

A FESTIVAL OF READINGS AND CAROLS



*A Saviour, who is Christ,
the Lord, has been born
for you today, in the city of
David.*

Luke 2:11

A FESTIVAL OF READINGS AND CAROLS

ORGAN PRELUDE

ONCE IN ROYAL DAVID'S CITY

1: Small Group

Once in royal David's city
Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby
In a manger for His bed;
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little child.

2: Choir

He came down to earth from heaven
Who is God and Lord of all,
And His shelter was a stable,
And His cradle was a stall;
With the poor and mean and lowly
Lived on earth our Saviour holy.

3: Congregation

And our eyes at last shall see Him,
Through His own redeeming love,
For that child so dear and gentle
Is our Lord in heaven above;
And He leads His children on
To the place where He is gone.

4: Congregation

Not in that poor lowly stable,
With the oxen standing by,
We shall see Him; but in heaven,
Set at God's right hand on high;
Where like stars his children crowned
All in white shall wait around.

WELCOME

PSALM 96

Oh sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth!

Sing to the LORD, bless His name; tell of His salvation from day to day.

Declare His glory among the nations, His marvellous works among all the peoples!

For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; He is to be feared above all gods.

For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols, but the LORD made the heavens.

Splendour and majesty are before Him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.

Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength!

Ascribe to the LORD the glory due His name; bring an offering, and come

into His courts!

Worship the LORD in the splendour of holiness; tremble before Him, all the Earth!

Say among the nations, “The LORD reigns! Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved; He will judge the peoples with equity.”

Let the heavens be glad, and let the Earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it; let the field exult, and everything in it!

Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy before the LORD, for He comes, for He comes to judge the earth.

He will judge the world in righteousness,

And the peoples in His faithfulness.

Glory to the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen

O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL

1

O come, all ye faithful,
Joyful and triumphant,

O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold Him,
Born the King of angels.

O come, let us adore Him

O come, let us adore Him

*O come, let us adore Him, Christ the
Lord!*

2

God of God,
Light of light,

Lo, He abhors not the virgin's womb;
Very God,
Begotten, not created:

3

Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation,

Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above:
Glory to God
In the highest:

4

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee,
Born on Christmas morning,
Jesus, to Thee be glory given,
Word of the Father,
Now in flesh appearing.

FIRST READING

St. Ignatius of Antioch:

God the Word was truly born of the Virgin, having clothed Himself with a body of passions like our own. He who forms all men in the womb, was Himself really in the womb, and made for Himself a body of the seed of the Virgin, but without any intercourse of man.

COME, THOU SAVIOUR OF OUR RACE

1

Come, Thou Saviour of our race,
Choicest gift of heavenly grace;
O Thou blessed virgin's Son,
Born Thy course for us to run.

2

Not of mortal blood and birth,
He descended to the earth:
By the Holy Ghost conceived,
Truly man, to be believed.

3

Wondrous birth! O wondrous child
Of the virgin undefiled!
Though by all the world disowned,
Still to be in heaven enthroned.

4

From the Father forth He came,
And returneth to the same,
Captive leading death and hell -
High the song of triumph swell.

5

Thou, the Father's only Son,
Hast o'er sin the victory won.
Boundless shall Thy kingdom be;
When shall we its glories see?

6

Brightly doth Thy manger shine,
Glorious is its light divine;
Let not sin o'ercloud this light,
Ever be our faith thus bright.

7

Praise to God the Father sing,
Praise to God the Son, our King,
Praise to God the Spirit be
Ever and eternally.

SECOND READING

St. John Chrysostom:

Behold on Christmas a new and wondrous reality. The angels sing and the archangels blend their voices in harmony. The Cherubim sing their joyful praise. The Seraphim exalt Christ's glory. All join to praise this holy feast, beholding the Godhead here on earth and man in heaven. He Who is above, now for our redemption dwells here below, and we who are lowly are by divine mercy raised up. Bethlehem this day resembles heaven, hearing from the stars the singing of angelic voices. Ask not how. For where God wills, nature yields. For He willed. He had the power. He descended. He redeemed. All things move in obedience to God. This day He Who is born and He Who is, becomes what He is not. He is God become man, yet not departing from His Godhead.

HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING

1

Hark! the herald angels sing
Glory to the new-born King;
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled.
Joyful, all you nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With the angelic host proclaim:
Christ is born in Bethlehem.

