

# NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

December 25 2020

Titus 3:4-7

John 1:1-18

## ***Standing...***

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

During the penitential season of Advent,  
the *Gloria* gets dropped out of the liturgy.

It always takes us by surprise and seems a bit strange,  
to go from the Kyrie straight into the salutation and Collect.  
But then, on Christmas Eve the *Gloria* comes back.

You know what I'm referring to, right? Where the pastor intones—

**Gloria be to God on high**—just like the angel said to the shepherds  
who were abiding in the fields outside of Bethlehem.

Then the congregation pipes in with him—

**and on earth, peace, goodwill towards men...**

This mirrors the event as it originally happened.  
For as that one angel starts telling the shepherds  
that the Christ-child is born and how to find him  
and how they need to be looking for new jobs  
because Christ is the Lamb of God  
who takes away the sin of the world,  
the whole heavenly host chimes in too—  
like they cannot contain themselves.

So it was last night, as we joined our voices with the angels,  
announcing to each other that the birth of Christ has taken place, for us.

Let us rejoice in the mystery of God made man  
by singing our Exordium Hymn—

## ***Sitting...***

Last night our gospel lesson told us the facts—  
the Census, the travel, in the inn, the manger.

Today we learn more about what it all means.

Mary pondered and treasured these things in her heart  
at what the meaning of all this was.

Yet, today it is declared to us, exactly what it means.

And what it means is that we are born again.

Like Scrooge on the day he wakes from his slumbering dreams with his spirits,  
he wakes that Christmas morn and he does not know what day or time it is.

He says, "I do not know anything. I am quite a baby."

Indeed, we are all, this morning, quite like babies.

Babies born, *not of the will of the flesh or of the will of man but born of God.*

God has claimed us as His own, coming into our flesh in order to save us from our sins.  
He didn't have to.

He could have easily done something similar to what He did  
in the days of Noah—just wiping all of sinful humanity out,  
with the exception of a tiny remnant.

But He chose instead to send His Son,  
born of flesh just like us, in order to save us,  
from sin, death and the Devil.

Indeed, we are quite like a babes.

Born new from God our Father.

That is what we learn on this great Christmas day.

That we are no longer simply children of Adam,  
but we are children of God.

And because we are children, we are heirs.  
Heirs of the kingdom that He rules.

We have been adopted by grace—  
members of His household.

What better joy is there?

What better truth is there to contemplate?

Than to learn that we have God as our Father.

That He is the One who is taking care of us—watching out for us—

working all things for our good, even though it may not appear that He is.

This what St. Paul tells us in our Epistle reading, in Titus 3.

That He saved us according to His own great mercy.

How? By the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit—  
through baptism.

That's when He claimed you as His own.

Emblazoned His name upon your forehead and your heart—  
marking You as one redeemed by Christ the crucified.

You were born again from above.

A child of Your Father in Heaven.

So that, St. Paul continues, *"being justified by His grace,  
we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life."*

God adopts you so that you will be heirs—  
so that you will receive,  
everything that belongs to Him.

What belongs to Him?

Is there anything that does not?

Is there anything that is not His?

No—there is nothing under this Sun, in time, that is not His.

And there is nothing beyond in eternity  
that does not belong to Him either.

He has made you His own in order to give you all things,

and because you belong to Him,

all things are indeed yours—  
the forgiveness of sins, life eternal and everlasting salvation.

We are quite babes—born again—by grace through Jesus Christ.

So, rejoice this day with the joy that children have on Christmas morning.

That indeed, we are just babies.

Born from God,

born by grace,

so that we receive His eternal inheritance.

In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen.

***Standing...***

And now may the peace of God which passes all understanding, guard your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.