthew and Luke focus on the conception and birth of the Son of God.

The writer of the Fourth Gospel, whom we usually call 'John', begins his presentation of Jesus and his message with a profound reflection on the mystery of the Word which existed with God from the very beginning and took flesh as a human being in the person of Jesus. The Evangelist expressed this as 'pitching his tent among us'. But why? Jesus is God's Word, God's invitation to human beings to accept their true nature as children of God. This is an offer, not a demand. Throughout Israel's history, God reached out to the people, offering a covenant, a relationship of sharing life and love, not for any merit on their part, but simply out of God's free choice. When the people fell short in their living out of the covenant, God always offered the chance of being forgiven and renewing the bond.

In the person of Jesus, we see God's ultimate offer of such a relationship: not one of duty or obligation, but a free response on our part to what God has done for us in reaching out in this way. God is presenting us with a gift: it is up to us to accept or refuse it on an ongoing basis, not just once and for all. ■

REFLECT

Christmas is very much a time for giving presents. Most homes have a tree under which the brightly-wrapped gifts are laid awaiting the excitement of being opened on Christmas Day. Gifts are important, not necessarily because of what they are but because of what they mean. If we suspect that someone is giving us a present out of a sense of obligation, then the object itself will not be of much interest to us. But if we realise that something, maybe apparently of little objective value, is an expression of love and affection, then it is something we are likely to treasure for a long time.

Today, we celebrate God's greatest gift to us, that of God's love in the person of Jesus. This is not a gift that we are supposed to put away safely in a cupboard and bring out every Christmas and Easter, but one which should be part of our daily life, a gift that we refer to as our faith. The old Catechism described faith as "a response to revelation": at the feast of the Nativity (the birth) of the Lord, we are again presented with God's clearest statement of the Word, and we are invited to respond once more as grateful disciples of Jesus.

Our faith is not something static, a set of statements which we recite in the Creed: it is a living, developing relationship with the Lord. If we think of it as a gift, it is more like a plant than a picture. Or, we might think of it as a Russian doll: each time we open it, there is another one inside, but we have to open it to discover the next layer. As we look at the Christmas crib scene, we might remember that we are being invited to become part of the mystery which we contemplate. ■

LEARN

There is no infancy narrative, no story of the conception and birth of Jesus, in the Gospel according to John.

Jesus as the Word of God corresponds to the female figure of Wisdom in the Jewish Hebrew and Greek Scriptures.

The Feast of Christmas replaced the pagan Roman festival of Saturnalia: that is why it is celebrated in December.

SAY

Thank you, God, for the gift of your Word to me.

DO

As you unwrap your present, think of the person who gave it to you and their reason for doing so. Then remember Jesus in the crib as God's present to you and God's reason for sending you this gift.

