

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

When a profound silence covered all things  
and night was in the middle of its course,  
your all-powerful Word, O Lord, bounded  
from heaven's royal throne.

**GLORIA**

Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,  
we bless you,  
we adore you,  
we glorify you,  
we give you thanks for your great glory,  
Lord God, heavenly King,  
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,  
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,  
you take away the sins of the world,  
have mercy on us;  
you take away the sins of the world,  
receive our prayer;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,  
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father.  
Amen.

**COLLECT**

Almighty ever-living God,  
splendour of faithful souls,  
graciously be pleased to fill the world with  
your glory,  
and show yourself to all peoples by the  
radiance of your light.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of  
the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.  
Amen.

**FIRST READING** Ecclesiasticus 24:1-2.8-12

A reading from the book of Ecclesiasticus.  
Wisdom speaks her own praises,  
in the midst of her people she glories in  
herself.  
She opens her mouth in the assembly of the  
Most High,  
she glories in herself in the presence of the  
Mighty One.

"Then the creator of all things instructed me,  
and he who created me fixed a place for my  
tent.  
He said, 'Pitch your tent in Jacob,  
make Israel your inheritance.'  
From eternity, in the beginning, he created  
me,  
and for eternity I shall remain.  
I ministered before him in the holy  
tabernacle,  
and thus was I established on Zion.  
In the beloved city he has given me rest,  
and in Jerusalem I wield my authority.  
I have taken root in a privileged people,  
in the Lord's property, in his inheritance."

The word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

**PSALM** Psalm 147

Response:  
The Word was made flesh,  
and lived among us.

or  
Alleluia!

- O praise the Lord, Jerusalem!  
Zion, praise your God!  
He has strengthened the bars of your  
gates,  
he has blessed the children within you (R.)
- He established peace on your borders,  
he feeds you with finest wheat.  
He sends out his word to the earth  
and swiftly runs his command. (R.)
- He makes his word known to Jacob,  
to Israel his laws and decrees.  
He has not dealt thus with other nations;  
he has not taught them his decrees. (R.)

**SECOND READING** Ephesians 1:3-6, 15-18

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the  
Ephesians.

Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus  
Christ, who has blessed us with all the  
spiritual blessings of heaven in Christ. Before  
the world was made, he chose us, chose us  
in Christ, to be holy and spotless, and to live  
through love in his presence, determining  
that we should become his adopted sons,  
through Jesus Christ, for his own kind  
purposes, to make us praise the glory of his  
grace, his free gift to us in the Beloved.

That will explain why I, having once heard  
about your faith in the Lord Jesus, and the  
love that you show towards all the saints,  
have never failed to remember you in my  
prayers and to thank God for you. May the  
God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father  
of glory, give you a spirit of wisdom and  
perception of what is revealed, to bring you  
to full knowledge of him. May he enlighten  
the eyes of your mind so that you can see  
what hope his call holds for you, what rich  
glories he has promised the saints will  
inherit.

The word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Alleluia, alleluia!

Glory be to you, O Christ, proclaimed to the  
pagans;  
glory be to you, O Christ, believed in by the  
world.  
Alleluia!

**GOSPEL** John 1:1-5.9-14

The longer form may be read: John 1:1-18  
A reading from the holy Gospel according to  
John.

In the beginning was the Word:  
the Word was with God  
and the Word was God.  
He was with God in the beginning.  
Through him all things came to be,  
not one thing had its being but through him.  
All that came to be had life in him  
and that life was the light of men,  
a light that shines in the dark,  
a light that darkness could not overpower.

The Word was the true light  
that enlightens all men;  
and he was coming into the world.  
He was in the world  
that had its being through him,  
and the world did not know him.  
He came to his own domain  
and his own people did not accept him.

But to all who did accept him  
he gave power to become children of God,  
to all who believe in the name of him  
who was born not out of human stock  
or urge of the flesh  
or will of man  
but of God himself.

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.

