

Christmas

SUNDAY EVENING MASS

SCRIPTURE READINGS BEGIN ON PAGE 47

During the Christmas season, our liturgy invites us to consider the birth of the Lord from many vantage points. As we begin this season, it is useful to remember that the stories of Jesus' birth and childhood are found in only two of our Gospels, Matthew and Luke. Throughout this season, we will hear stories from both Gospels. Those Gospels tell different but complementary stories about Jesus' birth, highlighting items of theological importance about the Incarnation and the salvation that Jesus brings.

On this day, the Feast of Christmas, we are given the details of Christ's birth as found

in the Gospel of Luke. Here we learn about the census that brings Mary and Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem, where Jesus is born. We also hear about the angel's announcement of this good news to the shepherds. In these details, we find two of Luke's particular concerns: (1) to locate the coming of Christ in the wider framework of salvation history as good news for all people, Gentiles and Jews, and (2) to show the Lord's favor upon the poor and lowly.

In Luke's Gospel, Jesus is born as one of the poor. Laid in a manger in a stable, because there was no room at the inn,

SUNDAY MASS SCHEDULE

9:00 AM Saint Dennis
10:30 AM Saint Charles Borromeo
12:30 PM Our Lady of Loretto
4:00 PM Saint Francis Xavier

DAILY MASS SCHEDULE

TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY

6:00 PM Saint Dennis

FRIDAY

6:00 PM Our Lady of Loretto

CONFESSIONS

Before mass and on request.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

TUESDAYS

6:00 PM Sewing Group
Meeting Room in Small Hall
(St. Dennis)

Bro. Mike Dorn OFM Cap. Administrator/Pastor • Phone: (406) 620-7500
Bro. Thomas Skowron OFM Cap. Assoc. Pastor • Phone: (406) 425-2567
Bro. Jerry Cornish OFM Cap. Youth Ministry

76 Highway 1, P.O. Box 57, Crow Agency, MT 59022

Find us on Facebook:
Crow Catholic Parishes



Visit our website:
crowcatholicparishes.com



he comes into the world through obscure and surprising means. Yet, as the angel proclaims this good news to the shepherds, this infant is announced as the Messiah and Lord. In the song of the angels, all are invited to give glory to God for this miraculous birth, in which God comes to share our humanity.

The angels sing that Jesus' coming brings peace. Yet there is little in the details of this Gospel that gives evidence of peace. Jesus is born as a traveler away from home, born in a stable in a crowded city under the occupation of foreigners. The appearance of the angel to the shepherds frightens them. When the angels proclaim Jesus' birth as the harbinger of "peace on earth," the evangelist Luke clearly wants us to take the long view. The shepherds are invited to claim a faith that will enable them to see this infant as a sign God's promise of a messiah. It is through such faith that one finds the peace of which the angels sing.

Family Connection

Christmas has come to be associated as a sea-

son of peace. This association and our familiarity with the Christmas story sometimes make us forget about the difficult circumstances surrounding Jesus' birth. As a family, gather around your nativity and carefully read Luke's story of Jesus' birth, Luke 2:1-14. Recall that the manger you see in the nativity set is not in a house, but a stable. The animals you see might have been noisy and may even have smelled unpleasant. Joseph and Mary were far from home in a city that was crowded and under the occupation of foreigners. The shepherds may have been unclean from their time in the fields. Invite each family member to say one thing about the Christmas story that makes an impression upon them.

Conclude by praying together for people in today's world who may experience circumstances like those found in the story of Jesus' birth. Pray for those who are far from home, those who live in fear, those who live in need. Sing together one or more Christmas hymns, such as "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" or "Angels We Have Heard on High."



MONDAY MORNING MASS

SCRIPTURE READINGS BEGIN ON PAGE 50

There are four Masses that are celebrated for the Feast of Christmas and each is given its own set of readings to help us contemplate Christ's birth. The Gospel for the Vigil Mass on Christmas Eve is taken from the beginning of the Gospel of Matthew. The Mass at midnight proclaims the birth of Jesus through the Gospel of Luke. The Mass at dawn on Christmas morning continues the story of the birth of Jesus as found in Luke's Gospel, ending with the shepherds' visit to the infant Jesus. In each of these Gospel readings, we hear portions of the infancy narratives with which we are familiar.

