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## Nativity of the Lord, Christmas Day - 25 December 2022

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# 25 December 2022

## Nativity of the Lord, Christmas Day

Reflection by Anthony Doran

### Introduction

Today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord. We rejoice and give thanks for this light which has come into the world. In this Mass, we see the culmination of the theme of the Christmas Masses: of night giving way to day, of the light breaking through the darkness. The Word-become-flesh is the true light enlightening us.

### Penitential Act

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus, you are the radiant light of God's glory. Lord have mercy.

You loved us before the beginning of time. Christ have mercy.

You are the Word who is God. Lord have mercy.

### First Reading

#### Isaiah 52:7-10

In this prophetic oracle, a new messenger appears, a messenger of salvation for the people. At the arrival of this messenger of good news, the people break into shouts of joy. The messenger we love for the news he brings.

### Responsorial Psalm

#### Psalm 97:1-6. R. v. 3

*All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.*

This psalm praises God who 'wins' a mighty victory, bringing salvation to God's people. This victory is witnessed by 'all the ends of the earth'. For this, we ring out our joy.

### Second Reading

#### Hebrews 1:1-6

While in the past, God spoke through the prophets, now, in the Incarnation, he speaks to us directly in his Son. In the light of the Son, we see the radiant light of God's glory.

## Gospel Reading

### John 1:1-18

The Prologue of John's Gospel, read at this Mass, takes us back to the very beginning. Before anything else was created, the Word was with God and the word was God. Through this Word-made-flesh we are enlightened and receive God's grace.

## Reflection

In this Christmas mass – the Mass During the Day – the prayers and readings do not tell us of the story of the birth of Jesus in the stable at Bethlehem. But that doesn't matter. Because we know this story already. And we know it well. Rather, in this mass, it is as if we are looking at the mystery of the Incarnation from a higher vantage point. Our joy at the birth of Christ is expressed in greater strength in this mass. We are invited to reflect on the mystery of Christmas more deeply. Perhaps it is a bit like savouring a fine vintage wine. Richer, deeper, stronger, more flavoursome.

Our Gospel Reading today takes us back to the very beginning. Long before Bethlehem. Long before the Exodus. Long before even the creation of the world. 'In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.' From all eternity, the Word was with God. Unlike the idols made by human hands and unlike the voiceless idols of the pagan world, our God speaks. For 'at various times in the past and in various different ways', as the author of the Letter to the Hebrews tells us, 'God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets; but in our own time...he has spoken to us through his Son.' God speaks a Word in love. And that Word is his Son.

'The Word was made flesh, he lived among us, and we saw his glory.' But the eternal Word of God, Jesus Christ, does not just remain a word uttered by God. He is made flesh. He lives among us. Jesus is truly our Emmanuel. Jesus is truly God-with-us. When God takes on our human flesh, nothing can ever be the same again. For not only is humanity forever changed, but surely God is forever changed, too. God becomes one of us so that we might become one of him. God shares in our human life so that we may share in his divine life. That is the heart of the mystery of the Incarnation. This is why we echo the angels' song of praise.

At Christmas, we are called to recognise and to love Jesus Christ, our Emmanuel, our God with us. And 'beautiful on the mountains are the feet of one who brings this good news.' The good news that our God lives among us. The good news that Jesus Christ, 'the radiant light of God's glory' is born for us. The good news that the Word is made flesh and lives among us. We see his glory. We receive from his fullness. We worship and we give thanks. And we know that when we worship our God-with-us, Jesus Christ, the newborn babe of Bethlehem, nothing can ever be the same again.

# Prayer of the Faithful

## Introduction

On this day we remember that the Word was made flesh. We turn to God with our petitions confident that God is near to us in our needs.

## Petitions

We pray for the leaders of the Church as we celebrate the Feast of Christmas. May their example of love and mercy shine through the world and show the real meaning of Christmas as they walk in synodality.

*(Pause)* Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for leaders of all nations that they recognise that you came to us as a defenceless little baby and became a refugee. May our leaders work for the rights of the refugees, victims of abuse, the elderly and the disabled.

*(Pause)* Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for this parish community. Moved by your love for us may we serve our neighbour with humility and be signs of Christ's presence in the world.

*(Pause)* Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for the lonely in our society as we remember that Jesus was also rejected by his own people. May there be extra places added at the Christmas banquet for anyone would otherwise be alone this day.

*(Pause)* Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

We pray for all broken families who will not be reunited this Christmas. Fill them with your grace, that aware of your love for them, they may desire to work towards reconciliation with their loved ones.

*(Pause)* Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord

## Conclusion

Father, you reveal yourself to us fully in Jesus Christ. We celebrate the gift of your love and offer our prayers to you with faith in our hearts. We make our prayer through the Spirit and in the name of Jesus, your Son.

## Amen

## Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

Title	AOV 1	AOV2	AOVK	AOVNG	GA	CWB	CWBII	S&S1	S&S2
A Child is born in Bethlehem						612			
All the ends of the earth (Fisher)				5				75	
All the ends of the earth (Canedo)									270
All the ends of the earth (Hurd)									271
Angels we have heard on high		140			286	622	255		
Away in a manger					289		256		
Baby lying in a manger			63				257		
Born this day									296
Emmanuel				40					
Good Christians all, rejoice						697	261		
Hark! The herald angels sing	171				294	704	262		
Joy to the world	170				295	728	265		
Let the season shine				87					
O come, all ye faithful (Vs 1-2)	167				287	760	267		
O little town of Bethlehem					296	772	266		
Of the Father's love begotten						779	268		
Once in royal David's city					297	782	269		
Sing to the Lord a new song									272
Sing we, sing we Nowell		124					271		
The first Nowell	169				298	822	280		
Unto us a Boy is born						849	273		
What Child is This? (Vs 1-2)	165						275		

## Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 97: *All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.*

	CWB	GA	JOBA	LPSF	PM
Psalm 97	185, 598	57	pg. 20	pg. 14	pg. 72

## Music selections by Michael Mangan

**Glory to God** (TT/SYJ) [Gathering, Recessional]

**Glory, gloria** (STAR) [CHILDREN, Gathering, Recessional]

**All the ends of the earth** (LCC) *Ps 97/98 (Chn's Lectionary)*

**Sing new songs of joy** (FWS, CWBII) *based on Ps 97(98)* [Gathering, Recessional]

**There is a child** (TT/SYJ) *based on Is 9:1-7*

**This little boy** (TT/SYJ) [Non-Scriptural Reflection]