

First reading

Isaiah 9:1-7

The people that walked in darkness
has seen a great light;
on those who live in a land of deep shadow
a light has shone.
You have made their gladness greater,
you have made their joy increase;
they rejoice in your presence
as men rejoice at harvest time,
as men are happy when they are dividing the spoils.

For the yoke that was weighing on him,
the bar across his shoulders,
the rod of his oppressor,
these you break as on the day of Midian.

For all the footgear of battle,
every cloak rolled in blood,
is burnt,
and consumed by fire.

For there is a child born for us,
a son given to us
and dominion is laid on his shoulders;
and this is the name they give him:
Wonder-Counsellor, Mighty-God,
Eternal-Father, Prince-of-Peace.
Wide is his dominion
in a peace that has no end,
for the throne of David
and for his royal power,
which he establishes and makes secure
in justice and integrity.
From this time onwards and for ever,
the jealous love of the Lord of Hosts will do this.
The word of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 95(96):1-3,11-13

Today a saviour has been born to us: he is Christ the Lord.

O sing a new song to the Lord,
sing to the Lord all the earth.
O sing to the Lord, bless his name.

Today a saviour has been born to us: he is Christ the Lord.

Proclaim his help day by day,
tell among the nations his glory

and his wonders among all the peoples.

Today a saviour has been born to us: he is Christ the Lord.

Let the heavens rejoice and earth be glad,
let the sea and all within it thunder praise,
let the land and all it bears rejoice,
all the trees of the wood shout for joy
at the presence of the Lord for he comes,
he comes to rule the earth.

Today a saviour has been born to us: he is Christ the Lord.

With justice he will rule the world,
he will judge the peoples with his truth.

Today a saviour has been born to us: he is Christ the Lord.

Second reading

Titus 2:11-14

God's grace has been revealed, and it has made salvation possible for the whole human race and taught us that what we have to do is to give up everything that does not lead to God, and all our worldly ambitions; we must be self-restrained and live good and religious lives here in this present world, while we are waiting in hope for the blessing which will come with the Appearing of the glory of our great God and saviour Christ Jesus. He sacrificed himself for us in order to set us free from all wickedness and to purify a people so that it could be his very own and would have no ambition except to do good.

The word of the Lord

Gospel

Luke 2:1-14

Caesar Augustus issued a decree for a census of the whole world to be taken. This census – the first – took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria, and everyone went to his own town to be registered. So Joseph set out from the town of Nazareth in Galilee and travelled up to Judaea, to the town of David called Bethlehem, since he was of David's House and line, in order to be registered together 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 a son, her first born. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them at the inn.

In the countryside close by there were shepherds who lived in the fields and took it in turns to watch their flocks during the night. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone round them. They were terrified, but the angel said, 'Do not be afraid. Listen, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in the town of David a saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. And here is a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.' And suddenly with the angel there was a great throng of the heavenly host, praising God and singing:

'Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and peace to men who enjoy his favour.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Homily

25th December 2020 – Christmas, Year B

Dear friends, what a strange time we are in; this Christmas, like this year of 2020, is going to be one that we will never forget, it's been unprecedented and been like no other, and hopefully we'll never have to go through one quite like it again. I know it's not been easy for any of us but particularly for those who have lost loved ones, those who have been isolated and on their own and have been cut-off quite literally from loved ones and of course grandparents who have been unable to see and hug their grandchildren for months.

At Christmas we celebrate the mystery of the Incarnation, God taking human form and becoming one of us. God's love revealed to us, as we recall the birth of a baby boy in a manger in Bethlehem over 2000 years ago.

In the mystery of the Incarnation heart speaks to heart, we celebrate God speaking to us, touching us through his Son, our Lord Jesus.

'The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light' the prophet Isaiah tells us at the beginning of the First Reading of the Night Mass. At Christmas we celebrate the great light that is Jesus. In being born on earth, and through his life, death and resurrection Jesus **is a light** that will never go out. Jesus is our light and he brings salvation for all, Jesus is the light that we need so desperately in our world at this time in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic.

It's interesting that Luke records that the first to hear of the birth of Jesus were the shepherds, the poorest of the poor, living in the open, moving from place to place with their sheep. The words that the angel uses are important; the angel tells the shepherds that a saviour has been born **'to you'** – Jesus is to be their saviour, not just the saviour of the religious, rich and powerful. We hear how the shepherds are not expected to believe the words of the angel on their own merit; a sign has been given to them, when they see a child, wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger, the angel's words will be confirmed.

Suddenly with the angel, there is a *'great throng of the heavenly host, praising God and singing.'* The shepherds experience a vision of Heaven, a world that is above and beyond their own, a vision that will inspire them and add a new dimension to their lives.

This year we were unable to have our traditional children's Mass so I recorded a Mass and I said to the children that at Christmas we receive the greatest gift that we have ever been given, the gift of Jesus himself, given out of love from God.

Homily

25th December 2020 – Christmas, Year B

We know that the birth of Jesus is more than just a feel-good story, but is deeply significant for us and our world particularly at this time. Whenever we are struggling, or feel down by the state of the world, or are burdened with worries, we can be certain that God is in the middle of it all; the Word has become flesh and really lives here with us in our midst, Jesus is a light shining brightly in the darkness of our world today.

The Lord, in coming to us this Christmas, wants above all to draw us to himself. He loves us, each of us, more than we could ever know or imagine. Let us open our hearts to him and respond to his invitation; let's allow our soul to breathe with a fresh grace, the grace which enables us to rise from our knees with new heart, new hope and new love this Christmas.

Whether at home or in Church, *O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord*; let's spend time reflecting on the crib and the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus, the greatest gift that we've ever been given, Jesus the Lord of Light who brings hope to our world.

Sending my love and prayers to you and your families this Christmas time.
God bless, **Fr Phil x**

Bidding Prayers and Spiritual Communion

25th December 2020 – Christmas, Year B

This Christmas as we celebrate the birth of Jesus we offer our prayers to the Father:

For the Church and for Christians everywhere: in faith and prayer may they draw closer to the Lord this Christmas time.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For those who are sad and lonely this Christmas; may we support and help them through our love, care and friendship.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For all victims and survivors of abuse: may we as a Church listen attentively to them and help them find healing and peace in their lives.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For those who are sick, especially those affected by the coronavirus; may they know the grace and healing of Jesus.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For those who are hungry and the poor in our world this Christmas; may we put our faith into action and be generous in sharing what we have with those who are less fortunate.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For peace this Christmas and an end to injustice, war and violence everywhere.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For all the faithful departed especially **Dougie Laverie, Mal Charles** and all those who have died recently: **“Eternal rest grant unto them...”**

For those who mourn the loss of loved ones this Christmas; may Christ’s message of hope in eternal life bring them comfort and consolation.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We ask Our Lady and all the Saints to join their prayers with ours as we say: **“Hail Mary...”**

God our loving Father,

As we celebrate the birth of your Son,

we ask you to hear the prayers that we offer through Jesus Christ our Lord,

Amen.

Bidding Prayers and Spiritual Communion
25th December 2020 – Christmas, Year B

Spiritual Communion

Prayer of St Alphonsus

My Jesus,
I believe that you are present in this Holy Sacrament of the altar.
I love you above all things and
I passionately desire to receive you into my soul.
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,
come spiritually into my soul
so that I may unite myself wholly to you now and forever.
Amen.