

The Nativity of our Lord

John 1:1-18

1 In the beginning was the Word: the Word was with God and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things came to be, not one thing had its being but through him. 4 All that came to be had life in him, and that life was the light of men, 5 a light that shines in the dark, a light that darkness could not overpower. 6 A man came, sent by God. His name was John. 7 He came as a witness, as a witness to speak for the light, so that everyone might believe through him. 8 He was not the light, only a witness to speak for the light. 9 The Word was the true light that enlightens all men; and he was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world that had its being through him, and the world did not know him. 11 He came to his own domain and his own people did not accept him. 12 But to all who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to all who believe in the name of him 13 who was born not out of human stock or urge of the flesh or will of man but of God himself. 14 The Word was made flesh, he lived among us, and we saw his glory, the glory that is his as the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.

15 John appears as his witness. He proclaims: 'This is the one of whom I said: He who comes after me ranks before me because he existed before me.' 16 Indeed, from his fulness we have, all of us, received – yes, grace in return for grace, 17 since, though the Law was given through Moses, grace and truth have come through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has ever seen God; it is the only Son, who is nearest to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

Other readings: Isaiah 52:7-10 Psalm 97 (98) Hebrews 1:1-6

Three separate sets of readings are provided for the three Masses of Christmas Day: the Mass at Midnight, the Mass at Dawn and the Mass during the day. The readings considered here are those of the Mass during the day.

The opening words of the Gospel according to John, known as the Prologue, offer a rich reflection on the mystery of the human birth of the Son of God. The evangelist refers to him as 'the Word', for God has finally spoken his fullest word to the human race. As the reading from the Letter to the Hebrews states, God having spoken at many times in the past 'in the last days has spoken to us through his Son'. The Prologue also refers to Jesus as 'the Light', for he brings truth and direction in our darkness. The darkness of sin and death cannot overcome the light of Christ. The evangelist speaks of the rejection of the Word by many, but also of the power given to those who do accept him, to all those who believe in him. The feast of Christ's birth invites us to renew that faith and welcome the Word of light into our lives again.

Do I appreciate that the birth of Christ is God's loving invitation to change my life?

Do I welcome the Word of life and light into the dark corners of my life?

We pray that the feast of Christmas will bring many to reconsider the Christian message.

Let us open our hearts to the grace and truth of God.