

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

*O people of Sion, behold,
the Lord will come to save the nations,
and the Lord will make the glory of his voice heard
in the joy of your heart.*

COLLECT

Almighty and merciful God,
may no earthly undertaking hinder those
who set out in haste to meet your Son,
but may our learning of heavenly wisdom
gain us admittance to his company.
Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

FIRST READING Baruch 5:1-9

A reading from the prophet Baruch.

Jerusalem, take off your dress of sorrow and distress,
put on the beauty of the glory of God for ever,
wrap the cloak of the integrity of God around you,
put the diadem of the glory of the Eternal on your head:
since God means to show your splendour to every nation under
heaven,

since the name God gives you for ever will be,
"Peace through integrity, and honour through devotedness".
Arise, Jerusalem, stand on the heights
and turn your eyes to the east:

see your sons reassembled from west and east
at the command of the Holy One, jubilant that God has
remembered them.

Though they left you on foot,
with enemies for an escort,
now God brings them back to you
like royal princes carried back in glory.

For God has decreed the flattening
of each high mountain, of the everlasting hills,
the filling of the valleys to make the ground level
so that Israel can walk in safety under the glory of God.
And the forests and every fragrant tree will provide shade
for Israel at the command of God;
for God will guide Israel in joy by the light of his glory
with his mercy and integrity for escort.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM Psalm 125

RESPONSE: *What marvels the Lord worked for us!
Indeed we were glad.*

1. When the Lord delivered Zion from bondage,
it seemed like a dream.
Then was our mouth filled with laughter,
on our lips there were songs. **R.**
2. The heathens themselves said: "What marvels
the Lord worked for them!"
What marvels the Lord worked for us!
Indeed we were glad. **R.**
3. Deliver us, O Lord, from our bondage
as streams in dry land.
Those who are sowing in tears
will sing when they reap. **R.**
4. They go out, they go out, full of tears,
carrying seed for the sowing:
they come back, they come back, full of song,
carrying their sheaves. **R.**

SECOND READING Philippians 1:4-6. 8-11

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

Every time I pray for all of you, I pray with joy, remembering how
you have helped to spread the Good News from the day you first
heard it right up to the present. I am quite certain that the One who
began this good work in you will see that it is finished when the Day
of Christ Jesus comes. God knows how much I miss you all, loving
you as Christ Jesus loves you. My prayer is that your love for each
other may increase more and more and never stop improving your
knowledge and deepening your perception so that you can always
recognise what is best. This will help you to become pure and
blameless, and prepare you for the Day of Christ, when you will
reach the perfect goodness which Jesus Christ produces in us for
the glory and praise of God.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

*Prepare a way for the Lord,
make his paths straight,
and all mankind shall see the salvation of God.
Alleluia!*

GOSPEL Luke 3:1-6

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

In the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar's reign, when Pontius Pilate
was governor of Judaea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother
Philip tetrarch of the lands of Ituraea and Trachonitis, Lysanias
tetrarch of Abilene, during the pontificate of Annas and Caiaphas,
the word of God came to John son of Zechariah, in the wilderness.
He went through the whole Jordan district proclaiming a baptism of
repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of
the sayings of the prophet Isaiah:

A voice cries in the wilderness:

Prepare a way for the Lord,
make his paths straight.

Every valley will be filled in,
every mountain and hill be laid low,
winding ways will be straightened
and rough roads made smooth.

And all mankind shall see the salvation of God.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Be pleased, O Lord, with our humble prayers and offerings,
and, since we have no merits to plead our cause,
come, we pray, to our rescue
with the protection of your mercy.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

*Jerusalem, arise and stand upon the heights,
and behold the joy which comes to you from God.*

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Replenished by the food of spiritual nourishment,
we humbly beseech you, O Lord,
that, through our partaking in this mystery,
you may teach us to judge wisely the things of earth
and hold firm to the things of heaven.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

*Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice.
Indeed, the Lord is near.*

COLLECT

O God, who see how your people faithfully await the feast of the Lord's Nativity, enable us, we pray, to attain the joys of so great a salvation and to celebrate them always with solemn worship and glad rejoicing. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

FIRST READING Zephaniah 3:14-18

A reading from the prophet Zephaniah.

