



The
Parish
Church
Of
Saint
Matthew

~

Big Lamp

~

Newcastle

The
Liturgy
for the
Christmas
Mass
of the
Nativity

- **To our visitors:**

Welcome to Saint Matthew's Parish Church.

- **The Mass:**

The Mass is the central act of worship of the Christian Church. Before He died, Jesus commanded His followers to continue the practice of a shared meal with the blessing of bread and a cup of wine in thanksgiving for all God's blessings. After the Resurrection, Christians were aware that in the celebration of the Eucharist (as they called the Mass), Christ's presence was particularly intense, especially in the elements of bread and wine (which Jesus had identified with His Body and Blood) and in the reading of Holy Scripture.

- **The Christmas Mass of the Nativity:**

This Mass celebrates the Birth of Jesus. In the Person of Jesus Christ, we believe that God was seen walking and talking with humanity, teaching the Godly way to live. This is called the Incarnation (= "*the enfleshment*") of the Divine, through which we learn that God is not remote from us, but with us at all times.

- **This service:**

Following the ancient Christian tradition, inherited from the Jewish practice, much of our Liturgy is sung. Details of the hymn, psalm and other varying texts are printed on the weekly sheet. It is traditional to make the sign of the Cross at places marked (+).

- **Holy Communion:**

All Christians in good standing with their own tradition are invited and welcome to receive Holy Communion at this Mass. If you are not a communicant, but would like to receive a blessing, please come to the Altar rail at the time of Holy Communion, keeping your head lowered as you kneel so that nobody tries to force Communion upon you.

Then all sing:

*Hark! the herald-angels sing
Glory to the new-born king,
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled.
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With th' Angelic host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem."
Hark! the herald-angels etc.*

Christ, by highest Heav'n adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold Him come,
Offspring of the Virgin's Womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see!
Hail, the incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel.
Hark! the herald-angels etc.

Hail, the heaven-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 man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth.
Hark! the herald-angels etc

Shortly before the service, please light your candles. When the bell rings, all STAND as the procession enters the church:

The choir sings:

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.*

All sing:

God of God,
Light of Light,
Lo, He abhors not the Virgin's womb;
Very God,
Begotten not created:
*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 Heaven above;
Glory to God
In the highest:
O come, etc.

Innumerable ages having passed since the creation of the world, when in the beginning, God created Heaven and earth and formed man in His own image; many more centuries after the Flood, when the Most High placed His rainbow in the heavens as a sign of the Covenant and of peace; from the migration of Abraham, our father in faith, from Ur of the Chaldeans, twenty-one centuries, from the Exodus of the people of Israel out of Egypt, led by Moses, thirteen centuries: from the anointing of David as king, about one thousand years; in the sixty-fifth week according to Daniel's prophecy; in the year of the one hundred and ninety-fourth Olympiad; from the founding of the City of Rome, seven hundred and fifty-two years; in the rule of Caesar Octavian Augustus, the forty-second year; the whole world being at peace; Jesus Christ, eternal God, the eternal Father's Son, being pleased by His Coming to consecrate the world, by the Holy Spirit conceived, nine months having passed since His Conception, in Bethlehem of Judah was born of the Virgin Mary

and became Man.

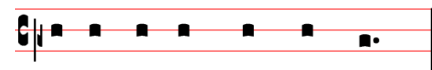
The Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the flesh.

Blessed is He Who comes in the Name of the Lord.



The priest then proclaims the beginning of Saint John's Gospel in which the Birth of Jesus is set within the context of God's eternal plan for the world:

+ The beginning of the Holy Gospel according to John:



Glo-ry be to Thee, O Lord.

In the beginning was the Word ... nor of the will of flesh, nor of human will, but of God.

And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us ...

... and we beheld His Glory (the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.



R.\ Thanks be to God.

The Mass is ended. Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.



R.\ In the Name of Christ. Amen.

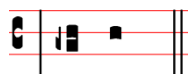
"To you in David's town this day
Is born of David's line
A Saviour, Who is Christ the Lord;
And this shall be the sign.

The heav'nly Babe you there shall find
To human view displayed,
All meanly wrapped in swathing bands,
And in a manger laid."

