

Cycle B Christmas
Monday December 25th, 2017

On behalf of the entire St. Antoninus faculty, staff, and volunteers; we would like to wish each and every one of you and your families a very blessed and peaceful Christmas Season.

The annual celebration of the Christmas Season gives us the opportunity to once more reflect on the birth of Jesus Christ, the savior of the world. The arrangement of the readings from the Bible at the Masses of Christmas, especially the **Gospel Readings**, gives us much to ponder.

At the **vigil** Mass we hear from the beginning of the Gospel of Matthew. The gospel begins with, “**The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.**” The purpose of this opening line and all of the Gospel of Matthew shows that Jesus was born in the context of human history and is the fulfillment of the Jewish Law and all of the prophets of the Old Testament. The passage gives us 42 generations of people who make up the lineage of Jesus Christ. This is not a mere list of names. Rather, all had a significant influence in the life of faith from Abraham to the time of Jesus. Some were quite virtuous while some were quite sinful. Yet, all things worked together for the glory of God.

During Mass at **night** we hear from the Gospel of Luke. This passage gives us the account of Joseph and Mary going from Nazareth to Bethlehem for the census. Luke tells us since there was no room for them in the inn; Jesus was born and laid in a manger. A manger is actually a feeding trough for animals. Jesus was born into absolute physical poverty. And, during Jesus entire time on earth He lived in physical poverty. However, He was rich in what mattered to **God the Father**. The details that Luke gives us about what was happening during the birth of Jesus and during His time on earth; reminds us again that Jesus was born in the context of human history and He came to redeem all people.

The Christmas Mass at **dawn** continues the birth narrative of Luke. The focus shifts to the shepherds. **After having seen and heard the message of the angel of the Lord; and the multitude of the heavenly hosts**, the shepherds went in haste and found Mary and Joseph and the Infant lying in the manger. The shepherds, **“made know the message that had been told them about this child. All who heard it were amazed.”** Mary, our Blessed Mother, **“kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart.”** The shepherds in their own way went forth to share the Good News, **“that a savior has been born...who is Christ and Lord.”**
“The shepherds returned glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen.”

The shepherds for their part give us **two very important duties** as disciples of Jesus Christ. **One**, they went and told others the Good News of God's action in the world. **Secondly** they glorified and praised God. **So**, the Christmas passages from the Gospels of **Matthew** and **Luke** tell us what happened.

The Gospel reading for Christmas Mass during the **Day** comes from the beginning of John's Gospel. John's Gospel is different in that; instead of telling us what happened, John tells us the deeper meaning of Jesus coming into the world. John opens with: "**In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.**" Here we are being taken back to Genesis, "**In the beginning.**" A little later John writes, "**And the Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us.**" The meaning here from St. John is that Jesus Christ is fully divine and that He has existed for all eternity and that **(He)the Word** has taken on human flesh and walked as one of us.

The annual celebration of the Christmas Season gives us the opportunity to once more reflect on the birth of Jesus Christ, the savior of the world. History has told us how the birth of Jesus Christ happened. **What does the birth of Jesus mean for each one of us, and in fact the whole world?**