

Christmas Eve, Midnight Mass

December 25, 2011

Call to prayer: Father, we praise you on this joyful day for your Son, born into our world of darkness and sin, to be its Savior. Send your Holy Spirit on us so that Christ may be born into our hearts and bear fruit in our lives. We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen.

A reading of the holy gospel according to Luke: 2:1-14

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria.

So all went to be enrolled, each to his own town.

And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

While they were there, the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over their flock.

The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were struck with great fear. The angel said to them,

Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Christ and Lord. And this will be a sign for you:

you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.

And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying:

Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.

The gospel of the Lord

Focus: Luke records the birth of Jesus with tender simplicity and stresses the theme of poverty.

Questions for reflection and sharing:

1. Christ came as a child. When has a child had an impact on your life?
2. Do you have family customs which make celebrating Christmas more meaningful than just merry-making?

Concluding prayer: All-powerful God, Jesus came into the world through Mary who placed her life at the service of your plan. Help us to hear the voice which announces his glory and open our minds to receive the Spirit who prepares us for his coming. We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen.