

THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD



Wonderful, Marvelous

Glorious and generous God,
with the angels and saints,
we raise our voices joyfully
for the gift of an infant.
May Christ be born in us

through the Eucharist,
as we acknowledge
that the wood of the cradle
anticipates the wood of the cross.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, December 25, 2022
Good News, Great Joy, Alleluia



Today's readings (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 breaks into our lives with the hopeful image of light. "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light," we hear in the reading from Isaiah. Sickness, death, and much human frailty have been part of our lives in the recent past. More than a promise of better days to come is needed. Isaiah's prophecy offers abundant hope as we hear, "Upon those who lived in a land of gloom a light has shone." The light is given to us because "a child is born to us," a child who will be called "Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace."

This Christmas, as we deal with uncertainty, let us be surprised with Christmas hope! Let us be amazed that God sent his Son to redeem us! Through Jesus, God offers us another path. As St. Athanasius said, "God became human so that humanity might become divine." How can we be anything but astounded that God has invited us into life with him?

During the Christmas season, seek ways to extend a kindness that is out of the ordinary. After all, God has done that for us, and as St. Paul said in his Letter to Titus, through Christ, God has cleansed us "as a people of his own, eager to do good." May your kindnesses be a light to others.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, December 26

St. Stephen

Today is special for permanent deacons as they celebrate the feast of their patron, St. Stephen, the first martyr. Acts recounts how the saint was stoned after he performed “great wonders and signs among the people.” While being stoned, Stephen called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Psalm 31 echoes the suffering of Jesus on the cross and the cry, “Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.” May we allow St. Stephen’s courage to inspire us as we seek to live as disciples of Christ. *Today’s readings: Acts 6:8–10, 7:54–59; Psalm 31:3cd–4, 6 and 8ab, 16bc and 17; Matthew 10:17–22.*

Tuesday, December 27

St. John, Apostle

St. John, the apostle, is known as the disciple “whom Jesus loved.” The Gospel text shows this disciple running to the tomb, arriving before Peter. Upon entering the tomb, the disciple “saw and believed.” In the first reading, St. John passes on his belief. “What we have seen and heard, we proclaim now to you,” he states. If there is a funeral at your church this week, try to attend to support the family of the deceased. During the Christmas season, grieving families especially need love and concern from the parish. *Today’s readings: 1 John 1:1–4; Psalm 97:1–2, 5–6, 11–12; John 20:1a, 2–8.*

Wednesday, December 28

Feast of the Holy Innocents

The Gospel today tells of “the massacre of all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity.” If you are with children today, offer them special love and give thanks to God for the blessing of their lives. With the children, make a simple manger from paper, popsicle sticks, or a cardboard box, as a reminder of Jesus’ cradle. If there is a community pantry nearby, donate and deliver diapers or baby supplies for the needy. *Today’s readings: 1 John 1:5–2:26–4; Psalm 124: 2–3, 4–5, 7b–8; Matthew 2:13–18.*

Thursday, December 29

Octave of Christmas

The days after Christmas are called the *Octave of Christmas*. Similarly, the first eight days of Easter are called an *octave*. In both seasons, the days of the octave invite the faithful to an extended reflection on what we are celebrating. Today, spend time with the Gospel text of Simeon’s prayer and then with his words to Mary. Incorporate Simeon’s prayer, known as the *Nunc Dimittis*, into your nightly prayers. *Today’s readings: 1 John 2:3–11; Psalm 96:1–2a, 2b–3, 5b–6; Luke 2:22–35.*

Friday, December 30

Feast of the Holy Family

The Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph is celebrated on a weekday this year, since there is no Sunday between Christmas and the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God. Celebrate this feast with your family and include a guest who is a “family of one” to join you. Prepare a special dessert, meet at a favorite restaurant, or volunteer to serve a meal to those who have no family to share the holidays with. Make peace with an estranged family member. *Today’s readings: Sirach 3:2–6, 12–14 or Colossians 3:12–21 or Colossians 3:12–17; Psalm 128:1–2, 3, 4–5; Matthew 2:13–15, 19–23.*

Saturday, December 31

The Light Shines in Darkness

Today’s Gospel proclaims Jesus as the incarnate Word of God, stating, “In the beginning was the Word, / and the Word was with God, / and the Word was God.” In your Bible, this text is the prologue to the Gospel of John and can be read as a preview of the chapters ahead. The rest of the brief chapter tells of the incarnation. Read this Gospel over meditatively, stopping to ponder phrases such as “the true light, which enlightens everyone.” *Today’s readings: 1 John 2:18–21; Psalm 96:1–2, 11–12, 13; John 1:1–18.*

