

Your Lourdes Christmas Liturgies at Home 2020

“they shall name him Emmanuel,
which means ‘God is with us’.”—Matthew 1:23

“Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace....”
– Luke 2:14

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was
with God, and the Word was God.”
– John 1:1

Matthew traces Jesus’ genealogy as far back as the patriarch Abraham. Not to be outdone, John traces the origins of Jesus, the living Word of God, to the very beginning of time, if not before! But for sure, in the words of the angel to Joseph: “God is with us.”

Angels also soothed both Joseph and the shepherd with the same four words: “do not be afraid” [Matthew 1:20 & Luke 2:10]. If we listen closely, the angels are whispering the same “fear not” in our ears too. There is cause for celebration here. Jesus is born in anew!

Furthermore, we’ve been given a special treat this year, a sign from above – “The Christmas Star.” Astronomers call it “The Great Conjunction” – when the planets Jupiter and Saturn were a tenth of a degree apart in the sky, which happened on Monday night. The Light of the World has shone in our dark pandemic-ness.

Another coincidence is that we are in a Census Year just like Mary and Joseph, who went to the City of David, Bethlehem, to be enumerated in the Roman census of the peoples of the empire. But what’s key here is not the Census but the David’s little town of Bethlehem. It’s the way Luke connects Jesus with David (Matthew highlights David in Jesus’ family tree).

Which brings us to the Shepherds. In the contemplative stillness of a midnight clear, while watching their flocks, angels appeared to the herders of sheep and announced to them the birth of a Savior. But why wasn’t it the royal family or the Roman governor or the high

priest who got this momentous news? Well before he became the boy hero vanquisher of Goliath or the flawed yet beloved second King of a united Israel, David was shepherd. Furthermore, the reputation of shepherds as vagabonds, vagrants and chicken thieves was as tattered as their work clothes. They'd be just the people with whom Jesus would want to tarry. And they were honored to receive this Good News. But after their adoration, they returned to the fields and it isn't clear that 30 years later they were part of the throngs crowding around Jesus. They seem to have just evaporated from the narrative.

The very title "Savior" is more than a title – but a harbinger of the Easter week that will come three decades ahead. The vulnerable newborn king will grow up to be the adult Jesus the Christ, who will die and rise and be our Savior. The prodigious Biblical scholar Raymond E. Brown calls us to remember "an adult Christ at Christmas," in his booklet of the same name. Mary had a baby, and he changed everything, even us.

Your Lourdes Sunday Liturgy at Home Christmas Liturgies 2020

Prelude: Center yourselves first by singing along with "O Come All Ye Faithful" presented by Luther Vandross:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XzJIK6hNqUs>

Then, rouse yourself and sing along with "Glory Hallelujah to the Newborn King" by Ruth Morris Gray

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JaMoCPN1eo>

Leader: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

All: And with your spirit.

Penitential Act

Lord Jesus, you are the word of God made flesh:

Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you are the true light that enlightens the world:

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you are the cause of our joy:

Lord, have mercy.

Opening Prayer

Good and gracious God,
on this holy night you gave us your Son,
the Lord of the universe, wrapped in swaddling clothes,
the Savior of all, lying in a manger.

On this holy night
draw us into the mystery of your love.
Join our voices with the heavenly host,
that we may sing your glory on high.

Give us a place among the shepherds,
that we may find the one for whom we have waited,
Jesus Christ, your Word made flesh,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
in the splendor of eternal light, God for ever and ever.

LET THE CHURCH SAY – AMEN.

First, listen to “O Holy Night” sung by Jennifer Hudson
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_DbZWRSDdlw

Then move on to the readings, this week taken from your Bible:

Readings for Christmas 2020

Children’s Vigil Mass

Reading 1 – The Prophet Isaiah 62:1-5

Psalm 89: “For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord”

Reading 2 – Acts of the Apostles 13:16-17, 22-25

Gospel - Matthew 1:1-25 (the genealogy and Joseph’s dream)

Midnight Mass

Reading 1 – The Prophet Isaiah 9:1-6

Psalm 96: “Today is born our Savior, Christ the Lord”

Reading 2 – Letter to Titus: 2:11-14

Gospel - Luke 2:1-14 (birth in a manger, angels and shepherds)

Mass on Christmas Day

Reading 1 – The Prophet Isaiah 52:7-10

Psalm 98: “All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God”

Reading 2 – Hebrews 1:1-6

Gospel – John 1:1-18 “In the beginning was the Word...”

