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Year A CHRISTMAS DAY

"TO THE HEIGHTS" YOUTH EDITION ALSO AVAILABLE

Sunday Mass Readings

FIRST READING:

Isaiah 52: 7-10

RESPONSORIAL PSALM:

Psalm 97 (98): 1-6

SECOND READING:

Hebrews 1:1-6

GOSPEL:

John 1:1-18

"a light that shines in the darkness,
a light that darkness could not
overpower."



Image: canva.com

Hear

Grab your Bible and look up the Gospel reading.
Don't have one? No worries, you can find this
week's readings online [here](#).

Check out [this video](#) on the readings for children.

Pray

- In the Gospel today we hear the beginning of John's Gospel - which brings us to the beginning of everything.
- What is the Holy Spirit saying to you through this piece of Scripture? How do these words resonate with you personally?
- How do you react to words like Light, Truth? Do you find it comforting to decorate your home with lights at Christmas, to light candles, to sit by a warm fire? Why is light in darkness so comforting to us?
- Where do you need the Light of the World to shine into your life at the moment? Are there any areas you are struggling with, or finding it hard to make a decision or see clearly? This Christmas Day, pray for the grace to let the Light in, and let His love and peace illuminate your heart and mind!

Talk

In today's readings we hear about John describing Jesus as Light.

Discuss the following as a family:

- What lights have we added to our home for Christmas time? What difference do they make?
- Why is Jesus called the Light of the World? How did He bring light to our world? What difference does His presence make in our world? What difference does His presence make in our home and in our family?
- Lights are no good unless we turn them on or light the flame... how can we be a light to others this Christmas time?

Family Challenge!

Spend some time as a family praying at the crib each day over Christmas: either in your own home or at your local church. What do you notice each day? Maybe focus on a different character in the crib scene each day and imagine it through their eyes. Ask Jesus to be the Light for your family now and always.

LIGHT OF THE WORLD

The Gospel for the Christmas Mass during the day is taken from the beginning of John's Gospel, but this part of John's Gospel is not an infancy narrative like those found in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Instead, John's Gospel starts at the very beginning and presents the Creation story as the framework for announcing the Incarnation. John's opening words echo the first verse in the Book of Genesis. This framework invites us to view Jesus' birth from God's perspective. Each of the Gospels makes clear that Jesus' birth was the result of God's initiative. John's Gospel, however, emphasizes that Jesus' birth was the divine intention from the moment of Creation.

As we observe in today's reading, the Gospel of John includes highly philosophical and theological language. One example that particularly stands out in this Gospel is John's repeated references to "the Word" in the opening verse. This expression (logos in the Greek) borrows from a concept found in both Jewish and Greek thought. Jews used this phrase to describe God's action in the Creation story, for example, and in the Wisdom literature. In Greek thought, the logos was understood as an intermediary between God and humanity. John and others in the early Church adopted this language to describe God's incarnation in Jesus. As the term was used to express the Trinitarian faith of Christians, the Word came to be equated with the Second Person of the Trinity.

In this prologue to the Gospel of John, we also hear the main themes that will be developed in his Gospel. These are often presented as dualities: light and dark, truth and falsehood, life and death, and belief and unbelief. We also hear in this prologue a unique aspect of John's Gospel, the theme of testimony. John the Baptist was sent by God to testify to Jesus, the light. Others in this Gospel will also offer testimony about Jesus. The reader is invited to accept this testimony, which bears witnesses to Jesus, the Son of God. But even more directly, Jesus' action and words will testify to Jesus' identity as God's Incarnate Word.

Thinking about Jesus' birth in these theological and cosmological terms is particularly appropriate as we celebrate the Feast of Christmas in the darkness of winter. At this time, nature itself seems to remind us of the darkness of sin. Into this darkness, in the midst of our sinfulness, God comes to dwell among us. John's Gospel reminds us that through the Incarnation, God saves us from the darkness of sin and makes us his children.

Adapted from ***Loyola Press Sunday Connection***



The world waits for the miracle, the heart longs for a little bit of hope
Lauren Daigle

THE LIGHT IS ALWAYS THERE

Isn't there something so incredibly comforting about a warm fire on a cold night, candles lighting up the darkness: there's something almost mesmerising about the flickering flame. Light draws us in - it's hard to take our eyes off of it. It's incredible to think that one tiny candle flame has the ability to dispel the darkness around it. So long as there is one light, darkness will never prevail. John presents Jesus in today's Gospel as the Light of the World: "the light that shines in the dark, a light that darkness could not overpower."