Thus spake the Seraph; and forthwith
Appeared a shining throng
Of Angels praising God, who thus
Addressed their joyful song:

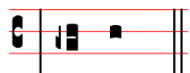
"All glory be to God on high,
And to the earth be peace;
Good will henceforth from Heaven to men
Begin and never cease."

*The figure of the Christ-Child is placed in the Crib (which has been prepared to celebrate the Birth of Christ and help people enter into the great event) and the Crib is blessed; this includes a short reading, a prayer, sprinkling with holy water and the use of incense to honour the image of Christ's Nativity. At the end of the **BLESSING OF THE CRIB:***



R.\ Amen.

THE BLESSING FOR THE MASS (+)



R.\ Amen.

Please extinguish your candle as we sing:

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee,
Born this happy morning,
Jesus, to Thee be glory given;
Word of the Father,
Now in flesh appearing.
O come, etc.

The priest, president of the assembly, greets the people:

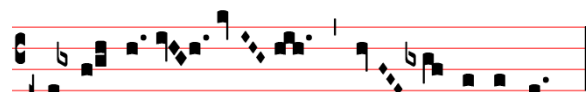
+ The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you:



R.\ And with thy spir- it.

The priest then invites the congregation to reflect on the times when we have fallen short of God's ideals, before we make an act of penitence:

... Kyrie eleison [*Lord, have mercy*]



Ky-ri- e- e- le- i-son.

...Christ eleison [*Christ, have mercy*]



Chri-ste e- le- i-son.

(continued over the page)

... Kyrie eleison



THE ABSOLUTION



*The choir sings the **INTROIT ANTIPHON**:*

The Lord spake and said unto me: Thou art My Son. This day have I begotten Thee.

Why do the heathen so furiously rage together: and why do the people imagine a vain thing.

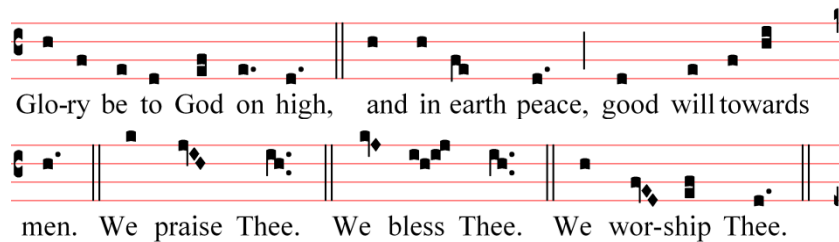
Glory be to the Father and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

The Lord spake &c

*As **GLORY BE TO GOD ON HIGH**, an ancient Christian hymn of praise, is sung, the priest honours God's Presence, marked by the Altar, using incense.*

Priest:

All:



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*At the end of Holy Communion, the choir sings the ministers consume what is left of the consecrated bread and wine and clean the vessels. As they return to the Altar the choir sings the **POSTCOMMUNION ANTIPHON**:*

The Word of God became Man; we have seen His glory.

The priest then sings the final prayer of the Mass:

Let us pray:

STAND

THE POSTCOMMUNION PRAYER



As the priest moves to the Crib with the figure of the Christ-Child, please light your candles as we sing:

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.