Before moving into reflection, listen to these rousing classics:

“Mary Had a Baby,” Morehouse College Glee Club

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kJSiSCN2BKI>

Reflection Prompts:

- Jesus “pitched his tent” among the most needy and vulnerable in our world. What does that ask of you?
- What “physically distant” activities could you do this Christmas season to reach out to those whose lives are on the margins of society? A Go-Fund contribution? Go figure.

Before moving into meditation and contemplation, behold:

“Mary, Did You Know?” sung by Pentatonix –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?index=7&list=RDvDfWlytuXe8&v=ifCWN5pJGIE>

Meditation Prompts:

The angel of the Lord tells Matthew that Mary’s child will be Emmanuel – which translates “God is with us.”

- Ponder the ways you have experienced the “with-ness” of God, God’s accompanying you, God’s presence all around you.

Then move into this week’s prayers of the faithful.

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS – December 24 & 25, 2020

ALL CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS

Presider: With new life and new hope, let us pray joyfully as we celebrate the dawning of Jesus – the light of the world.

Worship Leader

1. For Christians everywhere: those gathered in grand cathedrals or in their living rooms; those of every language and nation; those who are certain in their faith and those who struggle in their belief; those who are joyful and those who are sad. We pray: **Be born in us.**
(ASSEMBLY RESPONDS: **Be born in us.**)
2. For all who dwell in the fog of war, that the light of peace may shine on them. We pray: **Be born in us.**
3. For all who sit in the gloom of poverty or injustice, that the light of hope may warm them. We pray: **Be born in us.**
4. For all families and friends who long to be reunited for the holidays, but who are celebrating remotely this year the gift of love that binds them together. We pray: **Be born in us.**
5. For the members of all religions, that they may grow in tolerance and respect for each other. We pray: **Be born in us.**
6. For artists and scholars, that the light of inspiration may dawn on them as they seek to dream a better world. We pray: **Be born in us.**
7. For first responders, healthcare workers, caretakers, service workers, delivery people, members of the military and all who work on our behalf during the holidays. We pray: **Be born in us.**
8. For a re-commitment to Care for the Earth, so that future generations have clean air and water, green forests and farms, diversity of all creatures great and small, and a new consciousness of sustainability. We pray: **Be born in us.**
9. For refugees and homeless people, that they will find hospitality and welcome. We pray: **Be born in us.**
10. For the smooth distribution of the covid-19 vaccines and just allotment of them to the most vulnerable. We pray: **Be born in us.**
11. For an end to the Death Penalty and Human Trafficking, especially in Georgia. We pray: **Be born in us.**

12. For people who have suffered grief or illness in the pandemic year of 2020, that they experience a supportive community, especially those listed in our bulletin, and for all those living with HIV/AIDS. We pray: **Be born in us.**

13. For all of our loved ones who have died, that they see God face to face. We pray: **Be born in us.**

14. Please share any intention you have [PAUSE.....] as well as all our own needs. We pray: **Be born in us.**

Presider: O God, you have sent us the eternal light to lead us out of darkness. During this holy season, make us aware that the light of Christ surrounds us and calls us to be people of light to others. We pray with joy and gratitude in his holy name. LET THE CHURCH SAY.....AMEN!

Sing or recite “The Lord’s Prayer.”

Then, behold these songs:

“Jesus, O What a Wonderful Child” House of Hope Atlanta
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vHCrTKneUx8>

Closing Prayer

Lord our God, we celebrate with joy the birth of our Redeemer.
Grant that through worthy and holy lives
we may be welcomed into his glorious company for ever.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

LET THE CHURCH SAY – AMEN.

Arise and sing along:

“Handel’s Hallelujah! Chorus” Quincy Jones’ “Soulful Celebration”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yGbXPvWR79o>

“Handel’s Hallelujah Chorus” in its “Too Hot to Handel” version
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dnRldTMwEc4>

Closing Songs

“Go Tell It on the Mountain” sung by Mahalia Jackson

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lq5aEwtvdRI>

“Go Tell It on the Mountain” sung by the Mississippi Mass Choir

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dvNa-V8usQQ>

“Joy To The World” sung by the Soul Children of Chicago, 2009

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D-FhFKI3FXM>