

**Sunday, December 24, 2023**

**The Nativity of the Lord – Christmas Vigil**

- 1) Isaiah 62:1-5
- 2) Acts 13:16-17, 22-25
- 3) Matthew 1:1-25  
or Matthew 1:18-25

FOCUS: Jesus is our long-awaited Savior, who came to be with us always.

On this evening, when we anticipate the birth of our Lord, the readings focus on Jesus as the fulfillment of prophecy. Jesus' birth marks the culmination of God's promises to the people of Israel and the inauguration of a new age of salvation history. Jesus promised to remain with us always as Emmanuel.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Isaiah foretells that the Lord will rejoice in his people as a bridegroom rejoices in his bride. Paul preaches to the Jews that God has fulfilled his promise to Israel by sending Jesus, a Savior descended from King David. Matthew begins his Gospel with the genealogy of Jesus, and then tells the story of how Jesus' birth came about. Mary will conceive a child who will be named Jesus, *because he will save his people from their sins.*

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

PRIEST: As we celebrate the Incarnation, we ask the Father to look with mercy on the prayers we offer.

- 1) That the Church may continue to grow in number and virtue as she carries out the mission she has been given by Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) That the Prince of Peace may reign in the hearts of all people this Christmas and in the coming year, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) That all who mourn may be comforted and all in need may be satisfied, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) That the Lord may be a constant presence in our hearts and homes this Christmas season, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) That all who have died may be welcomed into God's presence, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) (Special petition/s)

PRIEST: Merciful Father, you sent your Son to be with us and save us from our sins. We ask that you hear our prayers today, through Christ our Lord.

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