

RICHMOND TEAM MINISTRY

St John the Divine

The Eucharist in

Christmas

and Epiphany

Christmas tells of the wonderful mystery of the divine entering into our humanity through the birth of a fragile child. Since the end of the third century, Christians have celebrated this birth, recognising Jesus as Emmanuel, 'God with us', the fulfilment of Hebrew prophecy and the one in whom Christians believe we encounter all there is to be known of God. The task of the Christmas liturgy is to recall us to this central truth of 'The Word made flesh', as expounded by John in the magisterial opening to his Gospel: *'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.'*

The Christmas season is often celebrated for twelve days, ending with the Epiphany, though in a more recent custom, Christmas lasts for a full forty days, ending with the Feast of the Presentation (Candlemas) on 2 February. In addition to the joyful celebration of Christmas Day itself, the season also commemorates St Stephen, the first Christian martyr (26 December), St John, Apostle and Evangelist (27), and the Holy Innocents (28), who draw our attention to the plight of all those, children especially, in the world who remain at risk and in danger. The Naming of Jesus is commemorated on 1 January.

The **Epiphany** ('manifestation') became, in the Western churches, an occasion to celebrate one element in the story of Jesus' birth, the visit of the far-travelled Magi, theologically understood as the manifestation of Christ to the Gentile world, Matthew's account speaks simply of 'Wise men from the east'; later tradition fixed their number at three, made them kings and named them – Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar. Seen from this perspective, Epiphany is an apt season to pray for the worldwide mission of the Church.

Jesus' baptism by John is commemorated on the 1st Sunday after the Feast of the Epiphany. This is a key moment of revelation, confirming Jesus' unique status as the Son 'in whom [God] is well-pleased', and heralding his public ministry. The feast of the Conversion of St Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, appropriately falls in Epiphany, as does the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The story of Jesus changing water into wine at the wedding in Cana-in-Galilee is read in this season: this is the first of a number of 'signs' in John's Gospel through which the significance of Jesus is manifested.

Please stand when the bell rings.

The Gathering

In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

The Greeting

Either: The Lord be with you
and also with you

Or: Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord
Jesus Christ be with you
and also with you.

Please sit. The president welcomes the congregation.

Prayers of Penitence

Sundays during Christmastide:

The sun of righteousness has dawned with healing in his wings. Let us come to the light of Christ, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

Sundays during Epiphany:

The grace of God has dawned upon the world through our Saviour Jesus Christ, who sacrificed himself for us to purify a people as his own. Let us confess our sins.

The Baptism of Christ:

Because God was merciful, he saved us through the water of rebirth and the renewing power of the Holy Spirit. But through sin we have fallen away from our baptism. Let us

return to the Lord and renew our faith in his promises by confessing our sins in penitence.

Either: **Father eternal, giver of light and grace,
we have sinned against you and against our neighbour,
in what we have thought,
in what we have said and done,
through ignorance, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We have wounded your love
and marred your image in us.
We are sorry and ashamed,
and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us, forgive us all that is past
and lead us out from darkness
to walk as children of light. Amen.**

Or: **Most merciful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
we confess that we have sinned in thought, word and
deed.
We have not loved you with our whole heart.
We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.
In your mercy forgive what we have been,
help us to amend what we are,
and direct what we shall be,
that we may do justly, love mercy,
and walk humbly with you, our God.**

The president says:

Either: May the God of all healing and forgiveness draw you to himself and cleanse you from all your sins, that you may behold the glory of his Son, the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Or: Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and keep you in life eternal, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Please stand.

Gloria in Excelsis

**Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for
your glory.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the
world: have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive
our prayer.**

**For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

The Collect

The Collect of the day is said and all respond Amen.

The Liturgy of the Word

Please sit for the Readings and Psalm

First Reading

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm

*We read the psalm appointed for the day and the congregation are invited to join in **the response.***

Second Reading

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

*The choir may sing a **Gradual Hymn.***

Gospel Reading

Please stand.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to *N.*

Glory to you, O Lord.

At the end:

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

The Sermon

Please sit for the sermon.

The Nicene Creed

Please stand for the Creed.

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

Please sit for the prayers of intercession.

These or other responses may be used.

Either: Lord, in your mercy
Hear our prayer.

Or: Lord, hear us.
Lord, graciously hear us.

The following prayer may be said towards the end of the prayers of intercession:

**Hail Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.**

And at the end:

**Merciful Father,
accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

Please sit for the notices.

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

The Peace

Please stand.

The president introduces the peace with the following sentence:

Either: Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and his name shall be called the Price of Peace.

Or: Our Saviour Christ is the Price of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end.

Or: Christ is our peace. If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation. The old has passed away: behold, everything has become new.

Or for the Baptism of Christ:

We are the body of Christ. In the one Spirit we were all baptised into one body. Let us then pursue all that makes for peace and builds up our common life.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you.

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

We greet those around us with a sign of peace.

*The choir may sing an **Offertory Hymn.***

The table is prepared and bread and wine are placed upon it.