We celebrate Christmas in the depths of winter - all around us is darkness, decay, bareness.... all waiting for the newness of Spring. We decorate with Christmas lights (some more than others looking at gardens and houses!) but there's something so beautiful and heart-warming to see twinkling lights on a dark night.

Jesus brought light to a darkened world - into a tiny stable on a dark night. That one moment, that one burst of light in a manger, that ray of hope, changed the entire world. Nothing has been the same since or ever will be.

No matter what darkness we face, or difficulty we can't see past: the Light is always there, we just have to welcome Him in. Let the light in this Christmas. Feel the warmth of Jesus' embrace. Let Him love you and fill your heart with His peace.



He came to get messy
(The Skit Guys)

Light of the World (Lauren Daigle)

To the Heights will return in January



Family Prayer

Dear Jesus, we thank you for the gift of the Incarnation, of your presence with us. Emmanuel, Light of the World, be present in our homes, this day and every day. Teach us to love as you love, to serve as you serve, to forgive as you forgive. Amen

EVENTS

New Year's Eve at the Foyer of Charity, Dunmore East X91FC65. December 31st: Adoration from 8 - 10.45, Holy Mass at 11pm, followed by nibbles and mulled wine by the fire!

Cherished Retreat: "Discovering my Identity as a Woman of God". Catholic Women's Ministry Retreat: Glencomeragh House, Kilsheelan: Jan 20th - 22nd 2023. Led by the Dominican Sisters of St Cecilia (Limerick). Mass, Adoration, rosary, confession, healing service, talks, testimonies, creative workshops, fellowship, tea and chats! Full Board accommodation €210 pps. For more info contact Shauna (087) 1378364. To book email info@holymission.ie

Men's Prayer Group, St Saviour's Church, Bridge Street, Waterford City. Every Wednesday evening, starts at 7pm: Exposition, Benediction, Faith Formation and Group Sharing. Led by the Servant Priests of the Home of the Mother

CHECK IT OUT: CHRISTMAS VIDEOS TO WATCH!



- Campa Mhuire Mháthair Christmas Special 2021
- The Light of Hope Carol Service from Holy Family Mission 2020
- Paul Harvey - the Christmas Story: the Man and the Birds
- Simple Christmas - Inspirational Video
- He Came - A Christmas Spoken Word
- **He came to get messy** - (The Skit Guys)
- JOY Story - ODB Films



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- Faith@Home Newsletter (faithathome@waterfordlismore.ie)
- "To the Heights" Youth Newsletter (youthministry@waterfordlismore.ie)
- Check it Out! Diocesan Events Bulletin (events@waterfordlismore.ie)

WEEKLY
WEEKLY
FORTNIGHTLY





Let's dive in!

FAITH

@Home

Activities for Children!

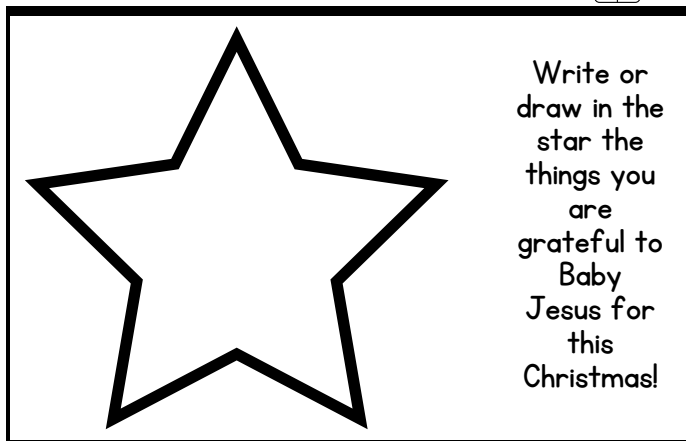
www.waterforddismore.ie



Let's Learn!

Check out this video from Kids Catholic Media on this Sunday's readings.

How many presents can you find on this page?



Write or draw in the star the things you are grateful to Baby Jesus for this Christmas!

Puzzle



Can you find these words from the Gospel in the wordsearch?

D	L	P	N	S	Z	W	E
Y	S	O	Y	R	N	C	U
P	F	W	A	E	O	L	R
W	M	E	D	U	E	B	T
G	O	R	L	I	G	H	T
J	O	R	N	A	M	U	H
W	W	D	L	J	Q	H	L
C	H	I	L	D	R	E	N

born
children
God
human
Light
power
true
Word
world



Celebrate the Seasons!

