

“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, for a child is born to us, a son is given us...” Words from our first reading this evening from the 9th chapter of the prophet Isaiah – sisters and brothers, may the Lord give to you his peace and his joy.

As a Boy Scout growing up, I had the opportunity to go on a 72-mile hiking trek at Philmont Scout Ranch. Covering over 140,000 acres of rugged mountain wilderness in New Mexico and offering numerous outdoor activities and programs, Philmont is perhaps *the* premier destination place for scouts. Actually, members from our troop here at Queen of Heaven were supposed to go this past summer but forest fires there unfortunately prevented them from embarking on their trip. One of my most memorable experiences from my time there was gold mining. There’s about \$14 million dollars’ worth of gold in the Aztec Ponil and Cyphers Mines in the mountain ranges there. The only problem is that it would cost millions more to excavate it, so the operations had ceased at the turn of the 19th century. But we had the chance to get a tour of the gold mines and see the tools and methods used by the miners in the days of old. As our tour progressed along and we were a good way into the mine itself, our tour guide went on to explain what the miners would have to do in the event of a collapse. Suddenly and without warning, we heard a big bang and all the lights went out. They were simulating for us a mining disaster and our crew was stuck scrambling around in the dark without flashlights or modern technology to help us. Fighting back confusion and fear, we tried remembering what our guide told us just moments before and began reaching around in the darkness, uncertain of the way out. After what seemed like forever, our guide stepped in, shouted out commands, helped us to find each other, and then with our right hands against the wall of the mining shaft and the other hands on the shoulder of the person in front of us, we proceeded slowly along the corridor in a single file line following the lead of our guide who at last brought us safely out of the cave. That was an exhilarating experience I’ll always remember - talk about bringing history to life! Although we were never in any real danger, I have to admit that without our guide we were lost. For us, he was the light that shone in the darkness leading us safely to the light of day and rescuing us from our predicament.

Despite the sun forever shining upon our earth, there are many moments when we find ourselves in darkness. The darkness of night, of a cloudy day, of a room with no windows, or even of a cave that has collapsed. In these cases, we need something more immediately accessible than the sun shining millions of miles away... we need something close at hand to illuminate these dark corners of the world. While in many

cases something like a flashlight or an iPhone or a car's headlights, or the lights of our houses does the trick... it should be mentioned that some of this darkness – most of this darkness – it cannot be dispelled by lightbulbs. The darkness of sin and struggle and temptation and depression and poverty and disease and addiction and war and abuse and neglect and family strife and meaninglessness... we all know something of these struggles; we all know the darkness – we need something or someone close at hand to bring light to these dark corners of our world. I suppose it's not your traditional Christmas metaphor, but we need a tour guide to help us out of the darkness of our situation and bring us back to the light of day. It's something that we take for granted, but no other religion believes in a God who has come and dwelt among his people. God is no stranger, God hasn't abandoned us but is Emmanuel, literally 'God-with-us'. Just as the sun's rays cannot penetrate the dark cave walls of the mines we are trapped in, we don't need a God who is out there; we need a God close at hand. Enter Jesus Christ the Savior, the light of the world, the answer to the prayer of every human heart.

The prophet Isaiah today proclaims: "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, for a child is born to us, a son is given us..." Our second reading goes on to describe the glory of our God and savior when he appeared, the same glorious light that shone around the shepherds as they listened to the angels' good news of Jesus' coming.

All throughout the season of Advent we've been lighting more and more candles, signifying the coming of the light of Christ more and more fully into the world. Now that it is Christmas, we put up lights on our trees and decorate our houses with strands and strands of lights. Certainly they look nice, but we call them Christmas lights as opposed to any other kind of light because ultimately they are meant to be a reflection of the light of Christ dispelling the darkness of our own lives. I hope that everyone has witnessed Christ's light for themselves in the context of our own lives, and I hope that each of us has experienced the presence of Jesus our savior, who has not abandoned us but came into our very struggles to lead us to safety, whether it was through an experience of prayer or the compassion of a family member or good friend, or even if it was simply the light of Christ shining in a dark gold mine far away in the person of a tour guide that we'll probably never meet again. As we commemorate the light of Christ this Christmas day, we give thanks to God for the glory his radiant light, and we ask that we in turn can be bearers of the Body of Christ in this Eucharist we receive, to bring his light to all the world.

“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. The true light, which enlightens everyone, has come into the world.” Words from our Gospel today from the 1st chapter of the Gospel according to St. John – sisters and brothers, may the Lord give to you his peace and his joy.

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houses does the trick... it should be mentioned that some of this darkness – most of this darkness – it cannot be dispelled by lightbulbs. The darkness of sin and struggle and temptation and depression and poverty and disease and addiction and war and abuse and neglect and family strife and meaninglessness... we all know something of these struggles; we all know the darkness – we need something or someone close at hand to bring light to these dark corners of our world. I suppose it's not your traditional Christmas metaphor, but we need a tour guide to help us out of the darkness of our situation and bring us back to the light of day. It's something that we take for granted, but no other religion believes in a God who has come and dwelt among his people. God is no stranger, God hasn't abandoned us but is Emmanuel, literally 'God-with-us'. Just as the sun's rays cannot penetrate the dark cave walls of the mines we are trapped in, we don't need a God who is out there; we need a God close as hand. Enter Jesus Christ the Savior, the light of the world, the answer to the prayer of every human heart.

The evangelist St. John today proclaims: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. The true light, which enlightens everyone, has come into the world." All throughout the season of Advent we've been lighting more and more candles, signifying the coming of the light of Christ more and more fully into the world. Now that it is Christmas, we put up lights on our trees and decorate our houses with strands and strands of lights. Certainly they look nice, but we call them Christmas lights as opposed to any other kind of light because ultimately they are meant to be a reflection of the light of Christ dispelling the darkness of our own lives. I hope that everyone has witnessed Christ's light for themselves in the context of our own lives, and I hope that each of us has experienced the presence of Jesus our savior, who has not abandoned us but came into our very struggles to lead us to safety, whether it was through an experience of prayer or the compassion of a family member or good friend, or even if it was simply the light of Christ shining in a dark gold mine far away in the person of a tour guide that we'll probably never meet again. As we commemorate the light of Christ this Christmas day, we give thanks to God for the glory his radiant light, and we ask that we in turn can be bearers of the Body of Christ in this Eucharist we receive, to bring his light to all the world.

**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."

The Nativity of the Lord – Christmas - Mass During the Day

Lectionary: 16

Reading 1 [IS 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.

Responsorial Psalm [PS 98:1, 2-3, 3-4, 5-6.](#)

R.(3c) **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.**

Sing praise to the LORD with the harp,
with the harp and melodious song.
With trumpets and the sound of the horn
sing joyfully before the King, the LORD.

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

Reading 2 [HEB 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.

Alleluia

R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**

A holy day has dawned upon us.
Come, you nations, and adore the Lord.
For today a great light has come upon the earth.

R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**

Gospel [JN 1:1-18](#)

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.
A man named John was sent from God.
He came for testimony, to testify to the light,
so that all might believe through him.
He was not the light, but came to testify to the light.
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.
John testified to him and cried out, saying,

"This was he of whom I said,
"The one who is coming after me ranks ahead of me
because he existed before me."
From his fullness we have all received,
grace in place of grace,
because while the law was given through Moses,
grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.
No one has ever seen God.
The only Son, God, who is at the Father's side,
has revealed him.