

# Sunday, December 28, 2025

## First Sunday of Christmas, Year A

### Introduction

As we celebrate the Twelve Days of Christmas, our gospel today confronts us with the death of innocent children at the hands of Herod. The birth of Christ does not remove the power of evil from our world, but its light gives us hope as we walk with all the “holy innocents” of past generations and today who have suffered unjustly. In our gathering around word and meal, God continues to redeem us, lift us up, and carry us as in days of old.

### Prayer of the Day

O Lord God, you know that we cannot place our trust in our own powers. As you protected the infant Jesus, so defend us and all the needy from harm and adversity, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

### First Reading: Isaiah 63:7-9

*God does not delegate divine intervention to a messenger or angel. God’s own presence brings salvation. The prophet and all who read these words join in celebrating God’s gracious deeds. God trusts that God’s people will not act falsely.*

A reading from Isaiah.

<sup>7</sup> I will recount the gracious deeds of the LORD,  
the praiseworthy acts of the LORD,  
because of all that the LORD has done for us  
and the great favor to the house of Israel  
that he has shown them according to his mercy,  
according to the abundance of his steadfast love.

<sup>8</sup> For he said, “Surely they are my people,  
children who will not act deceitfully,”  
and he became their savior

<sup>9</sup> in all their distress.

It was no messenger or angel

but his presence that saved them;  
in his love and pity it was he who redeemed them;  
he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **Psalm: Psalm 148**

Let us read the Psalm responsively.

<sup>1</sup> Hallelujah! Praise the LORD from the heavens;  
praise God in the heights.

<sup>2</sup> **Praise the LORD, all you angels;  
sing praise, all you hosts of heaven.**

<sup>3</sup> Praise the LORD, sun and moon;  
sing praise, all you shining stars.

<sup>4</sup> **Praise the LORD, heaven of heavens,  
and you waters above the heavens.**

<sup>5</sup> Let them praise the name of the LORD,  
who commanded, and they were created,

<sup>6</sup> **who made them stand fast forever and ever,  
giving them a law that shall not pass away.**

<sup>7</sup> Praise the LORD from the earth,  
you sea monsters and all deeps;

<sup>8</sup> **fire and hail, snow and fog,  
tempestuous wind, doing God's will;**

<sup>9</sup> mountains and all hills,  
fruit trees and all cedars;

<sup>10</sup> **wild beasts and all cattle,  
creeping things and flying birds;**

<sup>11</sup> sovereigns of the earth and all peoples,  
princes and all rulers of the world;

<sup>12</sup> **young men and maidens,  
old and young together.**

<sup>13</sup> Let them praise the name of the LORD,  
whose name only is exalted, whose splendor is over earth and heaven.

<sup>14</sup> **The LORD has raised up strength for the people and praise for all faithful  
servants,  
the children of Israel, a people who are near the LORD. Hallelujah!**

## **Second Reading: Hebrews 2:10-18**

*Through Jesus' suffering and death, the trail to eternal salvation has been blazed for us. We do not fear death, because he has conquered the power of death. Thus Christ, our merciful and faithful high priest, has the final say over the destiny of our lives.*

A reading from Hebrews.

<sup>10</sup> It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. <sup>11</sup> For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, <sup>12</sup> saying,

“I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters;  
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.”

<sup>13</sup> And again,

“I will put my trust in him.”

And again,

“Here am I and the children whom God has given me.”

<sup>14</sup> Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, <sup>15</sup> and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. <sup>16</sup> For it is clear that he did not come to help angels but the descendants of Abraham. <sup>17</sup> Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. <sup>18</sup> Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **Gospel: Matthew 2:13-23**

*In a dream, Joseph is warned to flee to Egypt to protect the infant Jesus from the jealousy of Herod.*

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>13</sup> Now after [the magi] had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” <sup>14</sup> Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt <sup>15</sup> and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, “Out of Egypt I have called my son.”

<sup>16</sup> When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the magi.

<sup>17</sup> Then what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

<sup>18</sup> “A voice was heard in Ramah,  
wailing and loud lamentation,  
Rachel weeping for her children;  
she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.”

<sup>19</sup> When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, <sup>20</sup> “Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child’s life are dead.” <sup>21</sup> Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel.

<sup>22</sup> But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. <sup>23</sup> There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, “He will be called a Nazarene.”

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**