What colour is the priest's chasuble today?
Colour it in!

Tick the box for the correct liturgical season!

Advent ☐ Christmas ☐ Lent ☐
Easter ☐ Ordinary Time ☐



My Saint Friend



St Stephen
26 December



Let's Sing!

It's
Christmastime
(Yancy &
Little Praise
Party)



Let's PRAY



Dear Jesus, Happy Birthday!
Help me love you more and more
every day!



Amen



Let's act!



Spend a few minutes every day praying at the crib in your home or in the church, thanking Jesus for all the blessings in your family, and for loving you so much that He became a tiny baby to show His love.



The Word was made flesh, he lived among us

Word of God



Colour the
image of
Jesus, Mary
and Joseph



Check out the following video resources for Christmas!



Christmas Playlists



Click the titles or scan the QR Code!



CHRISTMAS CAROLS

- Make Room - Casting Crowns
- Somewhere in your silent night - Casting Crowns
- Little Drummer Boy/Peace on Earth - Crosby & Bowie
- Adore - Chris Tomlin
- Noel - Chris Tomlin / Lauren Daigle
- Joseph's Lullaby - Mercy Me
- Light of the World - Lauren Daigle
- When Love was born - Mark Schultz
- God made Low - Sovereign Grace
- I heard the bells on Christmas Day - Casting Crowns
- Christmas Day - Chris Tomlin & We the Kingdom
- It came upon a Midnight Clear - Norah Jones



- Hallelujah, the Light has Come - Barlowgirl
- Joy (Unspeakable Joy) - Chris Tomlin
- Night of Silence / Silent Night
- When I think upon Christmas - Hillsong
- O Holy Night - Josh Groban
- What Child is This? - Chris Tomlin
- The Little Drummer Boy - For King & Country
- Silent Night - Andrei Boccelli
- His Name Shall Be - Matt Redman
- The First Noel (Holy is the Lord) - Hillsong
- Peace has come - Hillsong
- Away in a Manger - Pentatonix
- Newborn - Mercy Me

CHRISTMAS THOUGHTS

- The Light of Hope Carol Service from Holy Family Mission 2020
- Paul Harvey - the Christmas Story: the Man and the Birds
- The Role of Duty in "It's a Wonderful Life" (Fr Mike Schmitz)
- Simple Christmas - Inspirational Video
- The Unpleasant Ancestors of Christmas (Fr Mike Schmitz)
- Christmas is a Season: Jackie and Bobby Angel
- The Real Meaning of Christmas: Jackie and Bobby Angel



- JOY Story
- He Came
- He Came - A Christmas Spoken Word
- Christmas: A Time for Hope (Fr Mike)
- A Fr Mike Christmas (Ascension Presents)

FOR THE KIDS!



- Campa Mhuire Mháthair Christmas Special 2021
- Born is the King - Hillsong
- Catholic Kids Media: The Nativity
- Christmas is Jesus
- Christmas Songs for Kids



- Away in a Manger
- Starlight - Monica Scott
- Jump for Joy
- Oh what a Glorious Night - Sidewalk Prophets
- The Star (Nativity Scene)
- Oh what a special night!



Pray this prayer service together, or if that's not possible, pray it on your own for your family's intentions.



Family Prayer Service

"THE FAMILY THAT
PRAYS TOGETHER,
STAYS TOGETHER"
FR PEYTON



BEGIN BY LIGHTING A CANDLE

(or each member of your family can light one candle each)

OPENING PRAYER:

Father God, we thank You for the gift of our family, for each individual here (*and for those not here with us*). We thank You that You have given us each other, so that together we can grow and develop into the best versions of ourselves. We acknowledge that we have not always loved each other as we should, or treated each other with respect and love. Lord God, we need You in the heart of our family, because we are weak and frail, and need Your love to sustain us and unite us. Show us how to love each other, and through our family's love, be an example to those around us, that they may see in us a spark of Your Divine Love.

Holy Family of Nazareth, Jesus, Mary and Joseph - pray for us!



SCRIPTURE

Read the following passage of Scripture aloud and take some time to reflect in silence on it.

- Where can you see this love evident in your family?
- Where is it lacking?
- Can you put your name in instead of "love" in each sentence, honestly?
- What are you personally challenged by?



Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.

1 Corinthians 13: 4 - 8

TAKE A FEW MINUTES TO SHARE (OR JOURNAL) YOUR THOUGHTS.

