

December 25
Solemnity of The Nativity of the Lord
Bulletin (Christmas) Dec 25, 2022 Cycle A

Dear Readers: **December 25, 2022** is the Sunday of Christmas. We hope that reading about the Birth of the Lord will help you understand:

1. why we celebrate the birth of Christ.
2. the gifts Christ has given us that we need to learn to use and pass on to others.

What is Advent? It is the season during which we prepare for Christmas and the birth of Jesus. It includes the four Sundays before Christmas which began on November 27 this year. Hopefully you have just finished reading the Children's Liturgies on Advent. I am writing this to help you understand the story of Christ's birth and his influence on us and the world. We are not exactly sure what the actual date of birth for the Christ Child was. What is important to us is his influence.

Before the birth of Christ it was a stressful time for the Israelites. They lived in a land of darkest shadows surrounded by enemies with whom they were often at war. The people were filled with fear of war and suffering, wondering if God had forsaken them. Armies from the North had oppressed and enslaved the Israelites until now when it seemed as if a small light began to shine. The prophet Isaiah promised that a future ruler who would be honest and just was coming. The lighting of the candles during Advent foreshadows the bright light that everyone will see at Christmas. A small child will be born today who will become their leader, a mighty God and Prince of Peace. Try reading this first reading (**from Isaiah 9:2-4, 6-7**) a couple of times and you will realize how the Israelites felt about the coming of their "Prince of Peace".

Those who walked in the dark have seen a bright light.
And it shines upon everyone who lives in the land of darkest shadows.

Our Lord, you have made your nation stronger.
Because of you, its people are glad and celebrate
like workers at harvest time
or soldiers dividing what they have taken.

You have broken the power
of those who oppressed and enslaved your people.
You have rescued them as you did from Midian.

For us a child has been born.
A son has been given to us,
and he will be our ruler.

His names will be:
Wonderful Advisor and Mighty God,
Eternal Father and Prince of Peace.

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His power will never end,
and peace will last forever.
He will rule David's kingdom and make it grow strong.
He will always rule with honesty and justice.
The Lord All-Powerful will make certain that all of this is done.
The word of the Lord.

The first reading began when the Israelites had been forced into hard labor which left them no hope of a future. God broke the power of that enemy and destroyed them. The second part of this reading is a vision of the yet unborn child who was descended from their great and beloved King David. He is to become their savior. These were the ancient Hebrews and the first of God's people who had waited a long time for their savior. Now is the time for celebration because the Lord is saving them. He will be named Wonderful Advisor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, and Prince of Peace. What does this really mean? He knows the difference between right and wrong and will be the Godly Father and the Prince of Peace of their nation, caring for his people and leading them to peace.

Next the **Responsorial Psalm (96:1-2a, 2b-3, 11-12a)**. It is a song of joy because today is born our Savior, Christ the Lord. This is a Psalm of thanks to God for saving them. They will be "glad and celebrate" and remember how wonderful the Lord is for saving them.

R/: Today is born our Savior, Christ the Lord.

Sing a new song to the LORD!
Everyone on this earth,
sing praises to the LORD,
sing and praise his name.

R/: Today is born our Savior, Christ the Lord.

Day after day announce,
"The Lord has saved us!"
Tell every nation on earth,
"The Lord is wonderful
and does marvelous things!"

R/: Today is born our Savior, Christ the Lord.

Tell the heavens and the earth
to be glad and celebrate!
Command the ocean to roar
with all of its creatures
and the fields to rejoice

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with all their crops.
R/: Today is born our Savior, Christ the Lord.

The second reading (**from the letter of St. Paul to Titus: 3:4-6**). God saved us not because we are good but because he is merciful. God sent Jesus Christ to help us learn and understand the right path. He knows that people have a long way to go before they are as good and loving as God wants them to be. Jesus is our teacher and our savior. He will lead us to God which is our best hope. He teaches us to live justly and devoutly and to reject that which is godless. He wants us be gentle and kind to everyone. Let us be eager to do what is good.

