

**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 NATIVITY OF THE LORD

THE WORD

Year A • 25 December 2022 • Colour: White • Psalter Week 1



ODE TO JOY

For any of us to lose our hearing is a tragedy. It cuts us off from much of life. But imagine being a supremely gifted composer, a musical maestro – and losing the one faculty you need most of all for your work.

It's akin to a Formula 1 driver losing his eyesight or a brain surgeon whose hands begin to shake. Such was the catastrophe that befell the great German composer Ludwig van Beethoven.

Beethoven's hearing deteriorated in his 20s while still honing his craft. He had to abandon his promising career as a concert pianist. Over the years, he tried every manner of medical intervention, to no avail. As a silent world slowly unfolded him, he grew increasingly frustrated, irritable, and withdrawn. Eventually, stone deaf, he had to rely on what he called his 'mind's ear' when composing. Yet, despite this cruel twist of fate, this terrible life sentence, Beethoven was able to conjure music of exquisite beauty, transcendent harmonies that soared. He crafted compositions of unprecedented complexity and grandeur, sublime, immortal.

Though deaf, music remained for him a labour of joy. Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, his last symphony, first performed in 1824, ends with the *Ode to Joy*, a triumphant celebration of sisterhood and brotherhood that has become an anthem of European unity. It's a majestic choral masterpiece that does what it says on the tin – a hymn to joy unconfined, a fusion of heaven and earth. Imagine being able to write something so otherworldly when you're profoundly deaf.

For Christians, Christmas is the great season of our joy. We mark the birth 2,000 years ago of Jesus, *Emmanuel*, God with us, who, in his life, his message, his dying and rising, made our salvation possible. His birth is joy to the world, as the angels sing, joy unconfined. We celebrate God's labour of love that gave birth to joy.

Joy is an experience our battered world badly needs after the turbulent year we have endured.

There are many for whom this is the most painful time of the year – a time of sadness, loneliness, grief, loss.

We cry out for respite from drudgery and war, price rises and pandemics. Joy is something we need to experience and celebrate, and Christmas is the season of joy.

Pope Francis loves the word 'joy'. It's sprinkled throughout his preaching and writing. It's in the titles of his letters and encyclicals – the joy of the Gospel, the joy of love, rejoice and be glad. It's no surprise he loves that word because joy is the hallmark of our Christian faith.

Joy is the essence of this feast. The joy in knowing God is with us; the joy in knowing God has not forgotten us; the joy of families united, the joy of love shared. Christmas is an ode to joy. ■

REFLECT

So remember today what brings our Christmas joy. Jesus' humble birth has prepared a way for us to draw near to him. In our brokenness, our poverty, our weakness, our need, God comes to us. God's presence is healing, life-giving and renewing. We shout for joy, for we have been saved.

Feel that joy today. Let it seep into every molecule of your being. Let it envelop you. Invite it in, especially if you have lacked its fullness this year. Inhale it. Nurture it. Treasure it.

Share that joy. Gift it. It's something precious, priceless. Reach out to those you know who have found this year difficult, those who find this time of year difficult, those who are laid low by illness, financial worries, or separation or loss. By your words and actions, lift them. Carry them. Carry each other.

These festive days will pass. Post-Christmas blues will sweep in. We're all susceptible to them. But when normality returns, choose to continue to take refuge in God and rejoice. Because of Jesus' arrival 2,000 years ago, we can now experience the joy of God's presence forever. Joy unconfined.

A joy of which Beethoven's immortal music is but a tiny little foretaste. ■

PRAY

Ask the Lord to fill you with joy at his coming.

LEARN

Christmas tells us that God hasn't forgotten us. God has come among us, as one like us, to show us the way, to show us how to live, to offer us hope.

Love is the best Christmas present we could give or hope to receive.

DO

Jesus is *Emmanuel*, 'God-with-us'. Make a conscious effort to be aware of God's presence in our world today and every day.

SAY

"O come, O come, Emmanuel."