



*Merry Christmas*

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## *Our Lady of Lourdes Mass Schedule*

*Christmas Eve Vigil Mass*

*4:00 pm*

*Christmas Night*

*11:30 pm ~ Musical Prelude*

*12 Midnight ~ Solemn High Latin Mass*

*Christmas Day*

*9:00 am and 11:30 am*

*Both in English*

*New Years Day ~ Mary Mother of God*

*9:00 am*

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## *Confessions Dec. 20 ~ 26*

*Monday & Wednesday following the morning Mass*

*Tuesday & Thursday from 6:00 ~ 7:00 pm*

*Friday from 2:30 pm ~ 4:00 pm*

*Saturday ~ NO CONFESSIONS*

*Sunday from 2:30 pm ~ 4:00 pm*



# THE SEASON OF *Christmas*

## LIVING IN THE LIGHT OF CHRIST



The Coronavirus pandemic has starkly reminded us of the ever-encroaching reality of death and the need for a more faith-inspired hope for new life. The story of God and ourselves both in the Bible and in our own daily lives, is constructed around the surprising moments when God's holiness touches us and changes everything.

And as we have "seen the light at the end of the tunnel" of the pandemic, from our darkness we can better appreciate the Christmas proclamation that Christ "The true light, which enlightens every one, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him" (John 1:9-10).

Now we celebrate the invincibility of God's Light. God has freely chosen to come from beyond our world to be present in our world and act in its history. Although God promises to be with us, in reality this abiding divine presence was (and is) always rather elusive and never under our control. God does not just want to be with us in some external way, but wants to come to dwell within us—the real

meaning, of "sanctifying grace," God's own life through the Holy Spirit throbbing now within us, enlivening us and preparing us for an eternal life with God.

The New Testament authors stressed Christ's abiding presence with us. Matthew described Jesus as "Emmanuel, God with us" (1:23) and reminded us that Christ is present whenever we gather in his name (18:20) and will be with us always (28:20). Luke illustrated the hidden presence of the risen Christ as a mysterious stranger who explained scripture and shared bread (24:13-36). John described the abiding presence of Christ through the Holy Spirit or Advocate (Paraclete) (14:26) who continues in us the presence of the absent Jesus. Paul described the Christian community as those incorporated into the body of Christ (Rom 12:5; 1 Cor 10:17, 12:12-27) here on earth who continue his ministry and mission of serving God's presence in our world by working with God to transform our world from a place marred, disordered and dominated by Satan and evil powers into a world characterized by God's rule.



# THE CHRISTMAS SEASON

As the familiar 18th century English Christmas carol reminds us, the Christmas Season, also known as *Christmastide*, is not just one day but a 12 day celebration. In the Church's liturgical year, Christmas day was the first of the 12 days. The last night, twelfth night, is January 5, the eve of the feast of the Epiphany, celebrated on January 6. Today, the final Sunday of the Christmas Season celebrates the Baptism of Jesus. Clearly, Christmas is meant to be not just a celebration of the baby Jesus or Jesus' birthday but a summary of our lives in relation to God's intimate, incarnate presence with us today.

In the early Eastern Church, the Epiphany was the primary celebration of both Jesus' birth and his manifestation to the world. It was associated with the winter solstice when the sun's light began to be renewed for another year. In the Roman West in the 3rd century, the celebration of Jesus' birth was shifted to December 25 to compete with the pagan festival of the "unconquered sun" (*natalis solis invicti*) and the time until Epiphany became the Christmas Season. From the 4th century on, Christmas, with its focus on Christ's incarnation as a truly human person like ourselves, grew in popularity until today it often surpasses Easter in the popular imagination.



## *The Christmas Story in the Gospels*

After centuries of preparation, at God's appointed time (around 4 BC), the drama of Christ's incarnation began to unfold in the tiny, out of the way village of Nazareth in the hilly northern part of the Holy Land called Galilee.

The accounts of Jesus' birth are found in chapters 1–2 of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Although they relate the story in different ways, Matthew concentrating on Joseph and his dilemma about accepting Jesus as his son and Luke concentrating on Mary and her willing participation in God's plan for salvation, both Gospel writers stress that Jesus was not just another human child born to human parents but the unique son of God born through the agency of God's active power, the Holy Spirit.

Both Gospel writers stress that the infancy story of Jesus is really a miniature version of the rest of the Gospel: Jesus comes into our world—and into each person's life—and each one must then decide to respond either positively with acceptance or negatively with hostility. So Joseph and Mary, their relatives Elizabeth and Zechariah, the shepherds and the magi recognize Jesus as God's son sent for salvation. But threatened by this new-born king, King Herod and the Judean Jewish leaders respond with hatred and try to murder him. Similarly, each of us must also decide how we will respond to Christ's presence in our lives today.

### A PRAYER FOR ENLIGHTENMENT

Look upon us, O Lord,  
hear and enlighten us.  
Show us your very self.  
Take pity on our efforts  
and strivings toward you,  
for we have no strength without you.  
Teach us to seek you,  
and when we seek you  
show yourself to us,  
for we cannot seek you  
unless you teach us,  
nor can we find you  
unless you show yourself to us.  
Let us seek you in desiring you  
and desire you in seeking you,  
let us find you by loving you,  
and love you in finding you.  
—*St. Anselm of Canterbury*

### MASS READINGS FOR CHRISTMASTIDE 2021-2022

#### **Christmas Day (Dec 25)**

Is 52:7-10

Heb 1:1-6

Jn 1:1-18

#### **Holy Family (Dec 26)**

Sir 3:2-6, 12-14

Col 3:12-21

Lk 2:41-52

#### **Mary, Mother of God (Jan 1)**

Nm 6:22-27

Gal 4:4-7

Lk 2:16-21

#### **Epiphany (Jan 2)**

Is 60:1-6

Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6

Mt 2:1-12

#### **Baptism of Jesus (Jan 9)**

Is 42:1-4, 6-7 or Is 40:1-5, 9-11

Acts 10:34-38 or Ti 2:11-14; 3:4-7

Lk 3:15-16, 21-22