

eth us to love what is invisible. And therefore with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominations, and with all the host of the heavenly army we sing a hymn to Thy glory, evermore saying: — *Sanctus*.

Communion (Psalm 109:3)

IN THE BRIGHTNESS of the Saints, from the womb before the day star I begot Thee.

Postcommunion

GRANT to us, we beseech Thee, O Lord, that we, who rejoice in celebrating by these Mysteries the Birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, may by worthy lives, deserve to attain unto fellowship with Him: Who liveth and reigneth with Thee ...

SUCH IS THE greatness of today's Mystery, that the Church is not satisfied with only once offering up the Holy Sacrifice. The long-expected and precious Gift deserves an unusual welcome. God the Father has given his Son to us; and it is by the operation of the Holy Ghost that the grand Portent is produced: let there be, then, to the ever Blessed Three, the homage of a triple Sacrifice!

Besides, this Jesus, who is born tonight, is born thrice. He is born of the Blessed Virgin, in the stable of Bethlehem; he is born by grace, in the hearts of the Shepherds, who are the first fruits of the Christian Church; and he is born eternally from the Bosom of the Father, in the brightness of the Saints. To this triple birth, therefore, let there be the homage of a triple Sacrifice!

The first Mass honors the Birth according to the Flesh, which, like the other two, is an effusion of the Divine Light. The hour is come: the people that walked in darkness have seen a great Light; Light is risen to them that dwelt in the region of the shadow of death. Outside the holy place, where we are now assembled, there is dark Night: material Night, caused by the absence of the sun; spiritual Night, by reason of the sins of men, who either sleep in the forgetfulness of God, or wake to the commission of crime. At Bethlehem, round the Stable, and in the City, all is deep darkness; and the inhabitants, who would not find room for the Divine Babe, are sleeping heavily: will they awaken when the Angels begin to sing?

Commentary from The Liturgical Year by Dom Prosper Guéranger (1805-1875)

iter Deum cognóscimus, per hunc in invisibílium amórem rapiamur. Et ideo cum Ángelis et Archángelis, cum Thronis et Dominatió nibus, cumque omni militía cœléstis exércitus, hymnum glóriæ tuæ cánimus sine fine dicéntes: — *Sanctus*.

IN SPLENDÓRIBUS sanctórum, ex útero ante lucíferum genui te.

DA NOBIS, quæsumus, Dómine Deus noster: ut, qui Nativitátem Dómino nostri Jesu Christi mystériis nos frequentáre gaudémus: dignis conversatió nibus ad ejus mereámur pervenire consórtium: Qui tecum ...

Cover: The Adoration of the Shepherds (detail), c.1640, by the Le Nain Brothers (17th cent.)



Proper Prayers of the Mass in the Extraordinary Form

The Nativity of Our Lord

(First Mass at Midnight)

Introit (Psalm 2:7)

DÓMINUS DIXIT ad me: Fílius meus es tu, ego hódie genui te. *Ps. ibid. I.* Quare fremuérunt gentes: et pó-puli meditáti sunt inánia? *V.* Glória Patri, et Fílio, et Spirituí Sancto. Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in sœcula sœculórum. Amen.—Dóminus ...

THE LORD hath said to me: Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee. *Psalm.* Why have the Gentiles raged, and the people devised vain things? *V.* Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. — The Lord hath said ...

Collect

DEUS, QUI hanc sacratíssimam noctem veri lúminis fecisti illustratióne claréscere: da, quæsumus, ut, cujus lucis mystéria in terra cognóvimus, ejus quoque gáudiis in cœlo perfruámur: Qui tecum vivit ...

O GOD, who has made this most holy night shine forth with the splendor of the true Light: grant, we beseech Thee, that we, who have known the mysteries of His light on earth, may enjoy also His happiness in heaven: Who with Thee ...

Epistle (Titus 2: 11–15)

CARÍSSIME: Appáruit grátia Dei Salvatóris nostri ómni-bus homínibus, erúdiens nos, ut abnegántes impietátem, et sœcularia desidéria, sóbrie, et juste, et pie vivá-mus in hoc sœculo, exspec-

DEARLY BELOVED: The grace of God our Savior hath appeared to all men, instructing us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live soberly and justly and godly in this world,

looking for the blessed hope and coming of the glory of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ: who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and might cleanse to Himself a people acceptable, a pursuer of good works. These things speak and exhort: in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Gradual (Psalm 109:3, 1)

WITH THEE is the principality in the day of Thy strength: in the brightness of the Saints, from the womb before the day star I begot Thee. The Lord said to my Lord: Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool. **Alleluia, alleluia.** (Ps. 2. 7.) The Lord hath said to Me: Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee. Alleluia.

