



Celebrate

Second Sunday of Christmas
January 3, 2021

Within the gospel reading's profound words lies the simple message that God is revealed in a human person. Though we may try to understand how the Word existed with God from the beginning of time, the wonder we celebrate at Christmas is that the Word continues to dwell among us. Christ comes among us in the gathered assembly, the scriptures, the waters of new birth, and the bread and the wine. Through these ordinary gifts we receive the fullness of God's grace and truth.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, you have filled all the earth with the light of your incarnate Word. By your grace empower us to reflect your light in all that we do, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

First Reading

Jeremiah 31:7-14

God promises to bring Israel back to its land from the most remote parts of exile. In Zion Israel will rejoice over God's gifts of food and livestock. Young women will express their joy in dancing; God will give gladness instead of sorrow.

Thus says the LORD:
Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob,
and raise shouts for the chief of the
nations;
proclaim, give praise, and say,
"Save, O LORD, your people,
the remnant of Israel."
⁸See, I am going to bring them from the
land of the north,
and gather them from the farthest
parts of the earth,
among them the blind and the lame,
those with child and those in labor,
together;
a great company, they shall return here.
⁹With weeping they shall come,
and with consolations I will lead them
back,
I will let them walk by brooks of water,
in a straight path in which they shall
not stumble;
for I have become a father to Israel,
and Ephraim is my firstborn.
¹⁰Hear the word of the LORD, O nations,
and declare it in the coastlands far
away;

say, "He who scattered Israel will gather
him,
and will keep him as a shepherd a
flock."
¹¹For the LORD has ransomed Jacob,
and has redeemed him from hands
too strong for him.
¹²They shall come and sing aloud on the
height of Zion,
and they shall be radiant over the
goodness of the LORD,
over the grain, the wine, and the oil,
and over the young of the flock and
the herd;
their life shall become like a watered
garden,
and they shall never languish again.
¹³Then shall the young women rejoice in
the dance,
and the young men and the old shall
be merry.
I will turn their mourning into joy,
I will comfort them, and give them
gladness for sorrow.
¹⁴I will give the priests their fill of fatness,
and my people shall be satisfied with
my bounty,

says the LORD.

Psalm

Psalm 147:12-20; refrain, Ps. 147:12

Wor-ship the LORD, O Je - ru - sa - lem; praise your
 God, O Zi - on.

- Worship the LORD, ¹ O Jerusalem;
 praise your ¹ God, O Zion,
¹³ **who has strengthened the bars ¹ of your gates
 and has blessed your chil- ¹ dren within you.**
¹⁴ God has established peace ¹ on your borders
 and satisfies you with the ¹ finest wheat.
¹⁵ **God sends out a command ¹ to the earth,
 a word that runs ¹ very swiftly. R**
¹⁶ God gives ¹ snow like wool,
 scattering ¹ frost like ashes.
¹⁷ **God scatters ¹ hail like bread crumbs.
 Who can stand a- ¹ gainst God's cold?**
¹⁸ The LORD sends forth the ¹ word and melts them;
 the wind blows, and the ¹ waters flow.
¹⁹ **God declares the ¹ word to Jacob,
 statutes and judg- ¹ ments to Israel.**
²⁰ The LORD has not done so to any ¹ other nation;
 they do not know God's judgments. ¹ Hallelujah! R

or Wisdom 10:15-21; refrain, Wis. 10:20 [not printed]

The figure of Wisdom played a major role in early discussions of Christology. Wisdom is the divine word, coming from the mouth of God, and ruling over all of creation. Wisdom, created at the beginning of time, made her dwelling place in Jerusalem among God's people.

Second Reading

Ephesians 1:3-14

In Jesus, all of God's plans and purposes have been made known as heaven and earth are united in Christ. Through Jesus, we have been chosen as God's children and have been promised eternal salvation.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. ⁵He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace ⁸that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight ⁹he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that

he set forth in Christ, ¹⁰as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. ¹¹In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, ¹²so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. ¹³In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; ¹⁴this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

Gospel

John 1:[1-9] 10-18

John begins his gospel with this prologue: a hymn to the Word through whom all things were created. This Word became flesh and brought grace and truth to the world.

[In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.]

¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to

what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵(John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") ¹⁶From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

Prayers of Intercession

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

Joining our voices with the song of the angels, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

Redeeming God, you gather together your people from the farthest parts of the earth. Protect your church from stumbling. Let it not be overcome by sorrow, division, or despair. Make us radiant with goodness, that we might live always to the praise of your glory. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You bring together heaven and earth. All creation testifies to your splendor. Hold the ecosystems of this earth in delicate balance, from coastlands to farmlands, forests to wetlands, deserts to rainforests. Show us new ways to live in harmony with the world around us. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You overflow with grace upon grace. Expand the imaginations of those who serve in positions of authority. Open their hearts to the needs of their nations and communities. Protect all those in harm's way and those risking danger for the sake of others. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You bring consolation to those who weep. Embrace those who feel far-off, excluded, or defeated. Accompany those living with chronic and invisible illness. Sustain the weak and weary. Refresh those who labor under the weight of pain or sickness (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You come to us in the beauty of darkness and of light. Bring justice and reconciliation to communities divided by oppressions and misuse of power. Guide us to speak holy words of advocacy and truth. Help us to honor your image in one another. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

You turn our mourning into joy. We give thanks for those who have died in faith (*especially*). With all the saints, give us our inheritance in Christ. In the fullness of time, gather us all together in your mercy. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of mercy, come quickly to us with grace upon grace as we lift these and all our prayers to you, in the name of Jesus.

Amen.

Preparing for Next Week

Monday Psalm 110. **Tuesday** Luke 6:27-31. **Wednesday** (Epiphany of Our Lord) Matthew 2:1-12. **Thursday** Psalm 29. **Friday** 1 Timothy 4:11-16. **Saturday** 1 Kings 2:1-4, 10-12. **Baptism of Our Lord** Genesis 1:1-5; Psalm 29; Acts 19:1-7; Mark 1:4-11.

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