The Gospel for the Christmas Mass during the day is taken from the beginning of John's Gospel, but this part of John's Gospel is not an infancy narrative like those found in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Instead, John's Gospel starts at the very beginning and presents the Creation story as the framework for announcing the Incarnation. John's opening words echo the first verse in the Book of Genesis. This framework invites us to view Jesus' birth from God's perspective. Each of the Gospels makes clear that Jesus' birth was the result of God's initiative. John's Gospel, however, emphasizes that Jesus' birth was the divine intention from the moment of Creation.

As we observe in today's reading, the Gospel of John includes highly philosophical and theological language. One example that particularly stands out in this Gospel is John's repeated references to "the Word" in the opening verse. This expression (logos in the Greek) borrows from a concept found in both Jewish and Greek thought. Jews used this phrase to describe God's action in the Creation story, for example, and in the Wisdom literature. In Greek thought, the logos was

understood as an intermediary between God and humanity. John and others in the early Church adopted this language to describe God's incarnation in Jesus. As the term was used to express the Trinitarian faith of Christians, the Word came to be equated with the Second Person of the Trinity.

In this prologue to the Gospel of John, we also hear the main themes that will be developed in his Gospel. These are often presented as dualities: light and dark, truth and falsehood, life and death, and belief and unbelief. We also hear in this prologue a unique aspect of John's Gospel, the theme of testimony. John the Baptist was sent by God to testify to Jesus, the light. Others in this Gospel will also offer testimony about Jesus. The reader is invited to accept this testimony, which bears witness to Jesus, the Son of God. But even more directly, Jesus' action and words will testify to Jesus' identity as God's Incarnate Word.

Thinking about Jesus' birth in these theological and cosmological terms is particularly appropriate as we celebrate the Feast of Christmas in the darkness of winter. At this time, nature itself seems to remind us of the darkness of sin. Into this darkness, in the midst of our sinfulness, God comes to dwell among us. John's Gospel reminds us that through the Incarnation, God saves us from the darkness of sin and makes us his children.

Family Connection

At Christmas we celebrate the great mystery that God became flesh and dwelt among us. We call this mystery the Incarnation (the word means "to take on flesh"), and it changes everything. Today's Gospel reminds us that we can also look upon the Nativity from God's perspec-

tive to better appreciate the significance of the Incarnation. The mystery we proclaim at Christmas is that God, the very God who created all things from nothing and who is light itself, took on our humanity in order to transform us. Through his birth among us, we have seen the face of God and have become nothing less than God's own children. At this awesome mystery, we adore.

Gather as a family around your Nativity set. Keep this image before you and talk about how familiar we are with this scene. Invite members of the family to recall the details of Jesus' birth that we hear in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Observe that the Gospel of John invites us to consider Jesus' birth from a different perspective.

Read together today's Gospel, John 1:1-14.

John's Gospel reminds us that the image we see in our Nativity set is a most remarkable sight: God made himself at home with us by taking on flesh and becoming a human person. We call this mystery the Incarnation. What are some of the things that John's Gospel says happened for us because Jesus came to dwell among us? (Light overcame darkness; we see God's glory in Jesus; we became children of God.) Together thank God for this mystery of the Incarnation and the salvation that we received because Jesus was born among us. Sing together a Christmas hymn, such as "O Come, All Ye Faithful" or "Silent Night."

Merry Christmas!

From us Capuchin brothers Jerry, Mike, and Thomas,
it's an honor to be with you here in Crow Country
and please know that we wish you and all of your families
a very blessed Christmas Season!

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31ST & MONDAY, JANUARY 1ST (NEW YEAR'S DAY)

We'll resume the regular Sunday Mass schedule (as posted on the front of the bulletin) on December 31st. On New Year's Day at 10am we'll celebrate Mass at St. Dennis for the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God.

CONFIRMATION, FIRST COMMUNION

Sacrament classes for children who are at least 7 years old & baptized will begin on **Sunday, Feb. 4th** at both **St. Dennis** and **Our Lady of Loretto** after Mass. Classes will run about 30 minutes.

There is a sign-up sheet to begin the registration process.

NEXT BAPTISM CLASS

Our next class for parents/godparents is on **Saturday, Jan. 6th** at **10:30am** at **St. Dennis** with baptisms to follow for families having theirs done inside the chapel. Other dates and locations will be scheduled accordingly.

Please visit crowcatholicparishes.com or contact one of the priests to register.

ST. DENNIS SEWING GROUP TO RESUME IN JANUARY

The sewing group will be taking a break for the remainder of the year. We'll let you know when it resumes in January.