

II

IT IS BY THE HOLY SPIRIT THAT SHE HAS CONCEIVED THIS CHILD

The biblical texts which inspire the celebration are the Canticle of Judith (Jdt 16: 1-2a, 13-16) and Matthew's account of the angel's announcement to Joseph (Mt 1: 18-25).

The liturgy of the Church sees in the acclamation of Judith by the priests and people a foretelling of the praise it offers to Mary. In the Canticle of the heroine of Bethulia, the liturgy finds a forerunner of the Canticle of the Blessed Virgin: just as Judith identifies herself with the sentiments of Israel in praising God who has freed his people through the daughter of an oppressed nation, Mary, too, expresses the joy of Israel because God has come to the help of his "servant" and fulfilled his promises through a humble and poor woman. The Canticle of Judith and the Canticle of the Blessed Virgin are often heard in the liturgy to celebrate events of liberation and salvation, above all, the mystery of the Incarnation.

Matthew recounts the "birth of Jesus Christ" (v. 18): how Mary "was found with child through the power of the Holy Spirit" (v. 18) and how the prophecy of the virgin giving birth to Emmanuel, God-with-us, was fulfilled (v. 23). The passage emphasizes the intervention of the Spirit: the breath of God that directed creation and swept over the waters (see Gn 1: 2), the Spirit that renews lifeless bodies and oppressed exiles to form a vast army (see Ez 37: 1-14), the Spirit that creates in Mary the New Man, the New Israel.

INVITATION TO PRAISE

*L. Announce the salvation of the Lord,
proclaim his works among the peoples.*

A. His mercy is everlasting.

*L. Glory and honor to you, O Christ,
living Word of the Father.*

*A. You are the Savior of the world,
the new creation, the first fruits of the Spirit:
praise and glory to you forever.*

GREETING AND INTRODUCTION

When the celebration takes place with the participation of the faithful, the leader may address the assembly with this or another appropriate greeting which may be followed by an introduction illustrating the nature and content of the celebration.

*L. The grace and peace of Christ, Son of God,
born of the house of David,
be with us always.*

A. Blessed be God forever.

HYMN

An appropriate Marian hymn is sung. For example:

1. The God whom earth and sea and sky
Adore and praise and magnify,
Whose might they claim, whose love they tell,
In Mary's body comes to dwell.

2. O Mother blest! The chosen shrine
Wherein the architect divine,
Whose hand contains the earth and sky,
Has come in human form to lie.

3. Blest in the message Gabriel brought;
Blest in the work the Spirit wrought;
Most blest, to bring to human birth
The long desired of all the earth.

4. O Lord, the Virgin born, to you
Eternal praise and laud are due,
Whom with the Father we adore
And Spirit blest for evermore.

*Text: Quem terra, pontus, aethera: Venantius Fortunatus, c. 530-609; tr. By John M. Neal. 1818-1866, alt.
Tune: EISENACH, LM; John H. Schein, 1586-1630.*

CANTICLE

Advent

Ant. His salvation is near to those who fear him
and his glory will dwell in our land.

Christmas

Ant. Let the faithful rejoice
and sing a new song
to the one who came to save us.

Lent

Ant. Sacrifices have little value in your sight,
but those who live in faith and accept your Word
make an acceptable offering.

Ordinary Time

Ant. Great and wonderful is your power, O Lord:
you sent your Spirit into the world
and in Christ you renewed all creation.

Or:

Ant. Praise the Lord and call upon his name,
proclaim his works among the peoples.

Canticle of Judith
(*Jdt* 16: 1-2a, 13-16)

The Lord, creator of the world, protects his people.

His mercy is on those who fear him in every generation (Lk 1: 50).

Strike up the instruments,
a song to my God with timbrels,
chant to the Lord with cymbals.
Sing to him a new song,
exalt and acclaim his name.

A new hymn I will sing to my God.
O Lord, great are you and glorious,
wonderful in power and unsurpassable.

Let your every creature serve you;
for you spoke, and they were made.
You sent forth your spirit, and they were created;
no one can resist your word.

The mountains to their bases, and the seas, are shaken;
the rocks, like wax, melt before your glance.
But to those who fear you,
you are merciful.

Glory to ...

Advent

Ant. His salvation is near to those who fear him
and his glory will dwell in our land.

Christmas

Ant. Let the faithful rejoice
and sing a new song
to the one who came to save us.

Lent

Ant. Sacrifices have little value in your sight,
but those who live in faith and accept your Word
make an acceptable offering.

Ordinary Time

Ant. Great and wonderful is your power, O Lord:
you sent your Spirit into the world
and in Christ you renewed all creation.

Or:

Ant. Praise the Lord and call upon his name,
proclaim his works among the peoples.

GOSPEL

"She was found with child through the power

of the Holy Spirit."

