



*Happy New Year*



It is fitting that on this day when we note the start of a New Year, we celebrate an entirely new calendar-shattering, calendar-shaping, event in human history. We celebrate the extraordinary role that a young woman in Galilee played in God's plan for the human race.

Mary of Galilee was a teenager in a small village of perhaps a few hundred families. Yet today that teenager is especially venerated by the Church.

The Greek word for this day describes Mary as 'Theo-tokos' – God-Bearer.

It is a way for the Church to say that the One whom Mary bore in her womb was no mere prophet or guru or wonder-worker, but EMMANU-EL – God with us, God embodied, God enfleshed. Hence: Theotokos, Godbearer.

But, in the Western Church, the title 'Mother of God' was used to convey the same truth, and I prefer it. It is less clinical, more relational, less instrumental, more personal – in short, it is maternal. As soon as one proclaims Mary to be 'Mother of God', one immediately signifies a relationship, a loving, nurturing relationship which goes well beyond carrying in the womb to a safe birth.

We can quite easily imagine that relationship which was not altogether placid and straightforward. One thinks of her anguish and fright at his disappearance at the age of twelve. Humanly speaking, he was undergoing his growing awareness of his true identity. She was experiencing the pangs of a certain distancing by this adolescent son.

Yes, she was pre-eminently a Mother, with all that that entails, including the horror of seeing her son tortured and done to death on the Cross. Yes, she was a mother, but Mother of God.

How can this be portrayed for our minds to grasp? How did Divine Revelation picture the event which set all calendars going? We need to go to the very beginning, the Book of Genesis which commences the Hebrew scriptures. Billions of years ago, the creative act which began all reckoning of the passage of time and seasons was signalled by the Divine Wind hovering over the formless void. Light, and then the whole of the beautiful order of the cosmos came into existence at the word of the Creator.

When that Holy Gust hovered over Mary, and she responded: 'Be it done unto me according to thy Word,' the Light of the World was united to our human nature. The human existence of Our Lord Jesus Christ began.

On this calendar-changing day of 1 January, it is indeed fitting that we celebrate the maternity of Mary, the calendar-shattering event which is the fulcrum of history and from which we count the passing of the years. At the end of all history, at the end of all calendars, may we share in Divine life with Mary of Galilee, Mother of God.

Readings Epiphany of the Lord 8 January 2023  
Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 71:1-2, 7-8, 10-13; Ephesians 3:2-3, 5-6  
Matthew 2:1-12

## PROCESSIONAL HYMN

### O Come All Ye Faithful

Adeste fideles,  
laeti triumphantes,  
venite, venite in Bethlehem.  
Natum videte Regem angelorum.  
**Venite adoremus,  
venite adoremus,  
venite adoremus Dominum!**

O come, all ye faithful,  
joyful and triumphant,  
O come ye,  
O come ye to Bethlehem.  
Come and behold Him  
born the King of angels,

**O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
Christ, the Lord.**

Sing, choirs of angels,  
sing in exultation,  
sing all ye citizens of heav'n above.  
Glory to God in the highest. **R**

Yea, Lord, we greet thee,  
born this happy morning  
Jesus to thee be glory given.  
Word of the Father,  
now in flesh appearing. **R**  
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## RESPONSORIAL PSALM

### What Child is this (sung)

What child is this, who, laid to rest,  
on Mary's lap is sleeping?  
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,  
while shepherds watch are keeping?  
This, this is Christ the King,  
whom shepherds worship and angels sing.  
Haste, haste to bring him praise,  
the Babe, the Son of Mary.

Why lies he in such mean estate,  
where ox and ass are feeding?  
Come, have no fear, God's Son is here,  
his love all loves exceeding.  
Nails, spear, shall pierce him through  
the cross be borne for me, for you.  
Hail, hail, the Saviour comes  
the Babe, the Son of Mary.

So bring him incense, gold and myrrh,  
all tongues and peoples own him,  
the King of kings salvation brings,  
let ev'ry heart enthrone him.  
Raise, raise your song on high  
while Mary sings a lullaby,  
joy, joy, for Christ is born,  
the Babe, the Son of Mary.  
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## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**Alleluia, alleluia!**

**Alleluia, alleluia!**

You are the Christ everlasting,  
born for us all of a Virgin.  
You have conquered death,  
opened heaven to all believers.

