

Reflection for Christmas Eve: We are rational beings who are distinguished in nature for our mind. The mind is always acting, we are always thinking of something. Many thoughts are neither good nor evil but vague. On Christmas Eve we should try to prevent the wandering of our mind and fix it upon the great and joyful event which will take place Christmas Day. Especially during the Mass of Christmas, we ought to try to obtain perfect contrition for our sins. We should think of the journey made by Mary and Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem. We should accompany them in spirit along the 3 days journey. Let us reflect upon their fatigue, upon the difficulties. Look at Our Lady and admire the serenity she maintained despite the affronts which she received at Bethlehem where hospitality at the inn was refused. Jesus, her Holy Divine Child, made up for all she bore so patiently. We should reflect in our thoughts the journey. Let us think, as Christmas draws near, of God made man, a small infant who desired to redeem us and open the Gates of Heaven by appearing as a humble and helpless child. We should desire to have him born in our stony hearts. We should give him worthy hospitality in our hearts and reflect with confidence in His Infinite Goodness, to share in the gifts He brought to us. Modern life is very fast paced, and our days are filled with secular concerns. We have only a few free moments. Oftentimes, we feel all our days are the same. Christmas Eve should, however, be an exception. We should meditate seriously upon those events we are about to celebrate. Yes, we will be busier than ever with those last minute secular concerns, but let us turn this obstacle into a means of preparation for the great feast day. Let us accept the increased work and fatigue with a good heart in the spirit of penance and expiation for sin. This is why the Church, in its wisdom, inspired by the Holy Ghost, has made this day one of fast and abstinence. While working, let us entertain tender and pious thoughts of Our Lady who bore such difficult trials on this day over 2,000 years ago. She had to bear her Divine Son into the world in a stable, open to the air, in the middle of the night. Let us contemplate and prepare an acceptable dwelling place for Our Savior and open our hearts to the Infant Jesus. Let us dwell in spirit in Bethlehem with the Baby, Jesus.

Send, I beseech Thee, O Lord, Him whom thou wilt send; behold the affliction of Thy people. As Thou hast promised, come and save us. Give ear, O Thou that rulest Israel, that leadest Joseph like a sheep, Thou that sittest on the cherubim. Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the Just One; let the earth open and bud forth the Savior.

Mass Sunday
7:45 a.m.; 9:30; 11:00 and 5:30 p.m. (Five Wounds 9:15 a.m.)
Tuesday Mass: 10:00 a.m.
Friday Mass: 6:30 p.m.

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The first Mass of Christmas at Midnight, recalls that "Mary brought forth her first born Son." in the Gospel. The Second Mass at Dawn was celebrated in Rome at the Church of St. Anastasia who is inscribed in the Canon. This popular saint is commemorated in the Mass. Burnt to death in the IV Century during the reign of the Roman Emperor, Diocletian, devotion to St. Anastasia was exceptionally popular in Rome. The Second Mass recalls that Christ is the Light of the World. The Third Mass emphasizes that Jesus is the Eternal Word, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, "...the Word made flesh." During the Octave of the Nativity, various saints are honored in the Masses: St. Stephen the First Martyr, the first witness for Our Lord martyred for the Faith. Named in the Canon of the Mass, St. Stephen was a Greek Jew living in Jerusalem who was ordained a deacon by the Apostles, one of the original seven, to assist them in their work of evangelization. He bravely engaged the Jewish elders in debate who, failing to defeat his points, falsely accused Stephen of blasphemy. At his trial, St. Stephen charged the Jews with resisting the light of the Holy Ghost whereupon he was stoned to death. St. Paul, who was not yet converted, witnessed the stoning. With his dying breath, St. Stephen asked God to forgive those stoning him. Third day of the Octave, is the feast of St. John the Evangelist, the Beloved Disciple. December 28 the Holy Innocents, those children killed by King Herod in a fruitless attempt to murder Our Lord, are honored in a Mass celebrated in red, the color of martyrs. St. Thomas Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury, was murdered at the very altar of the church by assassins sent by Henry II, the English king, in 1170 when he refused to go along with innovations in Catholic doctrine, practices and tradition and supported the Pope against the monarchy. Henry later repented of his act and was reconciled to the Church after doing public penance. St. Sylvester I Pope and Confessor is commemorated in the Mass of December 31.

PerPetual help Weekly Newsletter

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The Mass voices our *expectation*, in union with Mary, waiting for Jesus to come. The **Offertory** and **Communion** recall the devotion of Mary to the blessed fruit of her womb, Jesus, during the months before the first Christmas. Her preparation inspires us to pray for priests who have been called by her Christ as the "*dispensers of the mysteries of God (Epistle)*"; and to hearken to their "*voice...crying in the wilderness*" of a world awaiting its God..."*prepare ye the way*" (**Gospel**). Christmas will be a complete Christ-Mass if you receive Christ!