Brothers and sisters:
God our savior showed us how good and kind he is.
He saved us because of his mercy,
and not because of any good things that we have done.
God washed us by the power of the Holy Spirit.
He gave us new birth and a fresh beginning.
God sent Jesus Christ our savior to give us his Spirit.

Jesus treated us much better than we deserved.
He made us acceptable to God and gave us hope of eternal life.
The word of the Lord.

St. Luke is the source of today's gospel. It is the story of Christ's birth and how he was introduced to the world. During the time before Christ's birth when Joseph and Mary were to be married, the Roman Emperor ordered that a census be taken of the empire that he controlled. Everyone had to go to their own home town to be listed. Joseph had to leave Nazareth in Galilee in the South and travel more than 70 miles North on foot to Bethlehem in Judea. Bethlehem had been King David's home town and Joseph was from David's family.

A reading from the holy gospel according to St. Luke (2:1 1-14).

Emperor Augustus gave orders for the names of all the people
to be listed in record books.
These first records were made when Quirinius was governor of Syria.
Everyone had to go to their own hometown to be listed.
So Joseph had to leave Nazareth in Galilee and go to Bethlehem in Judea.
Long ago Bethlehem had been King David's hometown,
and Joseph went there because he was from David's family.
Mary was engaged to Joseph and traveled with him to Bethlehem.
She was soon going to have a baby
and while she was there,

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she gave birth to her first-born son.
She dressed him in baby clothes and laid him on a bed of hay in a manger,
because there was no room at the inn.
That night in the fields near Bethlehem
some shepherds were guarding their sheep.



The shepherds were terrified.
The angel told them
not to be afraid because
the news the angel brought
would bring them great joy.
Today in King David's city
a Savior was born for them
He is Christ the Lord.

All at once an angel came down to them from the Lord,
and the brightness of the Lord's glory flashed around them.
The shepherds were frightened.
But the angel said, "Don't be afraid!
I have good news for you, which will make everyone happy.
This very day in King David's hometown a Savior was born for you.
He is Christ the Lord.
You will know who he is,
because you will find him dressed in baby clothes
and lying in a manger."
Suddenly many other angels came down from heaven and joined in praising God.
They said:
"Praise God in heaven!
Peace on earth to everyone
who pleases God."

The gospel of the Lord.

Mary, traveling with Joseph, rode on a donkey, because it was a long trip and she was soon to have the baby. They reached Bethlehem, but because of the census, the city was crowded and there were no rooms. They took shelter in a stable. That night Mary gave birth to her son, Jesus. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes for warmth and comfort, and placed him in a manger used for

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feeding the animals. According to Jewish tradition, being the first-born son meant that he belonged to the Lord.

When was Jesus born? We don't really know. There are many theories. December 25th is a good date because it is a naturally dark time of year. After December 25th some of this darkness begins to disappear. Likewise, Jesus' birth brings light into the darkness. Christmas is a time to celebrate the light that Jesus brings into our lives.

Why do you think the Shepherds were the first to see the "newborn King"? Why did God choose them? Remember this baby was descended from King David who began life as a humble shepherd in Bethlehem before he became the great King of the Hebrews. Shepherds took good care of their animals. They guided and protected them. Although the shepherds performed an important function in society by caring for the sheep, they had a lowly position. Throughout the Old Testament God is shown to favor lowly people. Remember also that the adult Jesus calls himself our Shepherd AND our King.

What did the lowly shepherds learn from the birth of Jesus? They learned how to follow and believe in Jesus.

Christmas is a time of gift giving for us. What are some gifts that we can give our families and friends? They don't need to cost money but should show that we have learned about goodness and kindness from Jesus. Share these ideas with your families. Write them down on cards and decorate them. Hang them on the tree or place them on the table for all to see. Let this remind you and your family what you will try to do to show your kindness, goodness, love and faith.

Goodness

Love



Kindness

Faith

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