**Alleluia, alleluia!**

**Alleluia, alleluia!**

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## GIFTS PROCESSION

### Away in a Manger

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,  
the little Lord Jesus  
laid down his sweet head.  
The stars in the bright sky  
looked down where he lay,  
the little Lord Jesus  
asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing,  
the baby awakes,  
but little Lord Jesus,  
no crying he makes.  
I love thee, Lord Jesus,  
look down from the sky  
and stay by my side  
until morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus,  
I ask thee to stay close by me forever  
and love me I pray.  
Bless all the dear children  
in your tender care,  
and fit us for Heaven  
to live with you there.  
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## MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION

Save us, Saviour of the world, for by your  
Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.

## COMMUNION PROCESSION

### While Shepherds Watched their Flocks

While shepherds watched  
their flocks by night,  
all seated on the ground,  
the angel of the Lord came down,  
and glory shone around.

"Fear not," said he, for mighty dread  
had seized their troubled mind,  
"Glad tidings of great joy I bring  
to you and all mankind.

To you, in David's town this day,  
is born of David's line  
a Saviour who is Christ the Lord,  
and this shall be the sign,

The heavenly Child  
you there shall find  
to human view displayed,  
all meanly wrapped  
in swaddling bands,  
and in a manger laid."

Thus spoke the seraph,  
and forthwith appeared  
a shining throng of angels  
praising God, who thus  
addressed their joyful song,

"All glory be to God on high  
and to the earth be peace.  
Goodwill henceforth  
from heaven to all,  
begin and never cease."  
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### Hark the Herald Angels Sing

Hark! The herald angels sing  
"Glory to the newborn King,  
peace on earth and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconciled."  
Joyful, all you nations rise,  
join the triumph of the skies,  
with th'angelic host proclaim  
"Christ is born in Bethlehem."

**Hark! The herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the newborn King!"**

Christ, by highest heaven adored,  
Christ the everlasting Lord,  
late in time behold Him come,  
offspring of a virgin's womb.  
Veiled in flesh, the Godhead see,  
hail the incarnate Deity.  
Pleased as man with us to dwell  
Jesus, our Emmanuel. **R**

Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace.  
Hail the Sun of Righteousness.  
Light and life to all he brings,  
ris'n with healing in his wings.

Mild he lays his glory by,  
born that we no more may die,  
born to raise us from the earth,  
born to give us second birth. **R**  
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### Angels We Have Heard on High

Angels we have heard on high  
sweetly singing over the plains,  
and the mountains in reply,  
echoing their joyous strains.

**Gloria in excelsis Deo.**

**Gloria in excelsis Deo.**

Shepherds, why this jubilee?  
Why your joyous strains prolong?  
Say what may the tidings be  
which inspire your heav'nly song? **R**

Come to Bethlehem and see  
him whose birth the angels sing.  
Come, adore on bended knee  
Christ, the Lord, the newborn King. **R**  
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## REFLECTION HYMN

### Silent Night

Silent night, holy night!  
All is calm, all is bright  
round yon Virgin, Mother and Child.  
Holy infant so tender and mild,  
sleep in heavenly peace,  
sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night!  
Shepherds quake at the sight,  
glories stream from heaven afar,  
heavenly hosts sing "Alleluia!  
Christ the Saviour is born!  
Christ the Saviour is born!"

Silent night, holy night!  
Son of God, love's pure light  
radiant beams from thy holy face,  
with the dawn of redeeming grace Jesus,  
Lord, at Thy birth,  
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.  
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## RECESSIONAL HYMN

### Joy to the World

Joy to the world! The Lord is come.  
Let earth receive her King.  
Let every heart prepare Him room,  
and heav'n and nature sing  
and heav'n and nature sing  
and heav'n and heav'n  
and nature sing

Joy to the world, the Saviour reigns  
let us our songs employ.  
While fields and floods,  
rocks, hills and plains  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.

He rules the world  
with truth and grace,  
and makes the nations prove  
the glories of His righteousness,  
and wonders of His love,  
and wonders of His love,  
and wonders, wonders of His love.