

MASS FROM St. PETER'S BASILICA ROME WILL BE SCREENED  
TODAY ON ABC Channel 2 at 9.30am to 11.00am!

## A HOLY CHRISTMAS TO ALL

“O God of Christmas and the giver of all our Blessings, we thank you for the many ways You have blessed us in life. Bless this food and all around this table today. With gratitude we remember your humble birth into our world, and we pray that You will take care of all those who don't enjoy the Blessings You have given us. We wish to join with the Angels in giving glory to You in the Highest and we pray for true peace and goodwill among all on Earth, especially those who persecute Your Church. Lord, may they come to believe in You as do we. Do not let us stray from You in the year ahead. You are our Lord forever & ever Amen”

Let us not forget that this whole day is Christ's, so that whatever you do on this day should have Christ as the reason for it. This is what makes us different to all others who are celebrating Christmas because we know why and what we are celebrating. While here at Mass, do your utmost to concentrate on the ceremonies and prayers of this, the Christmas Mass, listening carefully to the readings and what is prayed by the Priest on your behalf. Have a feeling of gratitude to God for the food and friends you will enjoy today, and say the prayer above or one of the prayers from the Mass before you begin your Christmas meal; and so show you understand the true significance of this day. This day is Christ's, and may what you do now bring you closer to Him forever

No-one knows the exact date on which Jesus was born, why then December 25? In the ancient world of the Roman Empire, a pagan festival honouring the Sun as the god bestowing all life was celebrated on Dec.25. The Emperor Aurelian established this festival in 274AD as 'Natalis Solis Invicti', the "Birth of the Unconquered Sun" (as the sun shone through on the winter solstice). By choosing this day as the birthday of Christ, Christians intended to supplant the pagan belief by celebrating His Birth as the start of the True Light that now enlightens the world and can give it Eternal Life!

Dionysius Exiguus (470-544AD) is the monk who gave to us the system of dating we now use worldwide. Pope St. John I commissioned him during his brief pontificate of only three years (523-526AD) to ascertain the date of Christ's birth and begin using it in Church documents. He did, but it is unknown how he did it. Later discoveries showed he made a small error of about four years. But by then dates could not be put back four years, so it was left. The rest of the world followed. The principle is that Christ is the centre of history. Those who today do not accept Christ, try to remove Him from history. They use BCE for BC; & CE for AD (after Christ). CE stands for the 'Common Era' whatever that is supposed to mean. But we should use BC and AD meaning "before the time of Christ" and AD "after the time of Christ!"

Strangely, today is also the Feast Day of St. Anastasia, a martyr about 304AD who is in the Mass

Give Lord Eternal Rest to all especially Fr. Karl Boes, Fr. Rod Bray, Fr. Dennis Foley, Sr. Aloise, Ted Mallett, Steve & Ellen Hrepka, Helen Bischof, George Dickson, Alan Bernardino, Ron Gahan, Arthur & Mary Clift, Loretta LeGrand, Mary & David Das, Allan Dyson, Godfrey & Rose Guillaumier, Colin Fitzgerald, Janina Keller, Leandro Hernandez, Eddi Hagemann, Max & Dick Gale, Agnes Pugh, Nada Martinovich, Wilga & Bill Meredith, Corrine Pietersz, Jelka Kosta, & Dorothy Clarke. Let us be united in the Kingdom of your Glory

majellan

Most amazing  
gift of all

25 December 2020 Christmas Year B

Christmas is surely the most loved time of the year for billions of people across the world; be they Christian believers or not, it is a time of feasting and a time of gift-giving. In our gift-giving we commemorate the greatest gift of all, an astonishing gift that is almost too great to believe.

For we Christians believe that God, in the person of Jesus Christ, became human, fully human, one like us in all things but sin. And like all of us, he began his human life as a baby.

Seeing a new baby always prompts me to ponder how truly extraordinary it is that God became a baby – helpless, vulnerable and, like all babies, totally dependent on its carers.

I think of Mary and Joseph, full of joy and wonder, bursting with love, beholding the baby Jesus. I can imagine Joseph, full of faith and love, tenderly caressing the child, and Mary lovingly nursing the babe, pondering all these things in her heart.

When serving as a Holy Communicant volunteer in a hospital, my greatest delight was to find among my list of patients to be visited those who were in the maternity ward. It was such a great privilege and pleasure to visit those parents and to share their joy in the arrival of their child into the world.

I would find the baby there with them, often just a few hours old. It was like Christmas

every time! Such a joy! I would marvel to see the parents, utterly besotted, literally falling in love with the baby before my very eyes.

In their presence, there was always a palpable sense of awe, of mystery, and of wonder.

