

Faith in Five – Adults
Solemnity of the Nativity of our Lord



1. Throughout Advent, the Church longed for the coming of our Savior. On December 25th, she celebrates His birth with unrestrained joy. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14)." The Son of God became man to give us a share in that divine life which is eternally His in the Blessed Trinity. The Nativity –comes from the Latin, to be born. "Nativity" here means, not just the birth of any given person, but the birth of the Son of God. He is Christ the Lord! Christ, true man and true God!

Christmas is the incarnation of God, a celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the Son of God who came to redeem all mankind and call them to himself. On that day, God sent his Son to become a man on earth in order that one day he would become the payment for the sins of the world, past, present, and future. Christmas is a day of remembrance and worship. God's word was fulfilled, that the Savior was born.

2. Jesus was born in a humble stable, into a poor family. Simple shepherds were the first witnesses to this event. In this poverty heaven's glory was made manifest. The Church never tires of singing the glory of this night:

The Virgin today brings into the world the Eternal
And the earth offers a cave to the Inaccessible.
The angels and shepherds praise him
And the magi advance with the star,
For you are born for us,
Little Child, God eternal! (CCC 525, 526)



To become a child in relation to God is the condition for entering the kingdom. For this, we must humble ourselves and become little. Even more: to become "children of God" we must be "born from above" or "born of God". Only when Christ is formed in us will the mystery of Christmas be fulfilled in us.

(Nativity, by Jean-Baptiste Marie Pierre - Google)

3. The USCCB explains, Christmas is one of the most important days of the Church year, second only to Easter itself. Celebrating the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is the culmination of the mystery of the incarnation, the feast of God becoming flesh. Every Eucharist is like Christmas where the bread and wine are transformed into His flesh, His Body and Blood, and, in a sense, He is born anew on the altar.

The liturgical season of Christmas begins with the vigil Masses on Christmas Eve and concludes on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. During this season, we celebrate the birth of Christ into our world and into our hearts and reflect on the gift of salvation that is

born with him... including the fact that he was born to die for us.

4. **Christmas is a holy day of obligation.** In the domestic church it is best observed by attendance at Midnight Mass, "an event of major liturgical significance" (Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy, #111). If that is not possible, the family may prepare for the feast by praying the Office of Readings before the crib on Christmas Eve. The crib and its Infant-occupant will provide daily food for meditation on the simplicity and poverty, the humility and obedience of our Savior.
5. For the Eucharistic Liturgy, the Church is exultant in her finest vestments of white or gold vestments, making use of incense, as well as extra flowers and candles to underscore the festal observance of the Lord's Nativity. White vestments reappear in our churches as a sign of joy. The Gloria – that Christmas hymn of the angels – is sung once again. With uncontainable joy the faithful raise their voices in numerous carols; and with humble gratitude, the faithful all are to genuflect or kneel during the Creed at the words relative to this central mystery of Christian faith, "and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary and became man." This helps us keep our hearts and minds focused on what the feast is all about.

There are four different Masses on Christmas – the Vigil Mass, Masses at Midnight, dawn and during the day – each with its own unique prayers and readings. The message of all the Readings is the same: 'Today is born for us a Savior, God-with-us, the Light that the darkness cannot overcome.' Only at the Midnight Mass, however, will the faithful hear chanted the Proclamation of the Birth of Our Savior.

6. According to the Directory on Popular Piety and Liturgy, the events surrounding Christ's birth draw out of us the spirit of simplicity and poverty, humility and trust in God.
 - a. God's greatest gift expressing His infinite love for us, who "so loved the world that he gave his only Son" (John 3:16)
 - b. God's desire to unite Himself with us: he Son of God "who" was rich but became poor for your sake, to make you rich out of your poverty" (2 Cor 8, 9)
 - c. Every human life is precious and has meaning: the Word of life came amongst men and was made visible through his birth of the Virgin Mary (1 John 1, 2)
 - d. God's grace of Messianic joy and peace, through the Prince of peace (Isaiah 9:50) and sending "peace on earth to men of good will" (Lk 2:14).

In gratitude for the Christ child, may we keep Christmas holy!

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