The president says:

Either: Word made flesh, life of the world, in your incarnation you embraced our poverty: by your Spirit may we share in your riches. **Amen.**

Or: Gracious God, accept the offering of your Church, the hearts of your people joined in praise and thanksgiving; in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. **Amen.**

Or: Lord, accept your people's gifts, not gold, frankincense or myrrh, but hearts and voices raised in praise of Jesus Christ, our light and our salvation. **Amen.**

Or for the Baptism of Christ:

Open the heavens, Holy Spirit, for us to see Jesus interceding for us; may we be willing to share his baptism, ready to share his cup and strengthened to serve him for ever. **Amen.**

Pray, my brothers and sisters, that our sacrifice may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands, for the praise and glory of his name, for our good, and the good of his Church.

The Eucharistic Prayer

Please stand.

Either: The Lord be with you
and also with you.

Or: The Lord is here
His Spirit is with us.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give thanks and praise.

For Sundays during Christmastide:

All glory and honour be yours always and everywhere, mighty creator, ever-living God. We give you thanks and praise for your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, who for love of our fallen race humbled himself, and was born of the Virgin Mary by the power of your Spirit, and lived as one of us.

In this mystery of the Word made flesh you have caused his light to shine in our hearts, to give knowledge of your glory in the face of Jesus Christ.

In him we see our God made visible and so are caught up in the love of the God we cannot see.

Therefore with all the angels of heaven we lift our voices to proclaim the glory of your name and sing our joyful hymn of praise:

For Sundays during Epiphany:

All honour and praise be yours, always and everywhere, mighty creator, ever-living God, through Jesus Christ your only Son our Lord: for at this time we celebrate your glory made present in our midst. In the coming of the magi, the King of all the world was revealed to the nations. In the waters of baptism, Jesus was revealed as the Christ, the Saviour sent to redeem us. In the water made wine, the new creation was revealed at the wedding feast. Poverty was turned to riches, sorrow into joy. Therefore, with all the angels of heaven, we lift our voices to proclaim the glory of your name and sing our joyful hymn of praise:

For the Baptism of Christ:

It is truly right and just, our duty and salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, holy Father, almighty and eternal God. You celebrated your new gift of baptism in signs and wonders at the Jordan. Your voice was heard from heaven to awaken faith in the presence among us of your Word made flesh. Your Spirit was seen as a dove, revealing Jesus as your servant, and anointing him with the oil of gladness to preach the good news to the poor. Therefore, as we celebrate the union of earth and heaven, we rejoice to echo the song of the angels in heaven, for ever praising you and saying:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Please sit when the bell rings.

We praise and bless you, loving Father, through Jesus Christ, our Lord; and as we obey his command, send your Holy Spirit, that broken bread and wine outpoured may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died, he had supper with his friends and, taking bread, he praised you.

He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:

Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.

Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:

Drink this, all of you;

this is my blood of the new covenant,

which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice
made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation, we
proclaim his death and resurrection until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith

Christ has died:

Christ is risen:

Christ will come again.

Lord of all life, help us to work together for that day when
your kingdom comes and justice and mercy will be seen in all
the earth.

Look with favour on your people, gather us to your loving
arms and bring us with (N and) all the saints to feast at your
table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of
the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory are yours, O loving
Father, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us:

Our Father, who art in heaven,

hallowed be thy name;

thy kingdom come; thy will be done;

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation;

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Breaking of the Bread

The president breaks the consecrated bread.

Either: We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

**Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

Or: Every time we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

The Agnus Dei

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.**

Giving of Communion

Jesus / This is the Lamb of God
who takes away the sin of the world.

Blessed are those who are called to his supper.

**Lord, I am not worthy to receive you,
but only say the word, and I shall be healed.**

The president and the people receive communion. You are welcome to receive communion today, but if you would prefer to receive a blessing then please carry this service book with you.

During the distribution of communion the choir may sing a motet / anthem.

Prayer after Communion

Silence is kept. The Post Communion prayer is said.

Either: **Almighty God, we thank you for feeding us with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ. Through him we offer you our souls and bodies to be a living sacrifice.**

Send us out in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory. Amen.

Or: **Father of all, we give you thanks and praise, that when we were still far off you met us in your Son and brought us home.**

Dying and living, he declared your love, gave us grace, and opened the gate of glory. May we who share Christ's body live his risen life; we who drink his cup bring life to others; we whom the Spirit lights give light to the world. Keep us firm in the hope that you have set before us, so we and all your children shall be free, and the whole earth live to praise your name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Dismissal

The Blessing

Please stand.

Either: Christ, who by his incarnation gathered into one things earthly and heavenly, fill you with peace and goodwill, and made you partakers of the divine nature;

Or: Christ the Son of God perfect in you the image of his glory and gladden your hearts with the good news of his kingdom;

Or: Christ our Lord, to whom kings bowed down in worship and offered gifts, reveal to you his glory and pour upon you the riches of his grace;

Or for the Baptism of Christ:

May God, who in Christ gives us a spring of water welling up to eternal life, perfect in you the image of his glory;

And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

Amen.

Either: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen.

Or: God in the peace of Christ.

Thanks be to God.