We would then pray together a prayer of blessing over the babe. The parents would often shed a tear or two. Our prayer would be full of gratitude for this new life and full of hope for all that this babe would experience in life. How very much parents want the very best for their child.

But how much more, how very much more, more than we can hardly dare to believe, does God lovingly look upon us! And how much more does God want for each one of us to be happy, to live life to the full, to develop our gifts and talents and achieve our potential, to be loved and to be loving, and to know how greatly we are loved and treasured by God.

All this we celebrate on this great feast: the mystery of creation, the mystery of life itself, and the greatest mystery of all – that God became human, shared fully in our humanity, and all this for love of us, that we might live forevermore as children of God. As an early mystic encapsulated it: He became human that we might become divine. This is the greatest gift of all that we celebrate at Christmas.

Anne Hunt  
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**VIGIL MASS**

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON** (or a hymn) Today you will know that the Lord will come, and he will save us, and in the morning you will see his glory.

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM** (Ps 88)

ANTIPHON: For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

**RESPONSE: For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.**

**LECTOR:** "I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant: I will establish your dynasty for ever and set up your throne through all ages." **R.**

**LECTOR:** Happy the people who acclaim such a king, who walk, O Lord, in the light of your face, who find their joy every day in your name, who make your justice the source of their bliss. **R.**

**LECTOR:** "He will say to me: 'You are my father, my God, the rock who saves me.' I will keep my love for him always; for him my covenant shall endure." **R.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION** Alleluia, alleluia! Tomorrow the wickedness of the earth will be destroyed: the Saviour of the world will be our king. Alleluia!

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON** (or a hymn) The glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all flesh will see the salvation of our God.

READINGS Isaiah 62:1-5; Acts 13:16-17, 22-25; Matthew 1:1-25

**MIDNIGHT MASS**

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON** (or a hymn) 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.

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM** (Ps 95)

ANTIPHON: Today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord.

**RESPONSE: Today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord.**

**LECTOR:** O sing a new song to the Lord, sing to the Lord all the earth. O sing to the Lord, bless his name. **R.**

**LECTOR:** Proclaim his help day by day, tell among the nations his glory and his wonders among all the peoples. **R.**

**LECTOR:** 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.**

**LECTOR:** With justice he will rule the world, he will judge the peoples with his truth. **R.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION** Alleluia, alleluia! Good News and great joy to all the world: today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord. Alleluia!

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON** (or a hymn) The Word became flesh, and we have seen his glory.

READINGS Isaiah 9:1-7; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14

**DAWN MASS**

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON** (or a hymn) Today a light will shine upon us, for the Lord is born for us; and he will be called Wondrous God, Prince of peace. Father of future ages: and his reign will be without end. **RESPONSORIAL PSALM** (Ps 96)

ANTIPHON: A light will shine on us this day: the Lord is born for us.

**RESPONSE: A light will shine on us this day: the Lord is born for us.**

**LECTOR:** The Lord is king, let earth rejoice, the many coastlands be glad. The skies proclaim his justice; all peoples see his glory. **R.**

**LECTOR:** Light shines forth for the just and joy for the upright of heart. Rejoice, you just, in the Lord; give glory to his holy name. **R.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION** Alleluia, alleluia! Glory to God in the highest, peace to his people on earth. Alleluia!

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON** (or a hymn) Rejoice, O Daughter Sion; lift up praise, Daughter Jerusalem: Behold, your King will come, the Holy One and Saviour of the world.

READINGS Isaiah 62:11-12; Titus 3:4-7; Luke 2:15-20

**MASS DURING THE DAY**

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON** (or a hymn) A child is born for us, and a son is given to us; his sceptre of power rests upon his shoulder, and his name will be called Messenger of great counsel.

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM** (Ps 97)

ANTIPHON: All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.

**RESPONSE: All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.**

**LECTOR:** Sing a new song to the Lord for he has worked wonders. His right hand and his holy arm have brought salvation. **R.**

**LECTOR:** The Lord has made known his salvation; has shown his justice to the nations. He has remembered his truth and love for the house of Israel. **R.**

**LECTOR:** All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Shout to the Lord all the earth, ring out your joy. **R.**

**LECTOR:** Sing psalms to the Lord with the harp, with the sound of music. With trumpets and the sound of the horn acclaim the King, the Lord. **R.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION** Alleluia, alleluia! A holy day has dawned upon us. Come you nations and adore the Lord. Today a great light has come upon the earth. Alleluia!

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON** (or a hymn) All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

READINGS Isaiah 52:7-10; Hebrews 1:1-6; John 1:1-18