From the Gospel according to Matthew 1: 18-25

Now this is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the power of the Holy Spirit. Joseph her husband, an upright man unwilling to expose her to the law, decided to divorce her quietly. Such was his intention when suddenly the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream and said to him: "Joseph, son of David, have no fear about taking Mary as your wife. It is by the Holy Spirit that she has conceived this child. She is to have a son and you are to name him Jesus because he will save his people from their sins." All this happened to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The Virgin shall be with child and give birth to a son, and they shall call him Emmanuel," a name which means "God is with us." When Joseph awoke he did as the angel of the Lord had directed him and received her into his home as his wife. He had no relations with her at any time before she bore a son, whom he named Jesus.

This is the Word of the Lord.

After the proclamation of the Gospel, the Leader may comment on the text. If circumstances permit, this reflection could take the form of dialogue. If there is no reflection, a text from one of the Fathers of the Church or other approved authors may be read, or there may be a period of silent meditation.

THE ANGELUS

V. The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary.

R. And she conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary. Holy Mary.

V. Behold the handmaid of the Lord.

R. Be it done to me according to your Word.

Hail Mary. Holy Mary.

V. The Word was made flesh,

R. And dwelt among us.

Hail Mary. Holy Mary.

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

If the prayer intentions which follow are omitted, one of the prayers is said.

In some celebrations, the prayer intentions proposed for the recitation of the Angelus by the bishops of Rome over the centuries may be expressed at this point: the needs of the Church, peace, the propagation of the faith, Christian unity, In this proposed text, an intention for the Order has been included.

This prayer of petition should not become a generic prayer of the faithful.

After the last intention, one of the prayers is said.

L. In communion with all men and women,
and renewing our commitment of service
for the building up of the Kingdom,
let us present to God
the intentions recommended
by the Bishops of Rome
for the praying of the Angelus
and let us remember, too, the needs of our Order.

A. Fill us with your Spirit, Lord.

1. That the Church,
Bride of the Incarnate Word,
made fruitful by the power of the Spirit,
bring countless children to divine life,
let us pray to the Lord.
2. That the peace
brought to earth by the Incarnate Word
dwell in the heart of every person,
let us pray to the Lord.
3. That the Word of God,
announced by the prophets,
conceived in the womb of the Blessed Virgin,
and proclaimed by the apostles,
be accepted by all men and women
as source of salvation,
let us pray to the Lord.
4. That the brothers and sisters of our Order,
inspired by the fiat of the Blessed Virgin,
be open to the action of the Spirit
and become signs
of the presence of God in the world,
let us pray to the Lord.

One of the following prayers is said.

Lord,
fill our hearts with your love,
and as you revealed to us by an angel
the coming of your Son as one of us,
so lead us through his suffering and death
to the glory of his resurrection.
We ask this through the same Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

Or:

O God,

your Word became flesh
and was born of the Virgin Mary.
May we become more like Jesus Christ,
whom we acknowledge as our redeemer,
truly divine and truly human.
We ask this through the same Christ our Lord.

A. Amen.

Optional concluding prayers:

O God,
you willed that your Word
should become flesh in the virginal womb of Mary
at the message of an angel.
Grant that your people
who honor and love the Mother of God
may enjoy forever her maternal protection.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

A. Amen.

O God,
your Word was received by the Virgin Mary
and made his dwelling among us.
May his light
shine in the darkness of our hearts.
We ask this through the same Christ our Lord.

A. Amen.

O God of infinite goodness,
the immaculate Virgin Mary
accepted your Word at the message of an angel
and became the temple of God
through the power of the Holy Spirit.
Following her example,
may we receive your Word
with humble faith.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

A. Amen.

Almighty God,
you created us
and sent us your Word
who became flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary.
Look with love on your people
and hear our humble prayer.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

A. Amen.

God of mercy,
you willed that your Word
should become flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary.
Grant that we who have adored the mystery of Jesus,
your Son and our Brother,
truly divine and truly human,
may participate in his new and eternal life.
We ask this through the same Christ our Lord.

A. Amen.

O God,
grant that we may celebrate with faith
the mystery of Mary, virgin and mother,
who, by the power of the Holy Spirit,
conceived the Savior Jesus Christ,
your Son and our Brother,
who lives and reigns with you
forever and ever.

A. Amen.

DISMISSAL

L. May God,
who brought light to the darkness of the world
through the Incarnation of his Son,
make us attentive to his Word
and confirm us in his peace.

A. Amen.

If a presbyter or deacon presides at the celebration, he blesses the assembly with this or another usual form of blessing:

L. May the blessing of almighty God,
Father, Son and + Holy Spirit,
come upon you and remain with you forever.

A. Amen.

L. Go in the peace of the Lord
and cherish in your hearts the Word that saves.

A. Thanks be to God.

Note: All Bible texts are taken from: The New American Bible <http://www.vatican.va/archives/>