

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Drop down dew from above, you heavens, and let the clouds rain down the Just One; let the earth be opened and bring forth a Saviour.

PENITENTIAL ACT

You were sent to heal the contrite of heart: Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

You came to call sinners: Christ, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

You are seated at the right hand of the Father to intercede for us: Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

May almighty God have mercy on us.... Amen.

(The Gloria is omitted awaiting its Christmas Proclamation.)

OPENING PRAYER

Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord, your grace into our hearts, that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ your Son was made known by the message of an Angel, may by his Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of his Resurrection. Who lives and reigns with you....

LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING *Isaiah 7: 10 - 14*

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

The Lord spoke to Ahaz and said, 'Ask the Lord your God for a sign for yourself coming either from the depths of Sheol or from the heights above.' 'No,' Ahaz answered 'I will not put the Lord to the test.'

Then Isaiah said: 'Listen now, House of David: are you not satisfied with trying the patience of men without trying the patience of my God, too? The Lord himself, therefore, will give you a sign.

It is this: the maiden is with child and will soon give birth to a son whom she will call Emmanuel, a name which means 'God-is-with-us.'



The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM *Ps 23: 1 - 6*

R. Let the Lord enter! He is the King of glory

1. The Lord's is the earth and its fullness, the world and all its peoples. It is he who set it on the seas; on the waters he made it firm. **[R]**
2. Who shall climb the mountain of the Lord? Who shall stand in his holy place? The man with clean hands and pure heart, who desires not worthless things. **[R]**
3. He shall receive blessings from the Lord and reward from the God who saves him. Such are the men who seek him, seek the face of the God of Jacob. **[R]**

SECOND READING *Romans 1: 1-7*

A reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Romans.

From Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus who has been called to be an apostle, and specially chosen to preach the Good News that God promised long ago through his prophets in the scriptures.

This news is about the Son of God, who, according to the human nature he took, was a descendant of David: it is about Jesus Christ our Lord who, in the order of the spirit, the spirit of holiness that was in him, was proclaimed Son of God in all his power through his resurrection from the dead. Through him we received grace and our apostolic mission to preach the obedience of faith to all pagan nations in honour of his name. You are one of these nations, and by his call belong to Jesus Christ. To you all, then, who are God's beloved in Rome, called to be saints, may God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ send grace and peace.

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia! The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and they will call him Emmanuel, a name which means 'God-is-with-us'. Alleluia!

GOSPEL *Matthew 1: 18 - 24*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

This is how Jesus Christ came to be born. His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph; but before they came to live together she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a man of honour and wanting to spare her publicity, decided to divorce her informally. He had made up his mind to do this when the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because she has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins.' Now all this took place to fulfil the words spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and they will call him Emmanuel, a name which means 'God-is-with-us'. When Joseph woke up he did what the angel of the Lord had told him to do: he took his wife to his home.

The Gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

NICENE CREED

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, All bow for following three lines:



focus on sunday

The birth of Christ is almost upon us now. We are reminded in Isaiah's prophecy of the long-awaited Emmanuel – God in our midst. Like Joseph, we need to make room for Jesus to enter our lives and our world.



and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

May the Holy Spirit, O Lord, sanctify these gifts laid upon your altar, just as he filled with his power the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Through Christ our Lord.

AFTER THE CONSECRATION

The mystery of faith. When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son; and his name will be called Emmanuel.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having received this pledge of eternal redemption, we pray, almighty God, that, as the feast day of our salvation draws ever nearer, so we may press forward all the more eagerly to the worthy celebration of the mystery of your Son's Nativity. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.



Christmas is practically here and there is still so much to be done. That Christmas celebrates the most central tenet of our faith, God becoming a human being, calls us to pray, reflect and do something practical. The

great doctors of the church tell us that the whole of creation waited with bated breath to see if Mary would agree to become the mother of the Saviour. Christmas celebrates God's gift to us of everything he has, his only Son, his whole family so to speak. Christmas celebrates Mary's generosity when she agreed to be the mother of the Saviour. In doing so she put in jeopardy her personal plans and ran the gauntlet of possible rejection by Joseph and being the butt of harsh and unforgiving village gossip. The season that's coming upon us is dripping with the spirit of generosity, God's generosity as well as Mary's and Joseph's.

It's the season for us all to be generous to all. It's the season to be compassionate to those who are less fortunate, forgotten and in need of meaningful help. It's the season to reach out and help a neighbour carry their load. If we ourselves have more than enough to enjoy Christmas, it won't hurt to be generous and give some of it away to those who have less or nothing at all to cheer them up. Christmas is not just about me. It's about us all together, rich, and poor, givers and receivers – all helping one another to carry the burden of our life together. So, let's slow down these days and try sensing and feeling the pain of others. God so loved and felt for the world that he sent his only Son... John 3:15.

Fr. Joe Walsh