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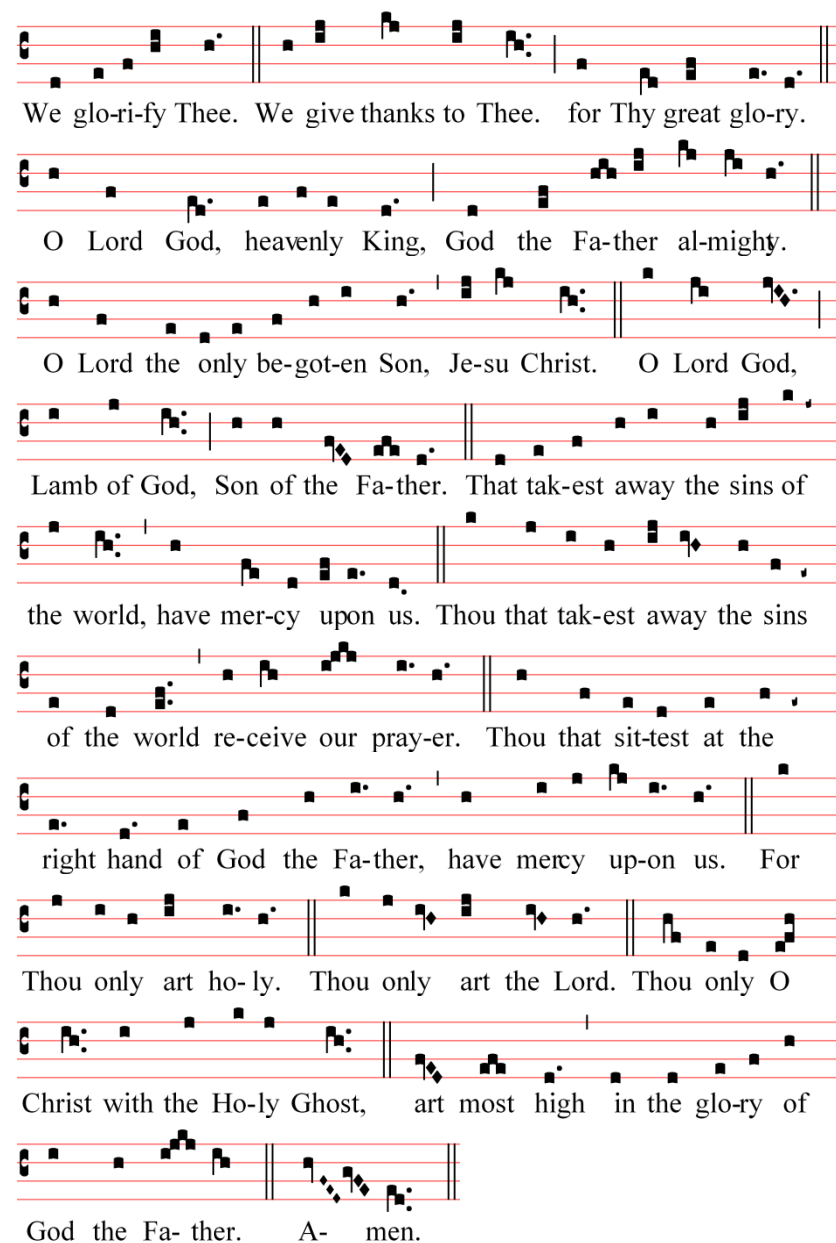
*Towards the end of the administration of Holy Communion we sing the **COMMUNION HYMN**:*

It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth
To touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, good will to men,
From Heaven's almighty King!"
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come,
With peaceful sings unfurled;
And still their heavenly music floats
O'er all the weary world;
Above its sad and lowly plains
They bend on hovering wing;
And ever o'er its Babel sounds
The blessed angels sing.

Yet with the woes of sin and strife
The world has suffered long;
Beneath the angel-strain have rolled
Two thousand years of wrong;
And man, at war with man, hears not
The love-song which they bring:
O hush the noise, ye men of strife,
And hear the angels sing.

For lo! the days are hastening on,
By prophet-bards foretold,
When, with the ever-circling years,
Comes round the age of gold;
When peace shall over all the earth
Its ancient splendours fling,
And the whole earth give back the song
Which now the angels sing.



We glo-ri-fy Thee. We give thanks to Thee. for Thy great glo-ry.

O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Fa-ther al-mighty.

O Lord the only be-got-en Son, Je-su Christ. O Lord God,

Lamb of God, Son of the Fa-ther. That tak-est away the sins of

the world, have mer-cy upon us. Thou that tak-est away the sins

of the world re-ceive our pray-er. Thou that sit-test at the

right hand of God the Fa-ther, have mercy up-on us. For

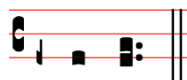
Thou only art ho-ly. Thou only art the Lord. Thou only O

Christ with the Ho-ly Ghost, art most high in the glo-ry of

God the Fa-ther. A- men.

Let us pray:

THE COLLECT



R.\ Amen.

We now SIT to listen to readings from the Bible.