The Gospel of the Lord.  
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

**PROFESSION OF FAITH**

I believe in one God,  
the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Only Begotten Son of God,  
born of the Father before all ages.  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made, consubstantial with  
the Father;

through him all things were made.  
For us men and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,  
(all bow during the next three lines)  
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the  
Virgin Mary,  
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under  
Pontius Pilate,  
he suffered death and was buried,  
and rose again on the third day  
in accordance with the Scriptures.  
He ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory  
to judge the living and the dead  
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,  
the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is adored  
and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and  
apostolic Church.  
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness  
of sins  
and I look forward to the resurrection of the  
dead  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

**PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Sanctify, O Lord, the offerings we make  
on the Nativity of your Only Begotten Son,  
for by it you show us the way of truth  
and promise the life of the heavenly Kingdom.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

To all who would accept him,  
he gave the power to become children of God.

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Lord our God, we humbly ask you,  
that, through the working of this mystery,  
our offences may be cleansed  
and our just desires fulfilled.  
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

# 3 JANUARY 2021 Sunday Message 2<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY

**THE WORD**

Year B • Psalter Week 2

## TO SUM UP... (JOHN 1:1-18)

**SAY**

The Word became flesh  
and pitched his tent  
among us.

(see John 1:14)

**DO**

Look at the words on this sheet: think of  
how they are a means of communicating,  
just as the spoken word is. Jesus Christ is  
God's word to you personally – what is your  
response?

**LEARN**

The opening words of today's  
Gospel, "In the beginning", recall the  
first words of the book of Genesis.

The masculine term "Word" (*logos*)  
refers to the feminine figure Wisdom  
(*Hokmah/Sophia*) in the Jewish scriptures.

There is no narrative about the  
circumstances of Jesus' conception or  
birth in the Gospel according to John:  
the Prologue sets out the evangelist's  
understanding of who Jesus is.

Our Gospel reading today comes from the Fourth Gospel: that account opens  
with an ancient Christian hymn which reflects on who Jesus Christ is, that he  
is the supreme means by which God completes the divine self-revealing to  
human beings. Like all summaries, it is very dense and only states what the  
author believes: the details of how God is revealed will be set out in the Gospel  
narrative which follows.

The first words, "In the beginning", echo the opening of the book of Genesis and tell us  
that even then, before creation, the Word existed in relationship with God. The central,  
pivotal point of the passage declares that "the Word was made flesh": the Prologue, as  
this hymn is usually known, presents Jesus Christ as the incarnation, the "en-flesh-ment",  
of this pre-existent Word. He is light and life to those who accept him and offers the  
possibility of becoming daughters and sons of God to those who decide to put their faith  
and trust in his message. But Jesus is not just a messenger: he is the Word. Whatever God  
is, the Word is: they are so closely identified that Jesus can say that "to have seen me is to  
have seen the Father". The Christmas story is thus given a cosmic sweep in the vision of  
the evangelist we call John. ■

**REFLECT**

On this Sunday, the Gospel invites  
us to reflect on the mystery of  
the coming of Jesus Christ into  
our world. In the Jewish scriptures, God  
created by word, by speaking, as in the  
first chapter of Genesis. But God also  
operated in the world through the female  
figure of Wisdom in creating and in  
communicating with human beings. The  
evangelist refers to this figure by using  
the masculine term *logos* (or Word): the  
"he" who was with God in the beginning  
looks back to the Word and forward to the  
person of Jesus.

This deep passage, which we should  
read as poetry, expresses an advanced  
understanding of the person of Jesus.  
It gives the outline of the coming of the  
Word into the world and the way in which  
people responded. It holds out to us today  
the same offer of light, life and becoming  
children of God. This is a free gift (grace):  
it is not something that we can earn, we  
have only to accept it and live by it.

As we approach the end of Christmastide,  
we might take time to reflect on the past  
few weeks and what the Christmas story

means to us personally. In the thought of  
the evangelist John, it is all about God  
reaching out to us in God's Word: the  
term "word" suggests communicating,  
which is what we do when we speak or  
write to other people. In Jesus, God is  
inviting us into an intimate relationship:  
perhaps we might use this reflection  
to deepen our relationship with God,  
because that is what faith is all about, in  
the end. ■