

## BULLETIN CHRISTMAS DECEMBER 25, 2016

### ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. Merry Christmas! Have a wonderful holiday season.
2. Christmas Mass, Christmas Day, Holy Rosary, 10:00 AM
3. Saint Theresa Christmas Eve Mass, 4:00 PM.
4. Saint Peter the Fisherman, Thursday, Dec 22, 2016 11:30 AM

### HOMILY: Eyes of a Shepherd

I wonder what it would be like to interview a shepherd from around the time when Jesus was born. I think it would go something like this:

**Father Scott:** God first announced the birth of his son to shepherds. Although shepherds are viewed warmly today, they were not well regarded during the times of Jesus. Actually, they were the last people you would expect God to take notice of. Why?

**Father Scott:** To answer some questions about shepherding, let's step back in time to speak with one of the Shepherds who was at the manger. **N**, why are you the last person God would use to announce the birth of his Son?

**Isaac:** Fr. Scott, some Jews think I am a religious outcast. Jewish law states that I am unclean because I do not attend all the feast and Holy Days. It is difficult to attend religious celebrations because I am always in the fields shepherding my sheep towards food and water. At night, I must sleep in their pen to protect them from theft and animal attack. For this, I'm often dirty and I don't smell too good, thus most people tend to give me a wide birth.

**Father Scott:** Would you also consider yourself a social outcast?

**Isaac:** Unfortunately, I would have to say yes. People are suspicious of me because I am dirty and always on the move in search of new pastures for my sheep. I'm viewed as a gypsy. When something comes up missing, like a farmers chicken, shepherds are often the first to be blamed.

**Father Scott:** Wow, and God decided you were the first to hear about the birth of our Savior, Jesus? A religious and social outcast?

**Isaac:** That is exactly what I thought. I hardly have time to pray and read the Hebrew Scriptures. Several people have told me that God does not care for me and that I should not set foot in the synagogue. When that angel appeared to me I thought I was in big trouble. I was absolutely terrified.

**Father Scott:** If I remember correctly, the angel said, “Don’t be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is the Christ, the Lord.”

**Isaac:** Right, it was not bad news. The angel did not condemn me for missing Passover last year. Although I was terrified at first, I became elated because the angel mentioned a fellow shepherd, David. I also felt honored that an Angel of God would tell me this important message about our Savior.

**Father Scott:** So what did you do?

**Isaac:** I did something out of the norm: I abandoned my flock. I was so happy to hear about the Christ Child I immediately raced off to the manger in Bethlehem. And after seeing the baby, I spread the word about the child’s birth. I became a living birth announcement.

**Father Scott:** The Bible says, “And all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.” Well, I bet they were amazed! This was not the kind of information that a shepherd is normally privy.

**Isaac:** That is correct Fr. Scott. But I believe God chose me, a shepherd, for a good reason. If God had chosen anyone in power, Caesar or Herod, they would have tried to turn this miraculous event into a money making scheme. As shepherds, we have absolutely nothing to gain and certainly nothing to lose. I believe God knew we were empty vessels, waiting to be filled with His joy.

**Father Scott:** Fantastic. You shepherds are definitely proof that God’s message is for everyone, from the highest to the lowest, from the faithful churchgoer, to the seeker, to the skeptic. Do you have any other parting thoughts why God chose you first to know about the Savior’s birth?

**Isaac:** I believe shepherds were the only ones listening at the time. Personally, I was alone in the field, I was not distracted, I was not worrying about shopping or finalizing travel plans. So when God called, I heard.

**Father Scott:** Thank you very much for your insight into that special night when our Savior was born. God definitely knew what He was doing when he chose shepherds to be the first to hear of his Son's birth. Happy shepherding.