THE FIRST READING

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

THE PSALM

THE SECOND READING

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

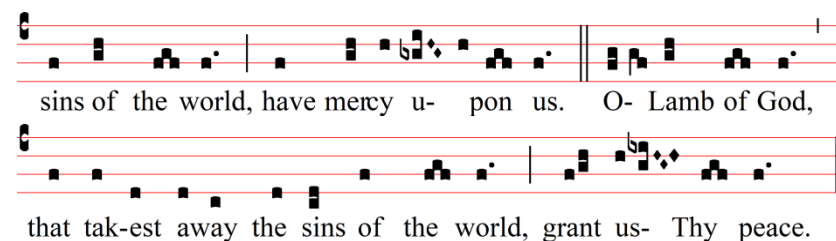
STAND

*The Choir sings the **ALLELUIA** and them all repeat it:*



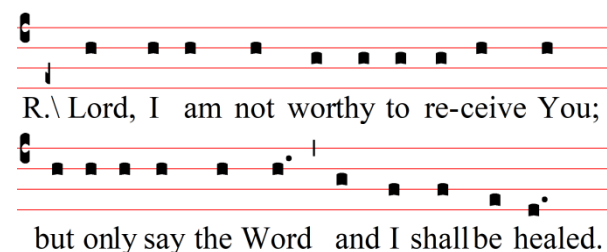
THE GRADUAL VERSE

R.\ Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!



The priest and those with him hold up the consecrated bread and wine and show it to the congregation and invite them to receive Holy Communion:

Behold the Lamb of God; behold Him Who takes away the sins of the world; blessed are they who are called to His Supper.

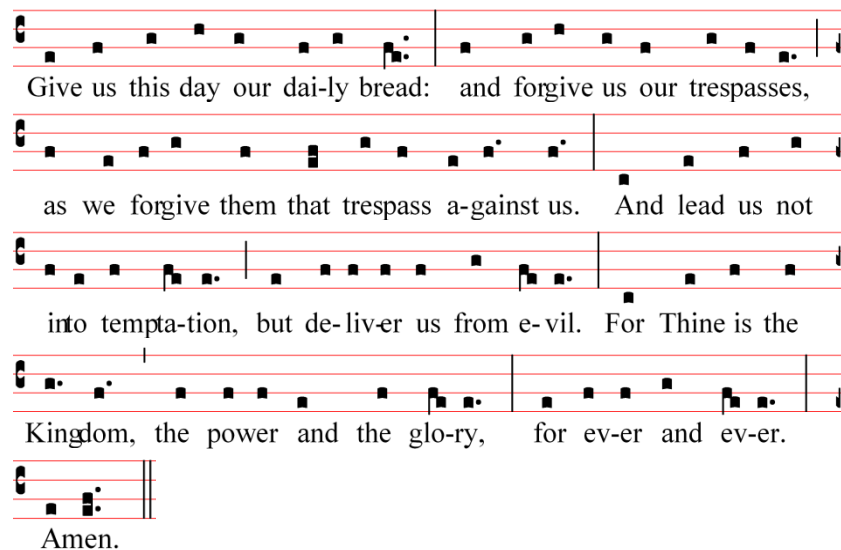


*Whilst the Sacred Ministers receive Holy Communion, the choir sings the **COMMUNION ANTIPHON**:*

With an holy worship, the dew of Thy Birth is of the womb of the morning.

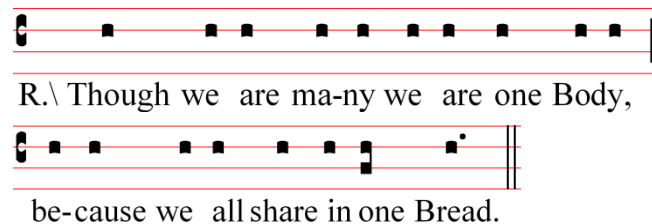
A bell rings and Holy Communion follows. If you are a communicant, in good standing with your own tradition, you are invited to receive Communion at our Altar. Otherwise, you are welcome to come to the rail to receive a blessing (in which case, please keep your head lowered as the priest approaches).

