

COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION
SUNDAY 2 January 2022 – 2nd Sunday of CHRISTMAS

COLLECT

Almighty God,
in the birth of your Son
you have poured on us the new light of your incarnate Word,
and shown us the fullness of your love:
help us to walk in his light and dwell in his love
that we may know the fullness of his joy;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Psalm 147.13–21

- 13 Sing praise to the Lord, O Jerusalem; ♦
praise your God, O Zion;
- 14 For he has strengthened the bars of your gates ♦
and has blest your children within you.
- 15 He has established peace in your borders ♦
and satisfies you with the finest wheat.
- 16 He sends forth his command to the earth ♦
and his word runs very swiftly.
- 17 He gives snow like wool ♦
and scatters the hoarfrost like ashes.
- 18 He casts down his hailstones like morsels of bread; ♦
who can endure his frost?
- 19 He sends forth his word and melts them; ♦
he blows with his wind and the waters flow.
- 20 He declares his word to Jacob, ♦
his statutes and judgements to Israel.
- 21 He has not dealt so with any other nation; ♦
they do not know his laws.
Alleluia.

Ephesians 1.3–14

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. ⁵He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace ⁸that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight ⁹he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, ¹⁰as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. ¹¹In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, ¹²so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. ¹³In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; ¹⁴this is the pledge of our inheritance towards redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

John 1.10–18

¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵(John testified to him and cried out, 'This was he of whom I said, "He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me." ')
¹⁶From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

A Reflection from Peter...

There's a wonderful moment in C S Lewis's "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe". It comes towards the end of the story when Aslan has appeared and everything happens very quickly. Amongst all the animals is a small lion, who clearly feels pretty insignificant and unimportant. At one point he and Aslan are together and in their conversation Aslan uses the phrase "Us lions". That one word of inclusion "us" powerfully impacts the little lion who suddenly feels he has purpose and direction. Today's Gospel has both inclusion and exclusion. First we hear a word of rejection: He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But that is immediately followed by a word of inclusion: To all who received him, ... he gave power to become children of God, born not of blood, or of the will of the flesh, or of the will of man, but of God. On Christmas Day we stopped to wonder at God's act of astonishing generosity as

God risked everything in taking on the frailties of human life and began that human life from the utter vulnerability of birth – and birth in a stable at that. Today, the focus changes swiftly to the meaning of that act of generosity for us. St John expresses it so powerfully when he says that the coming of Jesus enables us to become children of God. And St Paul helps us understand even better when he takes up the image of adoption. We cannot be children of the Father in the way that Jesus is – for Jesus is one with the Father. But we do become God’s children nonetheless – and as Paul puts it, by adoption and grace. This makes it clear that we don’t have to do anything – indeed there is nothing we can do. Becoming a child of God is itself God’s gift: God chooses to adopt us and God’s grace enables it. But we can go on refusing God’s grace. We can reject God’s gift. Like those in the Gospel, we can fail to accept Jesus. But, encouraged by the sight of the little family gathered in the stable with those visitors of shepherds and wise men, we respond from the heart. The carol asks “What can I give him?” and we know deep down the truth of the answer, “Give my heart!”