Shout for joy, daughter of Zion, Israel, shout aloud!
Rejoice, exult with all your heart, daughter of Jerusalem!
The Lord has repealed your sentence; he has driven your enemies away.
The Lord, the king of Israel, is in your midst; you have no more evil to fear.
When that day comes, word will come to Jerusalem: Zion, have no fear, do not let your hands fall limp.
The Lord your God is in your midst, a victorious warrior.
He will exult with joy over you, he will renew you by his love; he will dance with shouts of joy for you as on a day of festival.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM Isaiah 12

RESPONSE: *Sing and shout for joy
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.*

1. Truly, God is my salvation,
I trust, I shall not fear.
For the Lord is my strength, my song,
he became my saviour.
With joy you will draw water
from the wells of salvation. **R.**
2. Give thanks to the Lord, give praise to his name!
Make his mighty deeds known to the peoples!
Declare the greatness of his name. **R.**
3. Sing a psalm to the Lord
for he has done glorious deeds,
make them known to all the earth!
People of Zion, sing and shout for joy
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel. **R.**

SECOND READING Philippians 4:4-7

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

I want you to be happy, always happy in the Lord; I repeat, what I want is your happiness. Let your tolerance be evident to everyone: the Lord is very near. There is no need to worry; but if there is anything you need, pray for it, asking God for it with prayer and thanksgiving, and that peace of God, which is so much greater than we can understand, will guard your hearts and your thoughts, in Christ Jesus.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

*Alleluia, alleluia!
The spirit of the Lord has been given to me.
He has sent me to bring good news to the poor.
Alleluia!*

GOSPEL Luke 3:10-18

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

When all the people asked John, "What must we do?" he answered, "If anyone has two tunics he must share with the man who has none, and the one with something to eat must do the same." There were tax collectors too who came for baptism, and these said to him, "Master, what must we do?" He said to them, "Exact no more than your rate." Some soldiers asked him in their turn, "What about us? What must we do?" He said to them, "No intimidation! No extortion! Be content with your pay!"

A feeling of expectancy had grown among the people, who were beginning to think that John might be the Christ, so John declared before them all, "I baptise you with water, but someone is coming, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to undo the strap of his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fan is in his hand to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his barn; but the chaff he will burn in a fire that will never go out." As well as this, there were many other things he said to exhort the people and to announce the Good News to them.

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

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

May the sacrifice of our worship, Lord, we pray, be offered to you unceasingly, to complete what was begun in sacred mystery and powerfully accomplish for us your saving work. Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

*Say to the faint of heart: Be strong and do not fear.
Behold, our God will come, and he will save us.*

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

We implore your mercy, Lord, that this divine sustenance may cleanse us of our faults and prepare us for the coming feasts. Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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.*

COLLECT

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 in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

FIRST READING Micah 5:1-4

A reading from the prophet Micah.

The Lord says this:

You, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
the least of the clans of Judah,
out of you will be born for me
the one who is to rule over Israel;
his origin goes back to the distant past,
to the days of old.
The Lord is therefore going to abandon them
till the time when she who is to give birth gives birth.
Then the remnant of his brothers will come back
to the sons of Israel.
He will stand and feed his flock
with the power of the Lord,
with the majesty of the name of his God.
They will live secure, for from then on he will extend his power
to the ends of the land.
He himself will be peace.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM Psalm 79

RESPONSE: *God of hosts, bring us back;
let your face shine on us and we shall be saved.*

1. O shepherd of Israel, hear us,
shine forth from your cherubim throne.
O Lord, rouse up your might,
O Lord, come to our help. **R.**
2. God of hosts, turn again, we implore,
look down from heaven and see.
Visit this vine and protect it,
the vine your right hand has planted. **R.**
3. May your hand be on the man you have chosen,
the man you have given your strength.
And we shall never forsake you again:
give us life that we may call upon your name. **R.**

SECOND READING Hebrews 10:5-10

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

This is what Christ said, on coming into the world:

You who wanted no sacrifice or oblation,
prepared a body for me.
You took no pleasure in holocausts or sacrifices for sin;
then I said,
just as I was commanded in the scroll of the book,
"God, here I am! I am coming to obey your will."

Notice that he says first: You did not want what the Law lays down
as the things to be offered, that is: the sacrifices, the oblations, the
holocausts and the sacrifices for sin, and you took no pleasure in
them; and then he says: Here I am! I am coming to obey your will.
He is abolishing the first sort to replace it with the second. And this
will was for us to be made holy by the offering of his body made
once and for all by Jesus Christ.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

*I am the handmaid of the Lord:
let what you have said be done to me.
Alleluia!*

GOSPEL Luke 1:39-45

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

Mary set out and went as quickly as she could to a town in the hill
country of Judah. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted
Elizabeth. Now as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the
child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy
Spirit. She gave a loud cry and said, "Of all women you are the
most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why should
I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord? For the
moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb
leapt for joy. Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise
made her by the Lord would be fulfilled."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

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.

Amen.

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.

Amen.

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

*The Lord said to me: You are my Son.
It is I who have begotten you this day.*

Or

*Let us all rejoice in the Lord, for our Saviour has been born
in the world.
Today true peace has come down to us from heaven.*

COLLECT

O God, who have made this most sacred night radiant with the splendour of the true light, grant, we pray, that we, who have known the mysteries of his light on earth, may also delight in his gladness in heaven. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING Isaiah 9:1-7

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

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.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM Psalm 95

RESPONSE: *Today a saviour has been born to us;
he is 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 Titus 2:11-14

A reading from the letter of St Paul to Titus.