*Hark! the herald angels sing
glory to the new-born King.*

2

Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold Him come,
Offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
Hail, the incarnate Deity,
Pleased as man with us to dwell,
Jesus our Immanuel:

3

Hail, the heaven-born Prince of
peace!
Hail, the Sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings,
Risen with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by,
Born that we no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth:

CHOIR: In Midnight's Silence

THIRD READING

St. Tertullian of Carthage:

The earth was still in a virgin state, reduced as yet by no human labour, with no seed as yet cast into its furrows, when, as we are told, out of it God made man into a living soul. As, then, the first Adam is thus introduced to us, it is a just conclusion that the second Adam likewise, as the apostle has told us, was formed by God into a living spirit out of the ground—in other words, out of a flesh which was not yet stained by any human reproduction. But in order that I may lose no opportunity of supporting my argument from the name of Adam, why is Christ called Adam by the apostle, unless it be that, as man, He was of that earthly origin? And even reason here maintains the same conclusion, because it was by just the contrary operation that God recovered His own image and likeness, of which He had been robbed by the devil. For it was while Eve was yet a virgin, that the ensnaring word had crept into her ear which was to build the house of death. In like manner, into a virgin's soul, must be introduced that Word of God which was to raise the fabric of life; so that which had been reduced to ruin by the female gender, might by the same female gender be recovered to salvation. As Eve had believed the serpent, so Mary believed the angel. The wrongdoing which the one had occasioned by believing, the other by believing removed. But it will be said that Eve did not at the devil's word conceive in her womb. Well, she at all events conceived; for the devil's word afterwards became as seed to her that she should conceive as an outcast, and bring forth in sorrow. Indeed she gave birth to a fratricidal devil. While Mary, on the contrary, bore one who would one day secure salvation for Israel, His own brother after the flesh, and the murderer of Himself. God therefore sent down into the virgin's womb His Word, as the good Brother, who should blot out the memory of the evil brother. Hence it was necessary that Christ should come forth for the salvation of man, in that state of flesh, which man had entered into ever since his condemnation.

THE PEOPLE THAT IN DARKNESS SAT

1

The people that in darkness sat
A glorious light have seen;
The light has shone on them who
long
In shades of death have been.

2

To hail Thee, Sun of righteousness,
The gathering nations come;
They joy as when the reapers bear
Their harvest treasures home.

3

For Thou their burden doest remove,
And break the tyrant's rod,
As in the day when Midian fell
Before the sword of God.

4

To us a child of hope is born,
To us a son is given,
And on His shoulder ever rests
All power in earth and heaven.

5

His name shall be the Prince of
peace,
The Everlasting Lord,
The Wonderful, the Counsellor,
The God by all adored.

6

His righteous government and power
Shall over all extend;
On judgment and on justice based,
His reign shall have no end.

7

Lord Jesus, reign in us, we pray,
And make us Thine alone,
Who with the Father ever art
And Holy Spirit one.

FOURTH READING

St. Leo the Great:

Although Jesus shared in our infirmities, He was not a partaker of our sins. He took the form of a servant without the baseness of sin, raising up what was human, but not lessening what was divine. Emptying Himself, the Invisible made Himself Visible. He came down to us, to Whom we could not on our own ascend, that we might be brought back from our former bondage and from worldly errors to His eternal blessedness.

CHOIR: Little Donkey

FIFTH READING

St. Augustine of Hippo:

Man's Maker was made man that the Bread might be hungry, the Fountain thirst, the Light sleep, the Way be tired from the journey, the Truth might be accused by false witnesses, the Judge of the living and the dead be judged by a mortal judge, Justice be sentenced by the unjust, the Teacher be beaten with whips, the Vine be crowned with thorns, the Foundation be suspended on wood, the Strength be made weak, the Healer be wounded, and that Life might die. Wake up, O human being! For it was for you that God was made man. Rise up and realize it was all for you. Eternal death would have awaited you had He not been born in time. Never would you be freed from your sinful flesh had He not taken to Himself the likeness of sinful flesh. Everlasting would be your misery had He not performed this act of mercy. You would not have come to life again had He not come to die your death. You would have perished had He not come.

