

The Living Word

Nativity of the Lord (Christmas) Midnight

25 December

First Reading Is 9:1-7

A son is given to us.

The people that walked in darkness
has seen a great light;
on those who live in a land of deep shadow
a light has shone.
You have made their gladness greater,
you have made their joy increase;
they rejoice in your presence
as men rejoice at harvest time,
as men are happy when they are dividing the
spoils.
For the yoke that was weighing on him,
the bar across his shoulders,
the rod of his oppressor,
these you break as on the day of Midian.
For all the footgear of battle,
every cloak rolled in blood,
is burnt
and consumed by fire.
For there is a child born for us,
a son given to us
and dominion is laid on his shoulders;
and this is the name they give him:
Wonder-Counsellor, Mighty-God,
Eternal-Father, Prince-of-Peace.
Wide is his dominion
in a peace that has no end,
for the throne of David
and for his royal power,
which he establishes and makes secure
in justice and integrity.
From this time onwards and for ever,
the jealous love of the Lord of hosts
will do this.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 95:1-3. 11-13 R. Lk 2:11

**(R.) Today is born our Saviour,
Christ the Lord.**

1. O sing a new song to the Lord,
sing to the Lord all the earth.
O sing to the Lord, bless his name. (R.)
2. Proclaim his help day by day,
tell among the nations his glory
and his wonders among all
the peoples. (R.)
3. Let the heavens rejoice and earth
be glad,
let the sea and all within it thunder praise,
let the land and all it bears rejoice,
all the trees of the wood shout for joy
at the presence of the Lord
for he comes,
he comes to rule the earth. (R.)
4. With justice he will rule the world,
he will judge the peoples with
his truth (R.)

Second Reading Ti 2:11-14

God's grace has been revealed to all people.

God's grace has been revealed, and it has made
salvation possible for the whole human race and
taught us that what we have to do is to give up
everything that does not lead to God, and all our
worldly ambitions; we must be self-restrained
and live good and religious lives here in this
present world, while we are waiting in hope for
the blessing which will come with the Appearing
of the glory of our great God and saviour Christ
Jesus. He sacrificed himself for us in order to
set us free from all wickedness and to purify
a people so that it could be his very own and
would have no ambition except to do good.

Gospel Acclamation Lk 2:10-11

Alleluia, alleluia!

**Good News and great joy to all
the world:**

**today is born our Saviour, Christ
the Lord.**

Alleluia!

Gospel Lk 2:1-14

Today a saviour has been born for you.

Caesar Augustus issued a decree for a census of
the whole world to be taken. This census – the
first – took place while Quirinius was governor of
Syria, and everyone went to his own town to be
registered. So Joseph set out from the town of
Nazareth in Galilee and travelled up to Judaea,
to the town of David called Bethlehem, since he
was of David's House and line, in order to be
registered together with Mary, his betrothed,
who was with child. While they were there the
time came for her to have her child, and she gave
birth to a son, her first-born. She wrapped him
in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger
because there was no room for them at the inn.
In the countryside close by there were shepherds
who lived in the fields and took it in turns to
watch their flocks during the night. The angel
of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of
the Lord shone round them. They were terrified,
but the angel said, 'Do not be afraid. Listen,
I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared
by the whole people. Today in the town of David
a saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the
Lord. And here is a sign for you: you will find a
baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a
manger.' And suddenly with the angel there was
a great throng of the heavenly host, praising God
and singing:

'Glory to God in the highest heaven
and peace to men who enjoy his favour.'

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Reflection by Fr Michael Tate

The glory of God and profound
peace reaching out to embrace the
whole of humanity are dynamically
related in the baby in the manger.
This is the song of the angels, and
it is our privilege to join in that
song at this Christmas Mass.

Every baby is a promise of a new
future which fills one with hope.
But *this* baby is unique. *This* Jewish
boy baby is the body language of
God. *This* baby is the sonburst of
God entering our dark world. *This*
baby shows us that God is not
impossibly remote but, rather, God
is as intimately close as a
vulnerable infant.

And *this* baby fulfils all the yearning
of the human heart. We want to
love to the utmost. We want to be
loved to the utmost. *This* baby
enables both because he is without
any finite boundaries or restraints:
He is in-finite love reaching out to
us.

Can we grasp all this? Probably
not. So, like the little lambs
nuzzling up to the manger, we just
follow some deep intuition which
says: 'I must kneel in adoration, it
is good to be here.' We could
pause for a moment to pray for the
resolve to do our bit to echo the
angel's message: 'I bring you good
news of great joy to be shared by
all peoples.'

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St Stephen was the first deacon chosen by the apostles soon after the death and resurrection of Jesus. He took care of the needs of Greek-speaking widows among the Christian community in Jerusalem, and he was also known as a zealous preacher. But his preaching was considered blasphemy by the Jewish council and he was stoned to death in c.35 AD. Stephen became the first martyr for Christ and even as they threw stones at him, he asked God to forgive his attackers for their sins.

Wordsearch

Try to find these words:

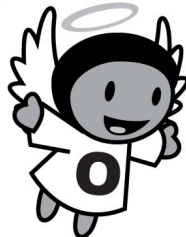
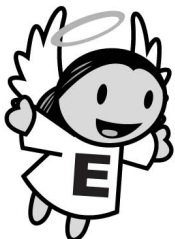
angels happy Joseph peace
Christ inn manger sheep
engaged Jesus Nazareth travelled



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Join up the angels and see what they spell



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