Gospel (Psalm 109:3, 1)

AT THAT TIME there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that the whole world should be enrolled. This enrolling was first made by Cyrinus, the governor of Syria. And all went to be enrolled, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem: because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary his espoused wife, who was with child. And it came to pass, that when they were there, her days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son and wrapped Him up in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger: because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same

tántes beátem spem, et adventum glóriæ magni Dei, et Salvatóris nostri Jesu Christi: qui dedit semet-ípsam pro nobis: ut nos redímeret ab omni iniquitate, et mundáret sibi pópulum acceptábilem, sectatórem bonórum óperum. Hæc lóquere, et exhortáre: in Christo Jesu Dómino nostro.

TECUM princípium in die virtútis tuæ: in splendóribus sanctorum ex útero ante luciferum genui te. Dixit Dóminus Dómino meo: Sede a dextris meis: donec ponam inimicos tuos, scabellum pedum tuorum. **Alleluia, alleluia.** ʒ. Dóminus dixit ad me: Fílius meus es tu, ego hódie genui te. Alleluia.

IN ILLO TÉMPORE: Éxiit edictum a Cæsáre Augústo, ut describerétur univérsum orbis. Hæc descriptio prima facta est a præside Sýriæ Cyríno: et ibant omnes ut profiteréntur, singuli in suam civitátem. Ascéndit autem et Joseph a Galilæa de civitáte Náza-reth, in Judæam in civitátem David, quæ vocá-tur Bèthlehem: eo quod esset de domo et familia David, ut profiterétur cum María desponsáta sibi uxóre prægnánte. Factum est autem, cum essent ibi, impléti sunt dies ut páreret. Et péperit filium suum primo génitum, et pannis eum involvit, et reclinávit eum in præsepio: quia non erat eis locus in diversório. Et pastóres erant in regióne eádem vigilátes, et custodiétes vigilas noctis

super gregem suam. Et ecce Ángelus Dómini stetit iuxta illos, et claritas Dei circumfúlsit illos, et timuérunt timóre magno. Et dixit illis Ángelus: Nolíte timére: ecce enim evangelízo vobis gáudium magnum, quod erit omni pópulo: quia natus est vobis hódie Salvátor, qui est Christus Dóminus, in civitáte David. Et hoc vobis signum: Inveniétis infántem pannis involútum, et pósitum in præsepio. Et súbito facta est cum Ángelo multitúdo militiæ cœlestis, laudántium Deum, et dicéntium: Glória in altíssimis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonæ voluntátis. — *Credo.*

Offertory (Psalm 95:13, 11)

LÆTÉNTUR cœli, et exsúltet terra ante faciém Dómino: quóniam venit.

ACCÉPTA tibi sit, Dómine, quæsumus, hodiérnæ festivitátis oblátio: ut, tua grátia largiénte, per hæc sacrosáncta commércia, in illius inveniámur forma, in quo tecum est nostra substántia: Qui tecum ...

Preface of the Nativity

VERE DIGNUM et justum est, æquum et salutáre, nos tibi semper, et ubique grátias agere: Dómine sancte, Pater omnipotens, ætérne Deus: Quia per incarnáti Verbi mystérium, nova mentis nostræ óculis lux tuæ claritátis infúlsit: ut dum visibil-

country shepherds watching and keeping the night watches over their flock. And behold an Angel of the Lord stood by them, and the brightness of God shone round about them, and they feared with a great fear. And the Angel said to them: Fear not; for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people: for this day is born to you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. And this shall be a sign unto you: you shall find the Infant wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger. And suddenly there was with the Angel a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God and saying: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will. — *Credo.*

LET THE heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad before the face of the Lord: because He cometh.

Secret

MAY OUR offering on this day's feast be acceptable to Thee, O Lord, we beseech Thee: that by Thy bounteous grace, through this sacred interchange, we may be found like unto Him, in whom our nature is united to Thee: Who with Thee ...

IT IS TRULY meet and just, right and for our salvation, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to Thee, holy Lord, Father almighty, eternal God: for through the Mystery of the Word made flesh, new radiance from Thy glory hath so shone on the eye of the soul that the recognition of our God made visible draw-