O COME, O COME, IMMANUEL

1

O come, O come, Immanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appear;

*Rejoice, rejoice! Immanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel*

2

O come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free
Thine own from Satan's tyranny;
From depths of hell Thy people save,
And give them victory o'er the grave:

3

O come, Thou Dayspring come and
cheer
Our spirits by Thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to
flight.

4

O come, Thou Key of David, come
And open wide our heavenly home;
Make safe the path that leads on high,
And close the path to misery:

SIXTH READING

St. Polycarp of Smyrna:

For which reason God the Father sent the Word, that He might be manifested to the world. And He, being despised by the Jews, was, when preached by the Apostles, believed by the Gentiles. This is He who was from the beginning, who appeared as if new, and was found old, and yet who is ever born afresh in the hearts of the saints. This is He who, being from everlasting, is to-day called the Son; through whom the Church is enriched, and grace, widely spread, increases in the saints, furnishing understanding, revealing mysteries, announcing times, rejoicing over the faithful, giving to those that seek, by whom the limits of faith are not broken through, nor the boundaries set by the fathers passed over.

O HEAVENLY WORD, ETERNAL LIGHT

1

O heavenly Word, eternal light,
Begotten of the Father's might,
Who in these latter days art born
For succor to a world forlorn.

3

And when as judge Thou drawest nigh,
The secrets of all hearts to try;
When sinners meet their awful doom,
And saints attain their heavenly home.

2

Our hearts enlighten from above,
And kindle with Thine own true love;
That we who hear Thy call today
May cast earth's vanities away.

4

O let us not for evil past,
Be driven from Thy face at last;
But with Thy saints for evermore
Behold Thee, love Thee, and adore.

5

To God the Father, God the Son,
And God the Spirit, Three in One,
Praise, honour, might, and glory be
From age to age eternally.

ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH

1

Angels we have heard on high,
sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply,
echoing their joyous strains:

Gloria in excelsis Deo;
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

2

Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your songs of happy cheer?
What great brightness did you see?
What glad tidings did you hear?

3

Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing;
come, adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, the new-born King.



SEVENTH READING

St. Gregory of Nyssa:

When God became known to us in the flesh, He neither received the sinful passions of human nature, nor did the Virgin Mary suffer pain, nor was the Holy Spirit diminished in any way, nor was the power of the Most High set aside in any manner, and all this was because all was accomplished by the Holy Spirit. Thus the power of the Most High was not abased, and the child was born with no damage whatsoever to the mother's virginity.

BEHOLD, A ROSE IS GROWING

1

Behold, a Rose is growing
Of loveliest form and grace,
As prophets sang, foreknowing;
It springs from Jesse's race,
And come a little flower,
In midst of coldest winter,
At deepest midnight hour.

2

Isaiah hath foretold it
In words of promise sure,
And Mary's arm enfold it,
A virgin meek and pure,
Through God's eternal will
This child to her is given
At midnight calm and still.

3

This flower, whose fragrance tender
With sweetness fills the air,
Dispels with glorious splendour
The darkness everywhere.
True man, yet very God,
From sin and death He saves us
And lightens every load.

4

O Saviour, child of Mary,
Who felt our human woe;
O Saviour, King of glory,
Who dost our weakness know;
Lead us at length, we pray,
To the brightest courts of heaven
And to the endless day.

EIGHTH READING

St. John Chrysostom:

It was fitting that the Giver of all holiness should enter this world by a pure and holy birth. For He is the one, who of old formed Adam from the virgin earth, and from Adam, without help of woman, formed woman. For as without woman Adam produced woman, so did the Virgin without man this day bring forth a man. For it is a man, says the Lord, and who shall know him. For since the race of women owed to men a debt, as from Adam without woman woman came, therefore without man the Virgin this day brought forth, and on behalf of Eve repaid the debt to men. So that Adam might not take pride, that he without a woman had produced a woman, a woman without a man has begotten a man; so that by the similarity of the mystery is proved the similarity in nature. For as before the Almighty took a rib from Adam, and by that Adam was not made less; so in the Virgin He formed a living temple, and the holy virginity remained unchanged. Adam remained sound and unharmed even after the removal of a rib; so was the Virgin unstained though a Child was born of her.

CHOIR: O Wondrous Story

SILENT NIGHT, HOLY NIGHT

1

Silent night, holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.