## **READINGS**

### **The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)**

#### **Mass during the Night**

#### **Lectionary: 14**

#### **Reading 1**

#### **[IS 9:1-6](#)**

The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom  
a light has shone.  
You have brought them abundant joy  
and great rejoicing,  
as they rejoice before you as at the harvest,  
as people make merry when dividing spoils.  
For the yoke that burdened them,  
the pole on their shoulder,  
and the rod of their taskmaster  
you have smashed, as on the day of Midian.  
For every boot that tramped in battle,  
every cloak rolled in blood,  
will be burned as fuel for flames.  
For a child is born to us, a son is given us;  
upon his shoulder dominion rests.  
They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero,  
Father-Forever, Prince of Peace.  
His dominion is vast  
and forever peaceful,  
from David's throne, and over his kingdom,

which he confirms and sustains  
by judgment and justice,  
both now and forever.  
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this!

### **Responsorial Psalm**

**[PS 96: 1-2, 2-3, 11-12, 13](#)**

**R. (Lk 2:11) Today is born our Savior, Christ the Lord.**

Sing to the LORD a new song;  
sing to the LORD, all you lands.  
Sing to the LORD; bless his name.

**R. Today is born our Savior, Christ the Lord.**

Announce his salvation, day after day.  
Tell his glory among the nations;  
among all peoples, his wondrous deeds.

**R. Today is born our Savior, Christ the Lord.**

Let the heavens be glad and the earth rejoice;  
let the sea and what fills it resound;  
let the plains be joyful and all that is in them!  
Then shall all the trees of the forest exult.

**R. Today is born our Savior, Christ the Lord.**

They shall exult before the LORD, for he comes;  
for he comes to rule the earth.  
He shall rule the world with justice  
and the peoples with his constancy.

**R. Today is born our Savior, Christ the Lord.**

### **Reading 2**

**[TI 2:11-14](#)**

Beloved:

The grace of God has appeared, saving all  
and training us to reject godless ways and worldly desires  
and to live temperately, justly, and devoutly in this age,  
as we await the blessed hope,  
the appearance of the glory of our great God

and savior Jesus Christ,  
who gave himself for us to deliver us from all lawlessness  
and to cleanse for himself a people as his own,  
eager to do what is good.

### **Alleluia**

#### **[LK 2:10-11](#)**

**R. Alleluia, alleluia.**

I proclaim to you good news of great joy:  
today a Savior is born for us,  
Christ the Lord.

**R. Alleluia, alleluia.**

### **Gospel**

#### **[LK 2:1-14](#)**

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus  
that the whole world should be enrolled.

This was the first enrollment,  
when Quirinius was governor of Syria.

So all went to be enrolled, each to his own town.

And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth  
to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem,  
because he was of the house and family of David,  
to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

While they were there,

the time came for her to have her child,  
and she gave birth to her firstborn son.

She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger,  
because there was no room for them in the inn.

Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields  
and keeping the night watch over their flock.

The angel of the Lord appeared to them  
and the glory of the Lord shone around them,  
and they were struck with great fear.

The angel said to them,

“Do not be afraid;

for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy  
that will be for all the people.

For today in the city of David  
a savior has been born for you who is Christ and Lord.  
And this will be a sign for you:  
you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes  
and lying in a manger.”  
And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel,  
praising God and saying:  
“Glory to God in the highest  
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

### INTERCESSIONS

As we give thanks for the arrival of the light of the world in the birth of Jesus, let us ask for the Lord’s grace in our lives.

Christ, you decided to show your merciful love through your holy shepherds, let your mercy always reach us through them, we pray to the Lord.

You taught your flock through the prudence and love of your saints, grant us continual growth in holiness under the direction of our pastors, we pray to the Lord.

We pray for all children: that they may be as loved by their mothers and families as Jesus was by his mother, Mary, we pray to the Lord.

For those who have died: That the Lord will welcome into the fullness of life all those who call upon his name, we pray to the Lord.

In Silence let us now add our own intentions for our community and for the world.....We pray to the Lord.

Loving God, you revealed your mercy by sending us your Son. Hear our prayers and answer them in your great love and mercy. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord