

Pontifical Irish College

Advent Service of Readings and Carols

11th December 2020

Presider: Fr Paul Finnerty, Rector



Henry Ossawa Tanner, *The Annunciation*, 1898

Philadelphia Museum of Art

“And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called Son of the Most High...”

Luke: 1:31-32

Congregational Hymn: **O come, O come, Emmanuel**

Veni, veni, Emmanuel
captivum solve Israel,
qui gemit in exsilio,
privatus Dei Filio.
Gaude! Gaude! Emmanuel,
Nascetur pro te Israel!

1. O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel,
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

2. O come, Thou Rod of Jesse's stem,
from ev'ry foe deliver them,
that trust Thy mighty power to save,
and give them vict'ry o'er the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel,
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

3. O come, Thou Key of David, come,
and open wide our heav'nly home,
make safe the way that leads on high,
that we no more have cause to sigh.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel,
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

4. O come, Thou Dayspring from on high,
and cheer us by thy drawing nigh;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night
and death's dark shadow put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel,
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

Choir: **O Sapientia**

Introduction

Opening Prayer

Ever Faithful God,
Your prophets foretold the coming of the light.
In your name they promised
that the eyes of the blind would be opened.
We confidently await the coming of your Son and the day when
He will gather all people to live in your light, forever and ever.
R. Amen.

OICHE NOLLAG – Máire Mhac an tSaoi

(Following a short introduction, Fr Bernard Healy of the diocese of Kerry, Ireland, will recite this poem in Irish. An English translation is included below.)

OICHE NOLLAG

(Máire Mhac an tSaoi)

*Le coinnle na n-aingeal tá an spéir amuigh
breactha,
Tá fiacail an tseaca sa ghaoith on gcnoc,
Adaigh an tine is téir chun an leapan,
Luífidh Mac Dé ins an tigh seo anocht.*

*Fágaig' an doras ar leathadh ina coinne,
An mhaighdean a thioctaidh is a naí ar a hucht,
Deonaigh scíth an bhóthair a ligint, a Mhuire,
Luíodh Mac Dé ins an tigh seo anocht.*

*Bhí soilse ar lasadh i dtigh sin na haiochta,
Cóiriú gan caoile, bia agus deoch,
Do cheannaithe olla, do cheannaithe síoda,
Ach luífidh Mac Dé ins an tigh seo anocht.*

CHRISTMAS EVE

(Translated by Gabriel Fitzmaurice)

With candles of angels the sky is now dappled,
The frost on the wind from the hills has a bite,
Kindle the fire and go to your slumber,
Jesus will lie in this household tonight.

Leave all the doors wide open before her,
The Virgin who'll come with the child on her
breast,
Grant that you'll stop here tonight, Holy Mary,
That Jesus a while in this household may rest.

The lights were all lighting in that little hostel,
There were generous servings of victuals and wine,
For merchants of silk, for merchants of woollens,
But Jesus will lie in this household tonight.

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

11:1-10

A shoot springs forth from the stock of Jesse.

A shoot will spring from the stock of Jesse,
a new shoot will grow from his roots.
The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.
His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.
He shall not judge by what his eyes see
or decide by what his ears hear
but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.
Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist,
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.
The wolf shall live with the lamb,
the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
the calf and the lion and the fatling together,
and a little child shall lead them.
The cow and the bear shall graze,
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.
They will not hurt or destroy
on all my holy mountain;
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord
as the waters cover the sea.
On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples;
the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

The word of the Lord

Choir: Rorate Caeli

Second Reading

A reading from the letter of Saint Paul to the Philippians

4: 4-7

Always be joyful. The Lord is near.

I want you to Rejoice! Always rejoice in the Lord; I repeat, what I want is your happiness. Let your tolerance be evident to everyone: the Lord is very near. There is no need to worry; but if there is anything you need, pray for it, asking God for it with prayer and thanksgiving, and that peace of God, which is so much greater than we can understand, will guard your hearts and your thoughts, in Christ Jesus.

The word of the Lord

Gospel Acclamation

R. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

The Word became flesh, he lived among us, and we saw his glory.

R. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Gospel

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

Luke 2:1-20

I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!"

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

The Gospel of the Lord

Homily

Congregational Hymn: The Angel Gabriel

1. The Angel Gabriel from heaven came,
his wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame;
"All hail," said he, "thou lowly maiden Mary,
most highly favoured lady," Gloria!

2. "For now a blessed Mother thou shalt be,
all generations laud and honour thee,
thy Son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold,
most highly favoured lady," Gloria!

3. Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head,
"To me be as it pleaseth God," she said,
"my soul shall laud and magnify his holy Name."
Most highly favoured lady, Gloria!

4. Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ was born,
in Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn,
and Christian folk throughout the world will ever say
"most highly favoured lady," Gloria!

WHEN ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI INVENTED THE CRIB

Taken from *The First Life of St. Francis of Assisi* by Thomas of Celano, Part One, Chapter XXX.

(Fr Marco Veghini offers a short introduction to this Italian Christmas tradition of the Crib, from which the world has received the custom of creating the Christmas Nativity Scene. Fr Marco Billeri will read this excerpt for us in Italian, and what follows below is a translation in English.)

[The highest aspiration of Francis of Assisi], his dominant desire and his most firm intention was to always and perfectly observe the holy Gospel and to faithfully imitate with all vigilance, with all commitment, with all the impetus of soul and heart, the teaching and example of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In this regard, what the Saint accomplished in Greccio [a small town in the province of Rieti, in our own region of Lazio], three years before his own glorious death, on the day of the Lord's Nativity, is worthy of eternal remembrance and devout celebration. In that district there was a man named Giovanni, of good reputation and even better life, and he was very dear to blessed Francis because, although he was noble and much-respected in his region, he valued the nobility of the spirit more than that of the flesh.

About two weeks before the feast of the Nativity, blessed Francis, as he often did, called Giovanni to himself and said to him: "If you want us to celebrate the birth of Jesus in Greccio, go before me and prepare what I tell you: I would like to represent the Child born in Bethlehem, and somehow see with the eyes of the body the discomforts in which he found himself due to the lack of what was needed for a new-born baby; how he was lying in a crib and how he lay on the hay between the ox and the donkey."

As soon as he heard Francis, the faithful and pious friend left quickly to prepare everything he needed in the specified place, according to the plan set forth by the Saint.

And so the day of joy comes, the time of exultation! For the occasion, many friars from various parts are gathered here; men and women arrive from the farmhouses of the region, each one bringing, according to his resources, candles and torches to illuminate that night, in which the star that brought light to every day and every age, shone splendidly in the sky. Francis arrives at last; he sees that everything is prepared according to his wishes, and he is radiant with joy. Now the crib is arranged, hay is placed in it and the ox and the donkey are brought in. In that moving scene, evangelical simplicity shines out, poverty is praised, humility is commended. Greccio has become like a new Bethlehem. This night is clear as daylight and is sweet to man and animal alike! People flock, and they rejoice before the new mystery with a joy never before experienced. The forest resounds with voices and the imposing cliffs echo the festive choirs. The friars sing well-chosen praises to the Lord, and the night seems to be explode with joy.

Then the priest solemnly celebrates the Eucharist at the crib, and he himself savours a consolation never tasted before. At the end of that solemn vigil, everyone returned home full of ineffable joy.

Today that place has been consecrated to the Lord, and above the crib an altar has been built and a church dedicated to the honour of St Francis, so that where once animals ate hay, now men can eat, as nourishment of the soul and sanctification of the body, the flesh of the immaculate and uncontaminated Lamb, Jesus Christ our Lord, who with infinite love gave himself for us. He with the Father and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns eternally glorified for ever and ever. Amen.

Intercessions

Celebrant: As we await with longing the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, let us in humility and with confidence in God's love and generosity, turn to Him in prayer.

1. For the Church; that she may be always a beacon of light to the world.
Lord hear us.
All: Lord, graciously hear us.
2. For world leaders; that they may prepare the way for the coming of the Lord by sincere concern for their people and the common good. Lord hear us.
All: Lord, graciously hear us.
3. For the sick and suffering, the homeless, the unemployed, those suffering from addictions, and anyone in any kind of distress. Lord hear us.
All: Lord, graciously hear us.
4. For those in the scientific and medical communities whose work is so valuable; we pray in thanksgiving for the many gifts of science and medicine to humanity. Lord hear us.
All: Lord, graciously hear us.
5. For our own community; that we may proclaim the beauty of the Gospel and encourage others to rejoice in the Lord. Lord hear us.
All: Lord, graciously hear us.
6. We remember our loved ones who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith. That they may enjoy the loving embrace of God. Lord hear us.
All: Lord, graciously hear us.

Celebrant: O God of life, you have given life to us all with the hope that we may gain eternal life with you. Console us in our grief, encourage us in our hope, and hear us in our prayers, through Christ our Lord.

Pater Noster

Choir: **Vieni, Signore**

Instrumental

Closing Prayer

God, Lord of eternity,
Your Son came to visit us in time.
Grant to each of us the heart of a child
which never ceases to marvel at Your wonders,
so that once again this day
You may find us watching in hope.
We ask you this, because of Your love for us,
God blessed forever and ever.
R. Amen.

Final Blessing

Presider: The Lord be with you.
R. And with your spirit.

Presider: Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing.

You believe that the Son of God once came to us;
you look for Him to come again.
May His coming bring you the light of His holiness
and His blessing bring you freedom.
R. Amen.

May God make you steadfast in faith,
joyful in hope, and untiring in love
all the days of your life.
R. Amen.

You rejoice that our Redeemer came to live with us as man.
When He comes again in glory,
may He reward you with endless life.
R. Amen.

May almighty God bless you,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit.
R. Amen.