*The Host (the consecrated bread) is offered with the words **The Body of Christ** and the Chalice with the words **The Blood of Christ**: the response to both is **Amen**.*



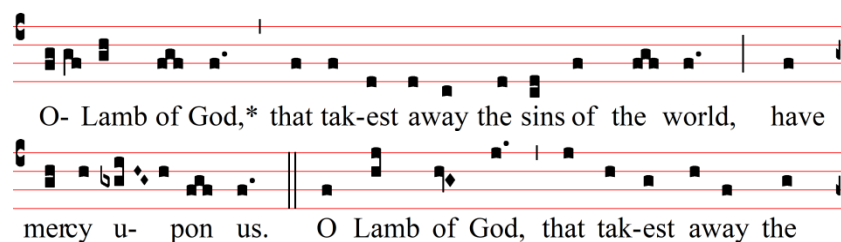
Give us this day our dai-ly bread: and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive them that trespass a-gainst us. And lead us not
into tempta-tion, but de-liv-er us from e-vil. For Thine is the
Kingdom, the power and the glo-ry, for ev-er and ev-er.
Amen.

We break this bread to share in the Body of Christ.



R.\ Though we are ma-ny we are one Body,
be-cause we all share in one Bread.

As the bread is broken, this ancient Christian hymn is sung:



O- Lamb of God,* that tak-est away the sins of the world, have
mercy u- pon us. O Lamb of God, that tak-est away the

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The Gospel Book is carried into the body of the church to read part of the account of Jesus' life. As the procession moves into the nave, we turn to face the Book. Incense is used to honour the presence of Christ in the words of the Gospel.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to N.



Glo - ry be to Thee, O Lord.

THE GOSPEL READING

This is the Gospel of the Lord



Praise be to Thee, O Christ.

SIT

THE SERMON

STAND

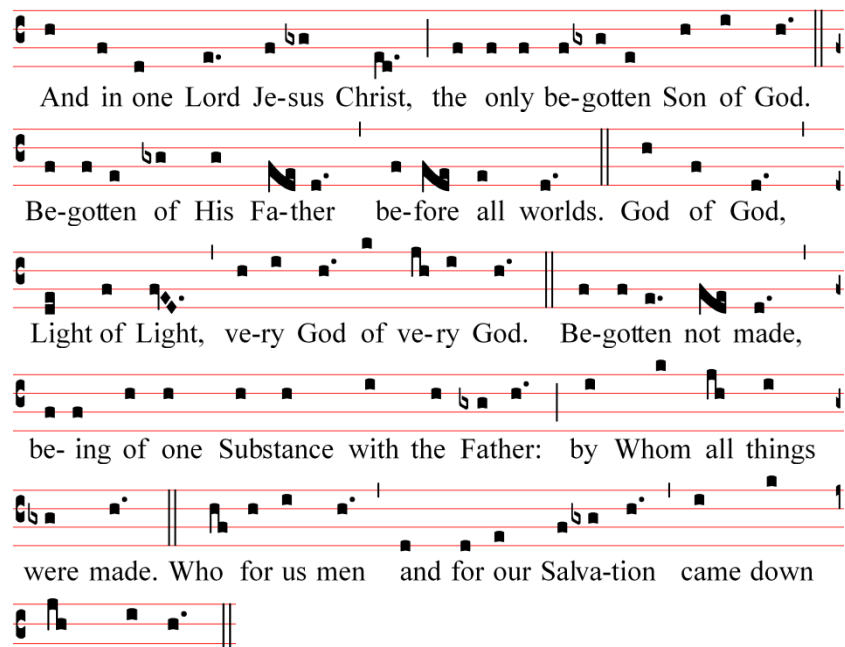
Priest:

All:



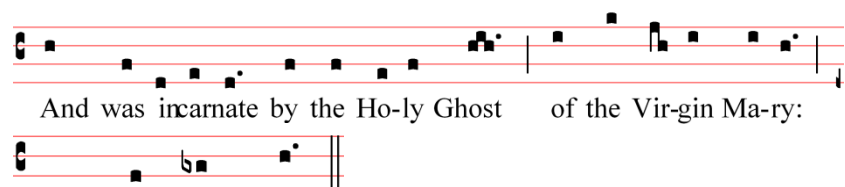
We be-lieve in one God. the Father al-mighty, Ma-ker of Heaven
and earth. and of all things vi- sible and in-vi- sible.

