



24 December 2017 CHRISTMAS EVE – Midnight Mass Year B

CHRIST, THE LIGHT OF OUR LIVES

We begin this long-awaited celebration of the Christmas Eve by wishing one another "A BLESSED CHRISTMAS." We are here not just to keep a religious and cultural tradition, but to commemorate the human birth of God's Only Begotten Son. This is the event that has changed the course of human history and still has the power to change our lives for the better.

Such a wonder will happen if we, as individuals, as families, and as a community of believers, open our hearts to receive Jesus with the same generosity with which Mary Most Holy received him as her Savior and Lord. Let us do just that, even as we include in our intentions the needs of all those we love, the entire community of believers, and the whole of mankind.



INTRODUCTORY RITES

Entrance Antiphon
(To be recited only when no Entrance Hymn is sung.)

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

Greeting

P –The grace and peace brought by Jesus at his birth be with you all.
All–**And with your spirit!**

Penitential Act

P –Brothers and sisters, as we are about to start this Midnight Mass, let us examine our conscience and see if there is something in us that

displeases the Lord. *(Pause)*

P –Lord Jesus, you are the Son of God and the Son of Mary. Lord, have mercy!

All–**Lord, have mercy!**

P –Lord Jesus, at your birth you became one like us in all things except sin. Christ, have mercy!

All–**Christ, have mercy!**

P –Lord Jesus, you came to reconcile us with God the Father and with one another. Lord, have mercy!

All–**Lord, have mercy!**

P –May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

All–**Amen!**

Gloria

All–Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the

Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen!

Collect (Opening Prayer)

P –O God, who have made this most sacred night radiant with the splendor 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.

All–Amen!



1st Reading *Is 9:1-6*

In the oracle we are about to proclaim, the Church sees a prophecy about Jesus the Messiah, who brings the light of God's love to a world darkened by hatred, pride, and suffering of all kinds.

R –A proclamation from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone.

You have brought them abundant joy and great rejoicing, as they rejoice before you as at the harvest, as people make merry when dividing spoils. For the yoke that burdened them, the pole on their shoulder, and the rod of their taskmaster you have smashed, as on the day of Midian.

For every boot that tramped in battle, every cloak rolled in blood, will be burned as fuel for flames. For a Child is born to us, a Son is given us; upon his shoulder dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace. His dominion is vast and forever peaceful, from David's throne, and over his kingdom, which he confirms and sustains by judgment and justice, both now and forever. The zeal of

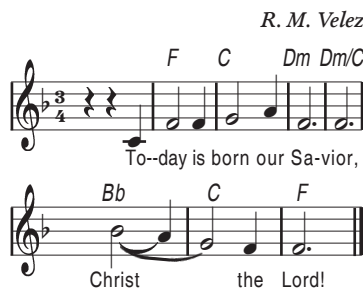
the Lord of hosts will do this!

The Word of the Lord!
All–Thanks be to God!

Responsorial Psalm *Ps 96*

R –*Today is born our Savior, Christ the Lord!*

R. M. Velez



* Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all you lands. Sing to the Lord; bless his name. **R.**

* Announce his salvation, day after day. Tell his glory among the nations; among all peoples, his wondrous deeds. **R.**

* Let the heavens be glad and the earth rejoice; let the sea and what fills it resound; let the plains be joyful and all that is in them! Then shall all the trees of the forest exult. **R.**

* They shall exult before the Lord, for he comes; for he comes to rule the earth. He shall rule the world with justice and the peoples with his constancy. **R.**

2nd Reading *Ti 2:11-14*

Tonight St. Paul reminds us that the incarnation of God's Son brings us salvation and grounds our hope that we shall be with him for ever.

R –A proclamation from the Letter of Paul to Titus

Beloved: The grace of God has appeared, saving all and training us to reject godless ways and worldly desires and to live temperately, justly, and devoutly in this age, as we await the blessed hope, the appearance of the glory of our great God and savior Jesus Christ.

He gave himself for us to deliver us from all lawlessness and to cleanse for himself a people as his own, eager to do what is good.

The Word of the Lord!
All–Thanks be to God!

Gospel Acclamation

All–Alleluia! Alleluia!
I proclaim to you good news of great joy: today a Savior is born for us, Christ the Lord.
Alleluia! Alleluia!

Gospel *Lk 2:1-14*

In this passage the Evangelist does not simply give us an account of Jesus' birth; he also makes us aware that the newborn Baby is the Savior of the world.

P –The Lord be with you!
All–And with your spirit!

P –A proclamation from the holy Gospel according to Luke

All–Glory to you, O Lord!

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. So all went to be enrolled, each to his own town.

And Joseph, too, went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled 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 her firstborn son.

She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over their flock. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were struck with great fear.

The angel said to them, "Do not be afraid! Behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today, in the city of David, a savior has been born for you who is Christ and Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger."

And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

The Gospel of the Lord!
All—Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

Homily

Profession of Faith (Nicene Creed)

All —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, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. (*All genuflect and pause after reciting this sentence.*) 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!

Prayer of the Faithful

P —On this Holy Night when

we commemorate the birth of the Savior of the world, let us pray for the needs of all mankind and our own. Let our response be:

All—Lord, You are our Light!

