

25 DECEMBER 2020

THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

INTRODUCTION:

On Christmas Day children open their gifts tossing away the ribbon, gift wrapping, paper boxes etc... We too need to discard whatever comes in the way of receiving God's gift of Salvation. We can discard our desire for self-satisfaction, self-righteousness and self-promotion, so that we may discover God's continued presence and love. Our proclaiming, living and *being the Good News*, is the best response we can make at Christmas.

INTRODUCTION TO THE READINGS:

Mass at Vigil: The readings from Isaiah tells of what *will* happen. The second reading and the Gospel speak of Jesus as the Son of David and of the human antecedents who prepared the way for his coming. This is presented through the genealogy from St. Matthew's Gospel. At the Vigil Mass, the celebration of Christmas begins with this liturgy, its prayers and readings evoke a sense of eager anticipation.

Mass at Midnight: At the midnight mass the Church opens God's gift of the Word made flesh. The prophet Isaiah proclaims: *"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light!"* He goes on to speak of the glorious victory... He announces that this ruler's dominion...The Gospel announces that this mighty ruler was born, ...*"wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn."* It is a fitting response to join our thanksgiving with the angels, whose song resounds through the heavens on this night.

Mass at Dawn: The readings provided for the Mass at dawn are succinct. The members of the Church are awakening in the early cold morning wondering if the angelic apparition was a dream. The shepherds go in haste and find it just as the angel had said. They return, glorifying and praising God for what they have heard and seen. All who hear of it are amazed by what the Shepherds tell them. The shepherds see, and we are invited to see.

Mass during the Day: The Prologue of John's Gospel helps us to understand the identity of the Infant in the manger. *"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth."* The second reading reminds us, God spoke in various ways through the prophets; but now, *"In these last days, he has spoken to us through the Son, whom he made heir of all things and through whom he created the universe, who is the refulgence of his glory"*. The opening collect of the Liturgy *"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."* Let us pray that Christ the "true light" leads us to the fullness of grace and truth.

READINGS:

KINDLY REFER THE ORDO FOR THE READINGS

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Celebrant: On this day (on this night, in this time) when the goodness and kindness of God our Saviour has appeared, let us, dear brothers and sisters, humbly pour forth to him our prayers, trusting not in our good works but in his mercy.

Our response is: Lord, hear our prayer

For Pope Francis, bishops, clergy, religious and the members of the Church, that in integrity of faith we may await and may welcome with joy him whom the immaculate Virgin conceived by a word and wondrously brought to birth; **pause**; let us pray to the Lord...

For all the people in the world, that they may be open to spread peace and accept progress; **pause**; let us pray to the Lord...

For all those who are oppressed by hunger, sickness or loneliness, that through the mystery of the Nativity of Christ they may find relief in mind and body; **pause**; let us pray to the Lord...

For all of us gathered here and those receiving the spiritual benefits through online Mass, that we may welcome Christ and in turn learn how to welcome him in the poor; **pause**; let us pray to the Lord...

Celebrant: We pray, O Lord our God, that the Virgin Mary, who merited to bear God and man in her chaste womb, may commend the prayers of the faithful in your sight. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF FROM THE CORONA VIRUS

Almighty and merciful God, who show Your love to all creation everywhere, hear graciously the prayers we make for all those affected by the Coronavirus in various parts of the world.

We come before You asking for a quick control of the outbreak, for a healing of those affected, for the victims and their families.

We pray for the doctors doing research that an effective vaccine to combat the sickness is speedily found.

We pray for the Government and health authorities that they take appropriate steps for the good of the people. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Commission For Liturgy
Archdiocese of Bombay*