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And in one Lord Je-sus Christ, the only be-gotten Son of God.
 Be-gotten of His Fa-ther be-fore all worlds. God of God,
 Light of Light, ve-ry God of ve-ry God. Be-gotten not made,
 be- ing of one Substance with the Father: by Whom all things
 were made. Who for us men and for our Salva-tion came down
 from Heaven.

KNEEL



And was incarnate by the Ho-ly Ghost of the Vir-gin Ma-ry:
 and was made man.

STAND




And was cru-ci- fied also for us under Pontius Pi-late; He

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The priest then continues to the end of the prayer, the bread and wine are lifted up, offering them to the purposes of God; the people associate themselves with the prayer:

... by Whom and with Whom and in Whom:



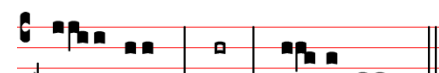
A- men.

In the unity of the Holy Spirit:



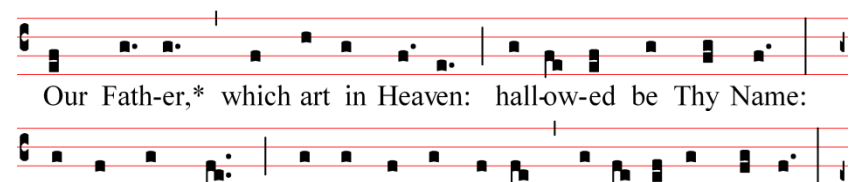
A- men.

All glory and honour be Yours, almighty Father, for ever and ever:



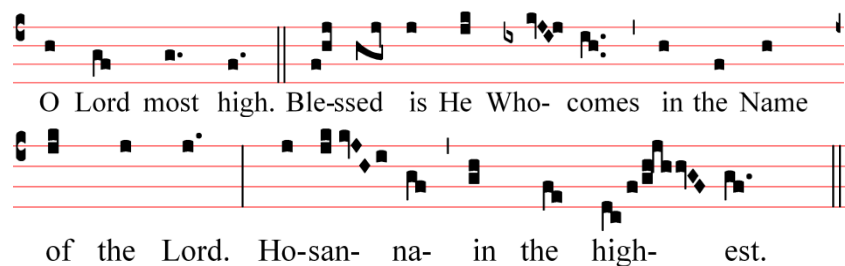
A- men. A- men.

Let us pray for the coming of the Kingdom in the words our Saviour gave us:



Our Fath-er,* which art in Heaven: hall-ow-ed be Thy Name:
 Thy Kingdom come: Thy will be done in earth as it is in Heaven.