2

Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight,
Glory streams from heaven afar,
Heavenly hosts sing: Hallelujah!
Christ the Saviour is born,
Christ the Saviour is born.

3

Silent night, holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from Thy holy face,
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.

NINTH READING

St. Augustine of Hippo:

He is the One through whom all things have been made and, on Christmas, He has been made in the midst of all things. He is the Revealer of His Father and the Creator of His mother, the Son of God through His Father without a mother and the Son of Man through His mother without a father. He is great in the eternal day of the angels but small in the time-conditioned day of men. He is the Word of God before all time and the Word made Flesh in the fullness of time. Maker of the sun, He is made under the sun. Disposer of all ages in the bosom of His Father, He consecrates Christmas Day in the womb of His mother. In Him He remains while from her He goes forth. Creator of the heavens and the earth, He is born on earth under the heavens. Unspeakably wise, He is wisely speechless. Filling the universe, He lies in a manger. Ruler of the stars, He nurses at His mother's breast. He is both great in the nature of God and small in the form of a servant, but His greatness is not diminished by His smallness nor His smallness overwhelmed by His greatness.

TO SHEPHERDS AS THEY WATCHED BY NIGHT

1

To shepherds as they watched by night
Appeared a host of angels bright:
Behold the tender babe, they said,
In yonder lowly manger laid.

2

He lies in Bethlehem, David's town,
As Micah did of old make known;
'Tis Jesus Christ, your Lord and king,
Who doth to all salvation bring.

3

Rejoice ye, then, that though His Son
God is with sinners now at one;
Made like yourselves of flesh and
blood,
Your brother is the eternal God.

4

What harm can sin and death then do?
The true God now abides with you.
Let hell and Satan rage and chafe,
Christ is your brother, you are safe.

5

Not one He will or can forsake
Who Him his confidence doth make.
Though all their wiles your foes may
try,
You can their utmost powers defy.

6

You shall, you must at last prevail;
God's own you are, and cannot fail.
To God for ever sing your praise
With joy and patience all your days.

TENTH READING

St. Leo the Great

The purpose of the Incarnation was to give the human race a wondrous grace so that iniquity might return to the ways of innocence, old age to newness of life, strangers might be received by God as His children and without any claim be capable of entering into an inheritance, that the evil-living might begin to live righteously, the prudent become generous, the incontinent chaste, and the earthly might become heavenly-minded.

COME, YOUR HEARTS AND VOICES RAISING

1

Come, your hearts and voices raising,
Christ the Lord with gladness
praising;
Loudly sing His love amazing,
Worthy folk of Christendom.

4

Jacob's star in all its splendor
Beams with comfort sweet and
tender,
Forcing Satan to surrender,
Breaking all the powers of hell.

2

See how God, for us providing,
Gave His son and life abiding;
He our weary steps is guiding
From earth's woe to heavenly joy.

5

From the bondage that oppressed us,
From sin's fetters that possessed us,
From the grief that sore distressed us,
We, the captives, now are free.

3

Christ, from heaven to us descending,
And in love our race befriending,
In our need His help extending,
Saved us from the wily foe.

6

O the joy, beyond expressing,
When by faith we grasp this blessing,
And to Thee we come confessing
That our freedom Thou hast wrought.

7

Gracious child, we pray Thee, hear us,
From Thy lowly manger cheer us,
Gently lead us and be near us
Till we join the angelic choir.

COLLECT

Let us pray.

Almighty God, as you have given us your only Son to take our nature upon himself, and to be born of a pure virgin:

Grant that we who have been born again and made your children by adoption and grace may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen

LORD'S PRAYER

BLESSING

M: (May) Christ the Son of God give you joy and peace by His presence with you; and the blessing of almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be with you always. **C:Amen.**

O THOU HOLIEST, O THOU HAPPIEST

1

O thou holiest, O thou happiest,
Grace-bestowing Christmastide!

Christ in a manger

Saves from all danger:

O rejoice, ye Christians far and wide!

2

O thou holiest, O thou happiest,
Peace-proclaiming Christmastide!

Christ's light is beaming,

Mankind redeeming:

O rejoice, ye Christians far and wide!

3

O thou holiest, O thou happiest,
Life-imparting Christmastide!

Angels from glory

Chant the great story:

O rejoice, ye Christians far and wide!