OUR FAMILY PRAYERS:

Allow some time for each member of the family to pray out loud for any intentions they have.

At the end, pray a Hail Mary (or a decade of the rosary) together for all these intentions, entrusting them to Our Lady.



THE BLESSING - KARI JOBE



HOLY FAMILY - DANIELLE ROSE



THE FAMILY PRAYER SONG - MARANATHA

- ASCEND YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY (DIOCESE OF WATERFORD & LISMORE) -

WHY NOT START A NEW NEW YEAR'S TRADITION?



Blessings Jar

If you don't have a jar, get a notebook and write your blessings in that instead!

WHAT IS A BLESSING JAR?

Blessings jars are a practical and fun way to keep a record of the things that you're thankful for on a daily basis. Whenever you recognize something that is a "blessing" in your life throughout the year, just write it on a piece of paper, fold it up, and stick it in the Blessing Jar. It might be as simple as a good chat with a friend, a hug, a gift, having the ability to play sports, having food on your table....

You can do this alone, or with your family, or even your youth group. Then decide how often you want to empty out the jar out to count your blessings: maybe on New Year's Eve, each month, on a special Feastday, or, if you're having an especially tough day, you may just want to empty out the contents of the blessings jar right then and be reminded of God how is blessing you each and every day! It will be a great reminder of God's faithfulness... in times of joy as well as in times of struggle.



HOW TO MAKE A BLESSING JAR

- Choose a large jar (or use a notebook or box if you can't source a jar)
- Stick the Blessings Label on the jar.
- Choose a scripture passage if you'd like (see next page for ideas), punch one end and tie to your jar with string.
- Decorate the jar with stickers, washi tape, ribbon, string - whatever way you like! (*Google Blessing Jars and you'll get lots of ideas!*)
- Write your first blessings idea on a small note card, fold it and put it in the jar.
- Make sure you have paper and pen near the jar to make the process easier each time you see a blessing you want to record!
- Enjoy the process and choose to be thankful every single day
- Repeat as often as you like



"MAY HIS FAVOUR BE UPON YOU AND A THOUSAND GENERATIONS,

AND YOUR FAMILY AND YOUR CHILDREN, AND THEIR CHILDREN, AND THEIR CHILDREN" THE BLESSING - KARI JOBE

- ASCEND YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY (DIOCESE OF WATERFORD & LISMORE) -

BLESSING JAR SUGGESTIONS FOR LABELS



or create your own!

And my God will supply
every need of yours
according to his riches in
glory in Christ Jesus.
Philippians 4:19

Every good gift and every perfect
gift is from above, coming down
from the Father of lights with
whom there is no variation or
shadow due to change.
James 1:17

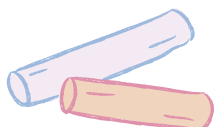
The Lord bless you and
keep you; the Lord make his
face to shine upon you and
be gracious to you; the Lord
lift up his countenance upon
you and give you peace.
Numbers 6:24-26

Fear not, for I am with you; be
not dismayed, for I am your
God; I will strengthen you, I will
help you, I will uphold you with
my righteous right hand.
Isaiah 41:10

And from his fullness we
have all received, grace
upon grace.
John 1:16

Blessed be the God and Father
of our Lord Jesus Christ, who
has blessed us in Christ with
every spiritual blessing in the
heavenly places,
Ephesians 1:3

THE TRADITION OF CHALKING THE DOORS ON THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY



PRIEST'S PRAYER TO BLESS THE CHALK

Priest: Our help is in the name of The Lord. **All: Who made heaven and earth.**

Priest: The Lord be with you. **All: And with your spirit.**

Bless, + O Lord God, this creature chalk to render it helpful to men. Grant that they who use it in faith and with it inscribe upon the entrance of their homes the names of thy saints, Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar, may through their merits and intercession enjoy health of body and protection of soul. Through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.



The chalk is sprinkled with holy water.

Using the blessed chalk (which many parishes will bless and make available) mark the lintel of your front door as follows:

20 + C + M + B + 23 saying:

The three Wise Men, Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar followed the star of God's Son who became human 2023 years ago.

May Christ bless our home and remain with us throughout the new year. Amen.

Then say the following prayer:

Visit, O Blessed Lord, this home with the gladness of your presence.

Bless all who live or visit here with the gift of your love; and grant that we may manifest your love to each other and to all whose lives we touch. May we grow in grace and in the knowledge and love of you; guide, comfort, and strengthen us in peace, O Jesus Christ, now and for ever. Amen.

