

## The Nativity of Our Lord (Christmas)



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 perspective 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."

### EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS

If you've served as a Eucharistic Minister before the pandemic or you would like to become one, please see Fr. Mike or contact us at 406.620.7500 or [stdenniscrowagency@gmail.com](mailto:stdenniscrowagency@gmail.com). We'll be arranging a training session for sometime in January for those interested in this ministry.

### SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION CLASSES

**Classes will resume in January on Wednesdays from 5:00-5:45pm at St. Dennis** for the Sacraments of Initiation (First Reconciliation, Confirmation, & First Eucharist) and will run through the first week of April. If you'd like to register your child, please talk with one of the priests or with Brother Jerry.

### INFANT BAPTISMS – FIRST SAT/SUN EACH MONTH

The new regular schedule of Infant Baptisms (children under age 7) is the first Saturday or Sunday of every month at each of our locations. Additionally, there's a mandatory class for parents and godparents on the first Saturday at 10:30 AM at Saint Dennis Parish Hall. **The next class is Saturday, January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The baptism itself will be scheduled based upon priest availability and your**

**requested church location.** Please contact any of the priests to register before the class. More info at [crowcatholicparishes.com](http://crowcatholicparishes.com)

## **CROW CATHOLIC PARISHES TO RECEIVE A NEWLY ASSIGNED PRIEST IN JANUARY**

As many of you know, it's been several months without a second full-time priest to serve the parishes, but starting the week of January 8<sup>th</sup>, Fr. Thomas Skowron, OFM Cap., will be arriving here on the Crow Reservation to begin his new long-term assignment. We are very grateful that our brother chose to return to Montana after recently serving a year at St. Labre while he was still in ministerial formation. He is very excited to begin his next chapter in Montana living and serving with everyone here in Crow Country!

### **Communion:**

## **Ii Iwacheen Ala Xápdeetkaatak 41** *There he is with no bed to sleep in*

"Away in a Manger"

Anonymous, 1885, Attributed to Martin Luther  
Crow text by Louella Johnson, 1980's

MUELLER11.11.11.11.

James R. Murray, 1887

F B<sup>b</sup> F C

Ii i - wa cheen a - la xáp - deet - kaa - tak Ak - baa - tat - día  
*There he is with no bed to sleep in. The little Lord*

F F

kaa-teesh xap - káat- taak daa - chík ih - ké baa-ku - kkoon am -  
*is lying there (endearingly). The stars in the sky are*

B<sup>b</sup> F C F B<sup>b</sup> C<sup>7</sup> F

muúss í-kaa kaaum Je-sus he - káa-tuuash bi-kkéé hée -leen i - há - wik.  
*looking down. The one they call Jesus is sleeping in the hay.*

# The Bulletin

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[crowcatholicparishes.com](http://crowcatholicparishes.com)  
[facebook.com/crowcatholicparishes](https://facebook.com/crowcatholicparishes)

Fr. Mike Dorn, OFM Cap. *Administrator*  
Br. Jerry Cornish, OFM Cap. *Youth Ministry*  
Fr. Michael Sullivan, OFM Cap. *Visiting Priest*

*CONFESSIONS before mass and on request.*

### **Sunday Mass Schedule:**

9:30am – Saint Dennis  
10:30am – Saint Charles Borromeo  
12:00pm – Our Lady of Loretto  
4:00 pm – Saint Francis Xavier

### **Daily Mass Schedule:**

6 PM @ Saint Dennis – Tues/Wed/Thurs  
6 PM @ Our Lady of Loretto – Fridays

## **The Nativity of the Lord**

December 24/25, 2022

OPENING SONG – Ootchia baaxpáam / O Holy Night (Insert)

SCRIPTURE READINGS begin on page 47 (Xmas Eve)

GLORIA – page 6

CREED-Apostles' page 10

MASS PARTS – Mass of Creation #884-888

COMMUNION – Ii Iwachen Ala Xápdeetkaatak / Away in the manger  
(back)

CLOSING SONG – Ootchia Baaxpáak Baachitchissaam / Silent Night  
(Insert)

*The Roman Catholic Parishes of*

**Our Lady of Loretto**  
Lodge Grass

**St. Charles Borromeo**  
Pryor

**St. Dennis**  
Crow Agency

**St. Francis Xavier**  
St. Xavier

**St. Kateri Tekakwitha**  
Wyola