Christmas is a most happy time of the year for Catholics because it commemorates the birth of Jesus, our Savior, who came into the world to suffer and die as propitiation for sin. Yet, Jesus is also an example for us. His entire life was lived in a humble fashion. He worked as a carpenter with St. Joseph, his foster Father, for many years and appeared unexceptional to most people until he was 30 years of age. At this point, Our Lord burst forward. He began his ministry with fasting in the desert for 40 days and 40 nights, then selected 12 Apostles to carry on His work after he returned to Heaven. The 12 Apostles were the original bishops of the Church. St. Peter, the leader, was the first Pope. Our Lord could have been born in a palace with the finest of clothes had he so desired. Then, he could simply have started His work of conversion at the top among the educated and powerful. Yet, it is interesting to see that He chose to maintain a simple and humble life. In emulation of Him, we too should seek the same kind of life. Silence, mortification and prayer. These are the key ingredients needed to hear the Voice of God, otherwise drowned out by the noise of the modern world.

Last Sunday: Faithful were 120. Donations totaled \$1,999.00. Building fund was \$112.00. Five Wounds was 131 and \$376.00. May Our Savior shortly to be born, the Blessed Mother and St. Joseph extend many blessings to you during the Christmas Season for your generosity.

Christmas Schedule: *Missa Cantata* begins at Midnight and will be preceded by Christmas Carols at 11:30 p.m. Infant Jesus, for whom we have been waiting so expectantly, will be blessed then placed into the stable at Midnight. Morning Masses are at 9:00 and 10:00 a.m. Father Moreau will celebrate a Mass on the Vigil of Christmas at 8:30 p.m. at Five Wounds and another on Christmas Day at 9:15 a.m. Traditional Catholics from 21 to 59 maintain fast and abstinence on the Vigil of the Nativity but may anticipate the fast and abstinence, in preparation for the great Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord, on 23 DEC. Traditional Catholics over age 7 abstain from flesh meat. Christmas envelopes for your special gift to the Infant Jesus will be placed in the rack in the back of the church today.

Parish Calendars: Still available today after the Masses for your use. Donation of \$10.00 each. Profit will be donated to the building fund. Not many are left, and so if you intend to get a calendar for this year, please do so now.

Next Tuesday: Mass of the preceding Sunday of Advent at 10:00 a.m. followed by Devotions in honor of Our Mother of Perpetual Help and silent ado-

ration until 11:15 a.m.

This Week: Make a small sacrifice for the Baby Jesus. Exercise charity toward somebody you detest. Turn your other cheek when struck by an enemy. Christ did not say to love our friends but our enemies.

Christmas Prayer: Jesu, sweetest Child, born in Bethlehem of the Virgin Mary, wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger, announced by Angels and visited by shepherds, have mercy on us. Have mercy on us, Child Jesus. Have mercy on us. Hail Mary.

All honor, laud and glory be, O Jesu, Virgin-born to Thee. All glory, as is ever meet, to Father and to Paraclete. Amen. Christ is near to us. Come, let us adore him. Our Father.

Jesu, sweetest Child, Who, enclosed for nine months in Thy Mother's womb, wast looked for with eager expectation by the Virgin Mary and St. Joseph, and wast offered by God the Father for the salvation of the world, have mercy on us. Have mercy on us, Child Jesus. Have mercy on us. Hail Mary.

Christ hast manifested Himself to us, alleluia. O come let us worship, alleluia.

The Nativity of Our Lord, December 25, 2009: The object of the day's liturgy is threefold: first to adore Jesus as true God in His eternal birth as Son of the Father, for to ignore Him would be folly (**Introit, Gradual, Communion**). Second, to recognize Jesus as true Man in His *earthly* or temporal birth as Son of Mary, born in a stable where, without speaking a word, but rather by the force of example alone, He teaches *humility* of service to God and neighbor, instructs us in *obedience* to the decrees of His Father and the arrangements made by Mary and Joseph, and furthermore warns us against the softening influence of material comforts by the *poverty* of His manger (**Gospel**). Third, to realize more and more the *spiritual* birth of Jesus in our souls (**Epistle**), by recalling our birth as "*reborn*" members of His Mystical Body, growing with Him throughout the coming year, by rejoicing in His Joys from Christmas to Lent, by sorrowing with His Sorrows during Lent and by celebrating His Glories during the Easter and Pentecostal periods. Before the crib today, in union with Mary, contemplate this *threefold* Birth of Jesus.