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.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

*Alleluia, alleluia!
I bring you news of great joy:
today a saviour has been born to us, Christ the Lord.
Alleluia!*

GOSPEL Luke 2:1-14

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

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".

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

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

May the oblation of this day's feast be pleasing to you, O Lord, we pray, that through this most holy exchange we may be found in the likeness of Christ, in whom our nature is united to you. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

The Word became flesh, and we have seen his glory.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Grant us, we pray, O Lord our God, that we, who are gladdened by participation in the feast of our Redeemer's Nativity, may through an honourable way of life become worthy of union with him. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
Amen.

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

*The shepherds went in haste,
and found Mary and Joseph and the Infant lying in a manger.*

COLLECT

O God, who were pleased to give us the shining example of the Holy Family, graciously grant that we may imitate them in practising the virtues of family life and in the bonds of charity, and so, in the joy of your house, delight one day in eternal rewards. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

FIRST READING 1 Samuel 1:20-22. 24-28

A reading from the first book of Samuel.

Hannah conceived and gave birth to a son, and called him Samuel "since" she said "I asked the Lord for him."

When a year had gone by, the husband Elkanah went up again with all his family to offer the annual sacrifice to the Lord and to fulfil his vow. Hannah, however, did not go up, having said to her husband, "Not before the child is weaned. Then I will bring him and present him before the Lord and he shall stay there for ever."

When she had weaned him, she took him up with her together with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour and a skin of wine, and she brought him to the temple of the Lord at Shiloh; and the child was with them. They slaughtered the bull and the child's mother came to Eli. She said, "If you please, my lord. As you live, my lord, I am the woman who stood here beside you, praying to the Lord. This is the child I prayed for, and the Lord granted me what I asked him. Now I make him over to the Lord for the whole of his life. He is made over to the Lord."

There she left him, for the Lord.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM Psalm 83

RESPONSE: *They are happy who dwell in your house, O Lord.*

1. How lovely is your dwelling place,
Lord, God of hosts.
My soul is longing and yearning,
is yearning for the courts of the Lord.
My heart and my soul ring out their joy
to God, the living God. **R.**
2. They are happy, who dwell in your house,
for ever singing your praise.
They are happy, whose strength is in you;
they walk with ever growing strength. **R.**
3. O Lord, God of hosts, hear my prayer,
give ear, O God of Jacob.
Turn your eyes, O God, our shield,
look on the face of your anointed. **R.**

SECOND READING 1 John 3:1-2. 21-24

A reading from the first letter of St John.

Think of the love that the Father has lavished on us, by letting us be called God's children; and that is what we are. Because the world refused to acknowledge him, therefore it does not acknowledge us. My dear people, we are already the children of God but what we are to be in the future has not yet been revealed, all we know is, that when it is revealed we shall be like him because we shall see him as he really is.

My dear people, if we cannot be condemned by our own conscience, we need not be afraid in God's presence, and whatever we ask him, we shall receive, because we keep his commandments and live the kind of life that he wants. His commandments are these: that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and that we love one another as he told us to. Whoever keeps his commandments lives in God and God lives in him. We know that he lives in us by the Spirit that he has given us.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

*Alleluia, alleluia!
Open our heart, O Lord,
to accept the words of your Son.
Alleluia!*

GOSPEL Luke 2:41-52

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

Every year the parents of Jesus used to go to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up for the feast as usual. When they were on their way home after the feast, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem without his parents knowing it. They assumed he was with the caravan, and it was only after a day's journey that they went to look for him among their relations and acquaintances. When they failed to find him they went back to Jerusalem looking for him everywhere.

Three days later, they found him in the Temple, sitting among the doctors, listening to them, and asking them questions; and all those who heard him were astounded at his intelligence and his replies. They were overcome when they saw him, and his mother said to him, "My child, why have you done this to us? See how worried your father and I have been, looking for you." "Why were you looking for me?" he replied. "Did you not know that I must be busy with my Father's affairs?" But they did not understand what he meant.

He then went down with them and came to Nazareth and lived under their authority. His mother stored up all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom, in stature, and in favour with God and men.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

We offer you, Lord, the sacrifice of conciliation, humbly asking that, through the intercession of the Virgin Mother of God and Saint Joseph, you may establish our families firmly in your grace and your peace. Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Our God has appeared on the earth, and lived among us.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Bring those you refresh with this heavenly Sacrament, most merciful Father, to imitate constantly the example of the Holy Family, so that, after the trials of this world, we may share their company for ever. Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.