

REFLECTION: I remember asking Jesus for something special in my life on Christmas...
I remember... I remember...

Christ is Born

The Nativity of the Lord
Cycle C | December 25, 2024



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WISDOM FROM THE CELLS

This Christmas, I am thinking about my family and loved ones. After meditating on Jesus' birth and thinking back on how God has been birthing in my life, I would like to share these thoughts with my loved ones this Christmas.

To my loved ones, I meditated on the birth of Jesus and this is what I would like to tell you about how God has birthing in my life and how I see him being birthed in your life. I always pray that Jesus is in your lives. Haven't you seen and heard what Jesus has done in my life? I'm in a place where flowers don't grow yet, Jesus has given me hope, faith and love where it's a rarity. He has given me life where it doesn't seem to exist. Aren't you curious to know what he can do in yours?

When I talked to someone close to me last night she talked me about going to church. My prayers have been answered! She is finally asking for help after so many years of addiction. Thank you, Jesus.

- Orlando, a former lifer.

PENITENTIAL RITE

**Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.**
May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life.
R. Amen.

OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray:
Lord,
Let your Word be born in us and live today among us.
Let your Word become flesh among us by our listening to you and doing what you ask of us: promoting peace, truth, justice, and love.
Let people see Jesus alive among us through the love we show.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord. **R. Amen.**

LAMB OF GOD

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
grant us peace.

This is Jesus, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world. Happy are we who are called to his supper.

Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

COMMUNION

CLOSING PRAYER

Let us pray:
Lord,
As we celebrate your birth help us to spread the light that you have brought to us. Let the joy of Christmas remind us of our call to receive and share the love you have for us.

We ask this through Jesus, our Savior. **R. Amen.**



OUR FATHER

Let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Savior gave us:
**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy Kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

R. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.

SIGN OF PEACE

Jesus, you said to your apostles: "I leave you peace, my peace I give you. Look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church, and grant us the peace and unity of your kingdom where you live forever and ever. **Amen.**"

The peace of the Lord be with you always.
R. And with your spirit.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading: Isaiah 52: 7-10

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings glad tidings, announcing peace, bearing good news, announcing salvation, and saying to Zion, "Your God is King!" Hark! Your sentinels raise a cry, together they shout for joy, for they see directly, before their eyes, the LORD restoring Zion. Break out together in song, O ruins of Jerusalem! For the LORD comforts his people, he redeems Jerusalem. The LORD has bared his holy arm in the sight of all the nations; all the ends of the earth will behold the salvation of our God.

The Word of the Lord.
R. Thanks be to God.

Second Reading: Hebrews 1: 1-6

Brothers and sisters: In times past, God spoke in partial and various ways to our ancestors through the prophets; in these last days, he has spoken to us through the Son, whom he made heir of all things and through whom he created the universe, who is the refulgence of his glory, the very imprint of his being, and who sustains all things by his mighty word. When he had accomplished purification from sins, he took his seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high, as far superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say: *You are my son; this day I have begotten you?* Or again: *I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me?* And again, when he leads the firstborn into the world, he says: *Let all the angels of God worship him.*

The Word of the Lord.
R. Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 98: 1, 2-3, 3-4, 5-6

R. All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.

Sing to the LORD a new song,
for he has done wondrous deeds;
his right hand has won victory for him,
his holy arm.

R. All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.

The LORD has made his salvation known:
in the sight of the nations he has revealed his justice.

He has remembered his kindness and his faithfulness
toward the house of Israel.

R. All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.

All the ends of the earth have seen
the salvation by our God.

Sing joyfully to the LORD, all you lands;
break into song; sing praise.

R. All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.

Gospel: John 1: 1-5, 9-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race; the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came to be through him, but the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, but his own people did not accept him. But to those who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to those who believe in his name, who were born not by natural generation nor by human choice nor by a man's decision but of God. And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth.

The Gospel of the Lord.
R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

it was a cold night
samuel's breath was icing
as he walked
toward the stable
where he went every night
to feed the animals

how he wished
he had not been forced
to leave the warmth
of his house
with his three children
and his wife

bethlehem
was the only place
where he could find work
because of having
been incarcerated
he found it hard
being away from home
he felt as a stranger
in this town
especially by the way
people looked at him
at his tattoos
how he wished
he could be with his family
instead of having to work
these long hours
for a small salary

sometimes
he thought it was easier
being locked up
but he had to work
to support his wife
and children

as he worked tirelessly
he entered into
another world
to what seemed to be
his imagination at first

suddenly
there in front of him
was a stranger helping
his very pregnant wife
onto the hay
why could they not
find a place to stay
in the town?
maybe they did not
have a lot of money?

he felt sorry
for this young couple
they seemed so young
there was a weariness

there was pain
written across their faces

for a moment
samuel was glad
he had come tonight
because he wanted
to help them
so he walked over
and as he did
his heart missed a beat

when he looked
into their faces
he remembered back
when he was this young
before he had
committed his crime
when he was forced
to be away from home

the young woman
was ready to give birth
and samuel was
determined to help
this young couple

my name is samuel
i work here at this stable
this young man named
with long black hair
and intense shining eyes
offered his hand

my name is joseph
we come from nazareth

all evening we have
been going to places
to see if we could find
a place for my wife
who will soon give birth
the prices they were asking
was too much
we have so little money

the door was slammed
in our faces
over and over again

there seemed to
be something else
happening in this small cave
i could not really put
my finger on it at first
he kept on telling me
how something important
was happening
of course all fathers think
the birth of their child

is the most important event
in the world
but it is just another birth

i remembered back
to the birth of
my own son mooses
tears came to my eyes
how i missed him now
and especially
when i was locked up
for so many years
i missed the opportunities
to be with him
and watch him grow
into a young man
this humiliating job
was the only one
i could find
because of
my incarceration history
how i missed my family
right now

but i did not say anything
there was nothing
more important
at this moment
than the look on
this woman's face as
she stared into the eyes
of her new baby
a new beginning
what would be the life
of this mother and child?

i gently took
the infant from
this young woman
named miriam and
handed him to joseph
his once weary face
was transformed
into pure joy
then he handed
the small one back
into my arms

i was not expecting
what happened
something else was
taking place in this shelter
i did not know what
but i felt this even stronger
with this baby in my arms
have you thought
of a name to give this one

there was no hesitation
there was no stumbling

when they responded
his name will be jesus
mystery could hear
this name being echoed
inside of me
his name will be jesus

you have helped us samuel
so i tell you
this one in your arms
will set us free
this is the one
long awaited by our people
he continued
you are the first to be lost
in this mystery
the one who made all
has chosen not to be born
in the large house
in front of the synagogue
or be waited on
by many servants
it is dark in here
except for this small light
from the fire
but there is much light
now in the world

jesus
thank you for this hope
being born within me
you are giving me hope
that soon i would be
with my family

jesus
i am glad i could be here
on the first night
of your breaking
into our dark world

thank you for your light
when i feel again
that all is darkness
i will remember back
to this moment
when i held you
in my arms
and gave me hope
to not give up
but to struggle
to be reunited once again
with my family
thank you small one

thank you
miriam and jose
for allowing me
to be here
at this stable