C —For the entire community of believers who rejoice over the birth of Jesus: May the peace of this night reverberate into the whole world through their lives. Let us pray! **R.**

C —For the Holy Father and all the religious leaders throughout the world: May the leadership they exercise in the name of God bring all peoples closer to one another in sincere cooperation and solidarity. Let us pray! **R.**

C —For the nations and factions at war: May the peace brought by Jesus at his birth lead them to seek an end to the scourge of war. Let us pray! **R.**

C —For our own family and all the families in our parish: May the spirit of Christmas make us always ready to support, forgive, affirm and love one another. Let us pray! **R.**

C —Let us pray in silence for our personal intentions. (*Pause*) Let us pray! **R.**

P —We thank You, Father, for the gift of Jesus, Your Son. May we treasure his presence as Mary Most Holy did. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our Lord and Savior.
All—Amen!



Preparation of the Gifts

P —Pray, brethren . . .

All—May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands, for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offerings

P —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.

All—Amen!

Preface of Christmas I

P —The Lord be with you!

All—And with your spirit!

P —Lift up your hearts!

All—We lift them up to the Lord!

P —Let us give thanks to the Lord our God!

All—It is right and just!

P —It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For in the mystery of the Word made flesh a new light of your glory has shone upon the eyes of our mind, so that, as we recognize in him God made visible, we may be caught up through him in love of things invisible.

And so, with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions, and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven, we sing the hymn of your glory as without end we acclaim:

All—Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest!

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!

Memorial Acclamation

P —The mystery of faith!

All—When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again!



All—Our Father . . .

P —Deliver us, Lord . . .

All—For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever.

Sign of Peace

Breaking of the Bread
All—Lamb of God . . .

Communion

P —Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the Supper of the Lamb.

All—Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon
(To be recited only when no Communion Hymn is sung.)

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

Prayer after Communion

P —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 honorable way of life become worthy of union with him.

Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

All—Amen!

CONCLUDING RITES



P —The Lord be with you.

All—And with your spirit!

P —Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing.
(Pause)

When he came to us as man, the Son of God scattered the darkness of this world, and filled this holy night with his glory. May the God of infinite goodness scatter the darkness of sin and brighten your hearts with holiness!

All—Amen!

P —God sent his angels to shepherds to herald the great joy of our Savior's birth. May he fill you with joy and make you heralds of his Gospel!

All—Amen!

P —When the Word became man, earth was joined to heaven. May he give you his peace and goodwill, and fellowship with all the heavenly host!

All—Amen!

P —May almighty God bless you: the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit!

All—Amen!

P —Go and share with others the joy and peace of Christmas!

All—Thanks be to God!

The Origin of "Silent Night"

Unknown to many, the lovely Christmas song "Silent Night" had quite a stormy, almost dramatic origin. Everything happened in the Catholic parish of **Oberndorf**, in the Tyrol region of **Austria**, Europe.

It was the early morning of the 24th of December 1818. In spite of the unusually cold temperature, Fr. Joseph Mohr, the parish priest, was beginning to feel the heat of a big problem that had developed most unexpectedly: the organ of the parish church had broken down and did not seem to have any intention to resume its service in time for the Midnight Mass.

As the worried priest was called to baptize a newborn child, he left the repair of the organ in the hands of the sacristan, hoping that on his return it might finally be fixed. But when he came back one hour later, the situation was still the same.

Fr. Joseph felt as if the whole world was tumbling down on him, as he could anticipate the disappointment of the parishioners at not hearing the familiar sound of the organ during the Midnight Mass. Christmas without the organ, in Austria, is like a wedding without the cake But, being a man of faith, the middle-aged priest did not totally lose hope. He knelt down in front of the Blessed Sacrament and prayed fervently for a few minutes, seeking strength and consolation from the Lord.

Those minutes spent in prayer proved particularly effective. When Fr. Joseph rose from his kneeler, his eyes were unusually bright. He had found a solution, or so he thought Immediately he dashed to his writing desk, grabbed a pen, and began to scribble the lines of a simple poem that all of a sudden had started bubbling up in his mind. The child he had baptized a short while earlier and his mother had been the source of his inspiration.

When he had finished, he was visibly elated at the thought that he could recite that newly composed poem during the Midnight Mass, as a way to make up for the absence of the

sound of the organ. Then he halted for a few seconds: You don't just recite a poem in church during the homily. A poem is a song, and a song is to be sung! Why not ask his friend and musician Franz Gruber to compose a simple tune that would suit his simple poem?

Fr. Joseph lost no time and hurried to see his friend. As Franz Gruber read the poem, he also felt inspired. In just a couple of hours he came up with a melody that was as simple and as touching as the lyrics. There and then, Fr. Joseph and the composer sang together the improvised composition several times. It sounded even better than they had anticipated. Now the only uncertainty was how the people would react.

That night, soon after the proclamation of the Gospel, Fr. Joseph announced that he had a surprise for all: a new Christmas carol entitled "**Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht**" (**Silent Night, Holy Night**). Franz Gruber and himself would sing it for them to the accompaniment of a guitar since the organ was out of order

As the singing proceeded, one could see the eyes of the parishioners, young and old, twinkle with deep feeling. A few elderly women furtively wiped their tears. Soon, almost all found themselves swaying their heads to the rhythm of the composition. Before the third stanza was over, the entire congregation was humming the tune with gusto and devotion. No one was missing the organ any more.

When the Mass was over, the parishioners almost mobbed the poor Fr. Joseph and Franz Gruber, demanding a copy of the new composition.

Such was the origin of "Silent Night," the Christmas song that has been translated and sung in almost all languages of the world.

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