

**MASS DURING THE NIGHT  
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,  
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.**

**MASS AT DAWN  
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,  
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,  
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 C • Season Colour: White • Psalter Week 1

## A SAVIOUR IS BORN, CHRIST THE LORD!

(LUKE 2:1-14, 15-20)



The reading from the Prologue of John's Gospel occurs on the second Sunday after Christmas, so we might focus today on the extracts from the Gospel of Luke which are given for the Vigil and Dawn Masses: these describe the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem and the visit of the shepherds.

Joseph and Mary have to travel to Bethlehem to be registered with the Roman authorities. Bethlehem is the city associated with King David, and the Messiah was expected to be of David's line. It was therefore not fitting that the heir to the promises to David should be lodged in what we would consider a motel, a temporary shelter for travellers: hence the child was born and laid in a stone feeding trough used by animals. The swaddling clothes in which the child is wrapped remind the reader of David's son Solomon and, along with the manger, look ahead to the burial of Jesus after his crucifixion.

The birth of Jesus is the fulfilment of Mary's positive decision to accept her place in God's plan. Luke will later show her as the model disciple, the one who listens to God's Word, meditates upon it and puts it into practice.

The shepherds anticipate the theme in the Gospel of God's concern for those who are marginalised and excluded from the normal religious and social life of the community. Their nomadic lifestyle meant that they could not fulfil the expected ritual obligations and, like all groups on the periphery, they were regarded with suspicion by the town dwellers and blamed when anything went missing. But it is to these characters that the divine message of the birth of the Messiah is given. They then become bearers of God's revelation to others, including Mary, "who treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart". ■

### LEARN

The Infancy Narratives are composed of the first two chapters of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke;

They are, more or less, completely different and we should read them on their own terms: they are theological documents rather than history or biography.

In these chapters, the Evangelists present their belief about the person of Jesus.

### DO

Set out your crib figures or visit the scene in your church: reflect on the fact that God was prepared to come into our world as a child for your sake.



### SAY

**Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on earth!**

### REFLECT

There was an outcry some years ago when the Christmas Day special edition of *Downton Abbey* ended with the tragic death of Matthew Crawley in a traffic accident. Admittedly, this does seem to be a somewhat insensitive ending to the Christmas episode of a popular drama. But perhaps we might reflect today on the fact that the Gospel stories surrounding the birth of Jesus are overtures to the main narrative: the evangelists, Luke and Matthew, are stating themes which they will develop in their accounts of the life and ministry of Jesus.

The greatest danger to understanding the Infancy Narratives is sentimentality. The Victorian carols and hymns which are so popular are very pleasant. But the earlier medieval hymns for the Christmas period all have the shadow of the cross over them. 'The Holly and the Ivy' is a good example of this writing.

It is all very well to concentrate on the child Jesus, but Luke is hinting that we need to keep in mind what this birth will entail. The shepherds' reaction to their experience is to "praise and glorify God": we might do the same, not just on account of the birth of Jesus, but for all God has done for us in and through Jesus. ■