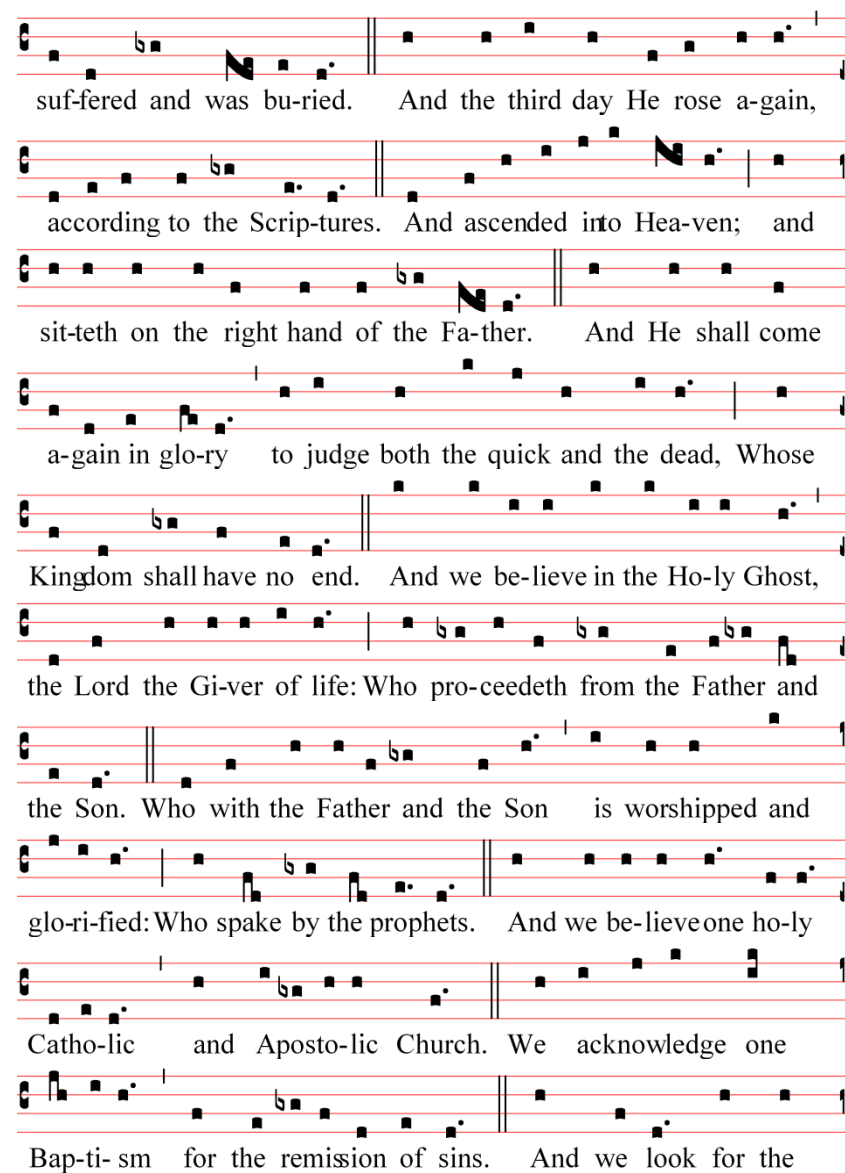
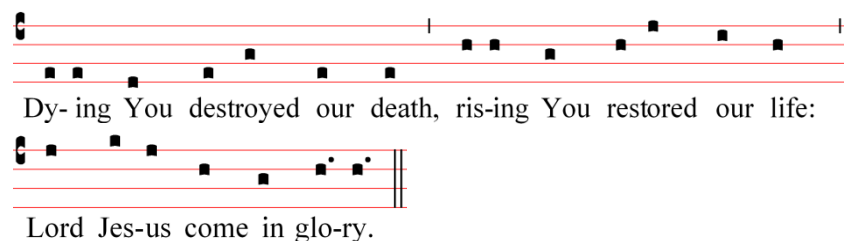
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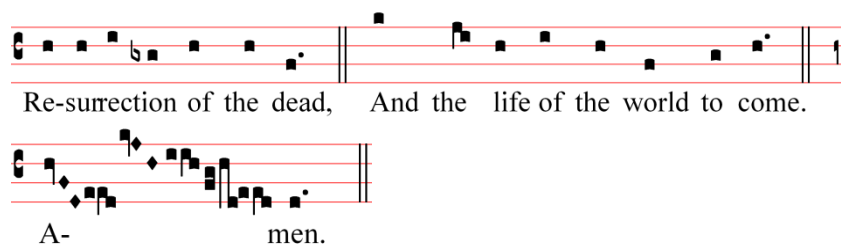
KNEEL

The priest then continues the prayer. As he repeats the words spoken by Jesus at the Last Supper, we acknowledge the presence of Christ in the sacramental bread and wine. A bell rings three times as the consecrated bread is held up for everyone to see; a few moments later, the bell rings three times again as the chalice of consecrated wine is held up. The priest then continues the prayer until:

... we proclaim His Death and Resurrection until He comes in glory:



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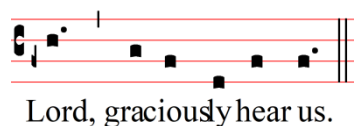
The priest invites the congregation to offer intercessions to God our Father:

THE INTERCESSIONS

Response to the intercessions:

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.



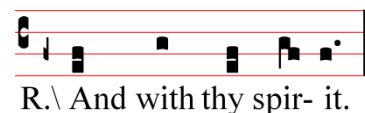
At the end:

... through Jesus Christ our Lord:

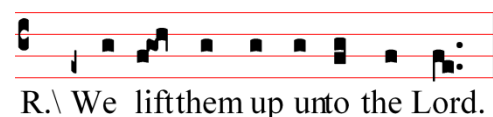


The priest begins the **GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING:**

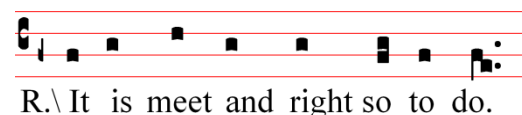
The Lord be with you.



