

## The Nativity of the Lord – 25<sup>th</sup> December 2024

	<b>Gospel (John 1:1-18)</b>	<b>First Reading (Isaiah 52:7-10)</b>	<b>Second Reading (Hebrews 1:1-6)</b>
<b>Context</b>	John's gospel confirms that Jesus is the Son of God, and that believers will have eternal life. Jesus did not come into being when he was born because he is eternal.	Isaiah foretells the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. Isaiah describes Jesus' life and death in remarkable detail. All four gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) in some way reflect the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophesies.	This letter describes the sufficiency and superiority of Jesus. It shows how the new covenant gained through Christ is vastly superior to the Old Covenant.
<b>Key verses</b>	<i><b>"The Word was made flesh, he lived among us..."</b></i>	<i><b>"...all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God."</b></i>	<i><b>"God...has spoken to us through his Son..."</b></i>
<b>Key themes/ messages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus is the true Light of the World. He helps us to see God and show us the way to his kingdom by helping us to understand God's Word.</li> <li>• God's almighty power is capable of overpowering the darkness of sin.</li> <li>• Although God created the world and the Old Testament pointed towards Jesus' coming, many people did not recognise him and chose to reject him.</li> <li>• God revealed his only Son to us so that our eyes may be opened to many wonderful promises and blessings. Believing in Jesus gives us new spiritual life.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Isaiah tells us how beautiful it is to spread the Good News. While Jesus' promise of salvation was a great blessing in Old Testament times, it is just as relevant today.</li> <li>• When we first learn about positive developments in our lives, we naturally tend to be pleased and we rush to tell everyone the good news. These behaviours are especially relevant to Christians, as we are called upon to spread God's Word to "all the ends of the earth."</li> <li>• Isaiah tells us that God consoles his people. The promise of God's comfort is a wonderful blessing when we encounter difficult times.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Old Testament times, God's message to the people was conveyed using several approaches, including direct communication with Moses and Abraham, and visions revealed to God's appointed prophets. Subsequently, God chose to reveal himself through his only Son, Jesus Christ.</li> <li>• As Jesus is God himself, he is a perfect representation of God's nature.</li> <li>• Jesus is far greater than any of the angels who worship him.</li> <li>• Through his death and resurrection, Jesus has conquered sin for all eternity.</li> <li>• Jesus has the power to forgive our sins.</li> </ul>
<b>Questions/ application to our lives</b>	<p>What does John mean when he tells us that "The Word was made flesh"?</p> <p>Why did God send Jesus to live among us, as opposed to solely delivering his Word through the Old Testament?</p> <p>Why do you think some people still refuse to believe in Jesus, even though his human life was reliably witnessed by many, and clearly recorded in the Bible?</p>	<p>Isaiah tells us that God "bares his holy arm" in the sight of all the nations. What do you think Isaiah meant by these words?</p> <p>God wants us to "shout for joy together" in response to the Good News of salvation for his people. When we reflect on this call to action, have we become complacent or indifferent to God's holy Word? If so, what can we do to renew our faith?</p>	<p>What can Christians do to reflect the "light of God's glory"?</p> <p>What do we need to do to experience God's presence in our lives? Is he with us already, or do we need to seek him?</p> <p>The gospels assure us that Jesus is willing to forgive our sins. How should we seek his forgiveness and what steps can we take to prepare ourselves?</p>
<b>Further reading</b>	Catechism 456-460, 466	Catechism 65, 102	Catechism 439, 496, 559