

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.

GREETING

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. The Lord be with you. And with your spirit.

PENITENTIAL ACT

You were sent to heal the contrite of heart: Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. You came to call sinners: Christ, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. You are seated at the right hand of the Father to intercede for us: Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. May almighty God have mercy on us Amen.

(The Gloria is omitted awaiting its Christmas Proclamation.)

OPENING PRAYER

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.



LITURGY OF THE WORD

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.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps.79:2-3.15-16.18-19

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

- 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]
- 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]
- 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 - 44

A reading from the holy Gospel

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.



NICENE CREED

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,

All bow for following three lines:

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. 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.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Pray brothers and sisters, 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.



focus on sunday

Mary's first journey after the annunciation was to visit her cousin, Elizabeth, who needed her help. Christmas brings the question to each of us, "who needs my help?"

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.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

The Lord be with you. And with your spirit. Lift up your hearts. We lift them up to the Lord. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right and just.

SANCTUS

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.

AFTER THE CONSECRATION

The mystery of faith. When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.

INVITATION TO HOLY COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God, 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

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.

CONCLUDING RITE

The Lord be with you. And with your spirit. May the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever. Amen. Go in peace. Thanks be to God.



The story of Mary going to help her cousin, an older lady who was now pregnant, is an ordinary story of the life of Mary. They were both pregnant. They both needed companionship and ordinary love. They needed to share the problems of any expectant mother and also share their joy.

We could say of Mary she did ordinary things extraordinarily well – she wouldn't make the newspapers— just the two women giving a listening ear and the little helps a pregnant mother needs.

There are many little visitations in life – to be present with people when they need us in the family and the neighbourhood.

In doing that like Mary we bring the grace of God and the presence of the Lord...what you do for anyone you do for me...Jesus could think of his mother in saying these words.

In receiving Mary, Elizabeth was visited by Jesus. In the give and take of our lives we bring Jesus to each other.

Donal Neary SJ, Editor Sacred Heart Messenger

Jesus' Story *Fr. Liam Hickey*

Mary is very good at helping out. She goes to her cousin Elizabeth who is expecting a baby. She notices when people want more wine at a wedding. The angel asked Mary to listen. Mary always listens to our prayers and helps us to listen to each other.