Lift up your hearts.

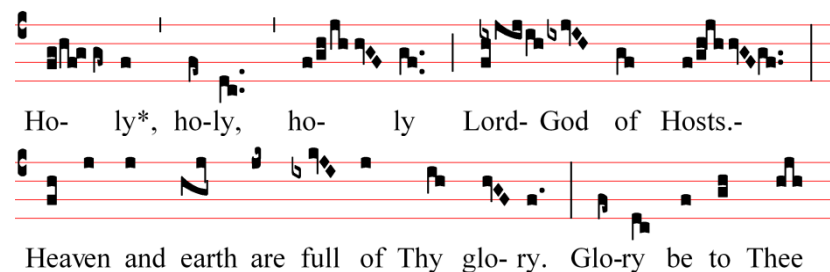


Let us give thanks unto our Lord God.



The priest continues the Great Prayer of Thanksgiving, recalling the mighty acts of God. The prayer continues as far as:

... and singing:



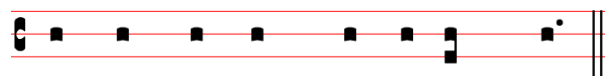
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O holy Child of Bethlehem,
 Descend to us, we pray;
 Cast out our sin, and enter in,
 Be born in us today.
 We hear the Christmas angels
 The great glad tidings tell:
 O come to us, abide with us,
 Our Lord Emmanuel.

Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, the power
 and the glory and the victory and the majesty.
 All that is in Heaven and earth is Thine:

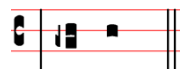


R.\ All things come of Thee, O Lord,



and of Thine own do we give Thee.

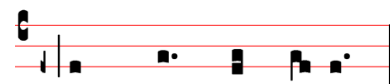
THE PRAYER OVER THE BREAD AND WINE



R.\ Amen.

The priest introduces the sharing of Christ's peace to seal the prayer and worship, that we have just offered, in the peace that Christ came to bring to the world:

... The Peace of the Lord be always with you.



R.\ And with thy spi- rit.

The choir sings the OFFERTORIUM:

Let the heavens rejoice and let the earth be glad before the face of the Lord,
 when He comes.

Then, as the bread and wine (tokens of our offering to God of all we have and all) we are all sing:



Let us here who re - pre - sent




Che - ru-bim guards a - round God's Throne; as



they cry out their thrice - ho - ly hymn

(continued over the page)

13

 prai - sing the life gi-ving Tri-ni - ty lay a -

18

 side all ear-ly care, borne by the pow-er of

23

 an - gels' wings to His peo - ple now comes the

27

 King of kings. Al - le - lu - ia, al-le-lu

32

 ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

The Altar will then be prepared for the Mass itself and bread and wine placed upon it. Incense is used again, denoting our reverence for the place where, as the Church has taught from earliest times, Christ will become present in the bread and wine over which we give thanks. Then, in turn and by groups, the people in the Church will also be censured because we are, by our Baptism, included in the priestly activity of Christ. During this all sing the following hymn:

O little town of Bethlehem,
 How still we see thee lie!
 Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
 The silent stars go by.
 Yet in the dark streets shineth
 The everlasting light;
 The hopes and fears of all the years
 Are met in thee tonight.

O morning stars, together
 Proclaim the holy Birth
 And praises sing to God the King,
 And peace to men on earth;
 For Christ is born of Mary;
 And, gathered all above,
 While mortals sleep, the angels keep
 Their watch of wondering love.

How silently, how silently,
 The wondrous gift is given!
 So God imparts to human hearts
 The blessings of His Heaven.
 No ear may hear His coming,
 But in this world of sin,
 Where meek souls will receive Him, still
 The dear Christ enters in.

Where children pure and happy
 Pray to the blessed Child,
 Where misery cries out to Thee,
 Son of the Mother mild;
 Where charity stands watching
 And faith holds wide the door,
 The dark night wakes, the glory breaks,
 And Christmas comes once more.

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