

THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD



Glory to God in the Highest

Generous God,
you are the gracious giver of all gifts.
On this holy Christmas Day come
into our lives.

Give us the riches of your poverty,
show us the power of your weakness,
and teach us the joy of your humility.
Bless our homes and hearts as we
celebrate the birth of your Son
and join the angels in singing your
praises now and forever.

Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

December 25, 2023

House of Bread



Today's readings: Christmas Vigil Mass: Isaiah 62:1–5; Psalm 89:4–5, 16–17, 27, 29; Acts 13:16–17, 22–25; Matthew 1:1–25. Christmas Mass during the Night: Isaiah 9:1–6; Psalm 96:1–2, 2–3, 11–12, 13; Titus 2:11–14; Luke 2:1–14. Christmas Mass at Dawn: Isaiah 62:11–12; Psalm 97:1, 6, 11–12; Titus 3:4–7; Luke 2:15–20. Christmas Mass during the Day: Isaiah 52:7–10; Psalm 98:1, 2–3, 3–4, 5–6; Hebrews 1:1–6; John 1:1–18. On the Nativity of the Lord, we prepare ourselves to hear with fresh ears the story of Mary giving birth in a stable and making a feeding trough into a bed for our Savior. The story of Jesus' birth proclaims that great things happen in the humblest of places. The name of the unremarkable town that hosted this miracle is

Bethlehem. In Hebrew, *Bethlehem* means “house of bread.” What perfect symmetry that the One who will become our bread of life began human existence in the house of bread.

The account of the nativity also presents a marginalized group of people as the first to hear the Good News. Not only did the shepherds go “in haste” (Luke 2:16) to see the messiah, but with joy in their hearts, they proclaimed what they saw and heard. May we be open to hearing the Good News in unexpected ways and from unexpected people. With Mary, we acknowledge the “greatness of the Lord,” who fills the hungry “with good things” and sends the rich “away empty” (Luke 1:47–53).



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Christmas Readings The Incarnate Word

The lectionary designates different readings for the Masses for Christmas. Each of these readings shed light on God sending his Son into the world to be with us.

Christmas Vigil Mass Name Him Jesus

Names mean something. The Gospel of Matthew locates Jesus' entrance into history by recounting his ancestry, name by name, generation by generation, all the way back to Abraham, with whom God first formed the covenantal relationship with humanity. With great specificity, Matthew tells us that the name *Jesus* means "savior." The One who came to save his people from their sins was born at a unique moment in history with a particular place in the genealogy of humankind. Matthew tells us that the name *Emmanuel* means "God is with us." Jesus came through the womb of the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem two thousand years ago and dwells among us this Christmas and every moment of our lives. Let us make room in our hearts, homes, and lives for him. *Readings for the Christmas Vigil Mass: Isaiah 62:1–5; Psalm 89:4–5, 16–17, 27, 29; Acts 13:16–17, 22–25; Matthew 1:1–25.*

Christmas Mass during the Night A Savior Has Been Born

The Scriptures assigned for the midnight Mass invite us to contemplate the incarnation through the lenses of past, present, and future. The prophetic promises of Isaiah take us back to the past when the coming of Christ was foretold. St. Paul bids Titus, and all of us, to live as Christ taught us while we wait for his coming again. Luke narrates the particularities of this historical birth of Christ and the miraculous proclamation of the heavenly host to the people of Bethlehem. We are invited into the midst of this wondrous

mystery and sent forth to announce the salvation of Christ to the ends of the earth with great joy: today is born our Savior, Christ the Lord (Psalm 96:1). *Readings for Christmas Mass during the Night: Isaiah 9:1–6; Psalm 96:1–2, 2–3, 11–12, 13; Titus 2:11–14; Luke 2:1–14.*

Christmas Mass at Dawn Go Tell It

As dawn breaks, we recall the first witnesses of the incarnation and hear the succession of astonishing announcements that result. The angels announce the glorious news to the shepherds in the fields. The shepherds hasten to visit the holy family and share all the angels told them. From there, the shepherds continued to boldly witness the glorious news to all who would listen. Receiving their witness, we join in glorifying and praising God for all we have seen and heard. We ring bells, sing with exuberance, join in worship, light up our homes, fill our tables with plenty, exchange gifts, all the while witnessing this Good News with our celebrations. *Readings for Christmas Mass at Dawn: Isaiah 62:11–12; Psalm 97:1, 6, 11–12; Titus 3:4–7; Luke 2:15–20.*

Christmas Mass during the Day Word Made Flesh

The Gospel of John, read at the Christmas Mass during the Day, heralds that the world was created through the Word and that the Word has entered the world. John proclaims that the work of all creation coalesced in the birth of Christ. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. Then creation continued infused with Christ. In the story of creation and redemption, God is always moving toward us through the Word. We are summoned to turn our lives toward the Word and allow God to be manifested through us. On this holy day, we celebrate with joy that we share in the divinity of Christ, who humbled himself to share in our humanity. *Readings for Christmas Mass during the Day: Isaiah 52:7–10; Psalm 98:1, 2–3, 3–4, 5–6; Hebrews 1:1–6; John 1:1–18.*