Go in the peace of Christ.
R. Thanks be to God.

Choir: **Alma Redemptoris Mater**



A Alma * Redemptó-ris Máter, quae pérvia caéli
pórta mánes, Et stélla má-ris, succúrre cadénti súrge-
re qui cúrat pópu-lo : Tu quae genu-ísti, nátura mi-rán-
te, tú-um sánctum Geni-tó-rem : Virgo pri-us ac posté-
ri-us, Gabrí-élis ab óre súmens illud Ave, pecca-tó-
rum mi-se-ré-re.

*Mother of Christ.
Hear thou thy people's cry.*

*Star of the sea
And portal of the sky.*

*Mother of him
Who thee from nothing made,*

*Sinking we strive
And call to thee for aid.*

*O, by that joy
which Gabriel brought to thee,
thou virgin first and last,
let us thy mercy see!*

The celebration now continues with Christmas carols
in the Chapel this year.

Christmas Carols

Congregational Carol: **Adeste, fideles**

1. Adeste fideles laeti triumphantes,
Venite, venite in Bethlehem.
Natum videte Regem angelorum.

*R. Venite adoremus, Venite adoremus,
Venite adoremus, Dominum.*

2. Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine
Gestant puellae viscera.
Deum verum, genitum non factum.

3. Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation.
Sing, all ye citizens of Heaven above!
Glory to God, in the highest.

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

KA ANYI NURIBANU NA-AMURU ANYI NWA OHURU

LET US REJOICE FOR UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN

(Following a short introduction, Fr Francis Nonso Okoye will sing this Christmas song in Igbo. An English translation is provided below.)

Let us rejoice, let us rejoice for unto us a new king is born, the Saviour of the world.

In the manger at Bethlehem Jesus was born,
the King of the world.

Blessed Virgin Mary has been specially honoured
as the mother of the Saviour.

Congregational Carol: **Silent Night**

*Oíche chiúin, oíche Mhic Dé, Cách 'na suan dís araon,
Dís is dílse 'faire le spéis, Naoín beag gnaoigheal ceananntais caomh
Críost, 'na chodhladh go séimh. Críost, 'na chodhladh go séimh.*

Astro del ciel, Pargol divin, mite Agnello, Redentor
Tu di stirpe regale decor, Tu virgineo mistico fior
Luce dona alle menti, pace infondi nei cuor!

Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar, heav'nly hosts sing 'Alleluia!'
Christ, the Saviour, is born; Christ, the Saviour, is born.

Congregational Carol: **Fermarono i cieli**

The Skies Stopped

Fermarono i cieli, la loro armonia
Cantando Maria la nanna a Gesù
Con voce divina la Vergine bella
Più vaga che stella cantava così

Dormi dormi, fai la nanna mio Gesù
Dormi dormi, fai la nanna mio Gesù

La luce più bella negli occhi brillava
Sul viso sembrava divino splendor
La madre felice di bimbo divino
Gridava il suo amore cantando così

Dormi dormi, fai la nanna mio Gesù
Dormi dormi, fai la nanna mio Gesù

Dormi dormi, fai la nanna mio Gesù
Dormi dormi, fai la nanna mio Gesù

O, CE VESTE MINUNATĂ!

O, WHAT WONDERFUL NEWS!

(This popular Romanian Christmas Carol is sung by priests of the diocese of Iași, Romania, who are members of the College community. An English translation is provided below)

O what wonderful news!
Is shown to us in Bethlehem!
Today has been born, the One without a beginning,
As the Prophets foretold!

That in Bethlehem Mary,
Having completed the trip,
In a little space, near that town,
She bore the Messiah

His Son in God's Own Name,
The Father has sent into the world!
To be born and to grow,
To save us all!

Congregational Carol: **Tu scendi dalle stelle**
 You Descended From the Stars

Tu scendi dalle stelle, o Re del cielo,
e vieni in una grotta al freddo, al gelo,
e vieni in una grotta al freddo, al gelo.

O Bambino mio divino,
io ti vedo qui a tremar.

O Dio beato!

Ah! quanto ti costò l'avermi a mato!

Ah! quanto ti costò l'avermi a mato!



A te, che sei del mondo il Creatore,
mancano panni e fuoco, o mio Signore,
mancano panni e fuoco, o mio Signore.

Caro eletto Pargoletto,
quanto questa povertà
più m'innamora:
giacché ti fece amor povero ancora,
giacché ti fece amor povero ancora.

A sincere thanks is offered to all who joined with the College community for this celebration, which included cultural contributions from the Irish, Italian, Romanian, and Igbo Christmas traditions.

A small group of singers led us this year – we give thanks to Don Albino Lilliu, Fr Felix Junsung Suh, and Fr John Coughlan.

As always, the invaluable contribution of Ms Fabjola Lekaj, our organist, accompanied by her brother Mr. Floran Lekaj on violin, is greatly appreciated.

We wish you all a joyful Christmas, and many blessings for 2021.

