

# Our Lady of Loretto and St Michael and St Martin of Tours

## FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

(Year A)



Heavenly Father, you exalted the lowly, the humble and meek: give us humble and contrite hearts.

**Kyrie eleison...**

Lord Jesus, you grew in the Virgin's womb: be born in our hearts and lives.

**Christe eleison...**

Holy Spirit, you make God present amongst us: fill us with your heavenly gifts.

**Kyrie eleison..**

**FIRST READING** A reading from the prophet Isaiah (7:10-14)

The Lord spoke to Ahaz and said, 'Ask the Lord your God for a sign for yourself coming either from the depths of Sheol or from the heights above.' 'No', Ahaz answered 'I will not put the Lord to the test.'

Then he said:

'Listen now, House of David: are you not satisfied with trying the patience of men without trying the patience of my God, too? The Lord himself, therefore, will give you a sign.

It is this: the maiden is with child and will soon give birth to a son whom she will call Emmanuel, a name which means "God-is-with-us".'

**The word of the Lord.**

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 23:1-6. R. Cf. vv.7,10)**

**R. Let the Lord enter! He is the king of glory.**

The Lord's is the earth and its fullness, the world and all its peoples.

It is he who set it on the seas; on the waters he made it firm. **R.**

Who shall climb the mountain of the Lord?

Who shall stand in his holy place?

The man with clean hands and pure heart, who desires not worthless things. **R.**

He shall receive blessings from the Lord and reward from the God who saves him. Such are the men who seek him, seek the face of the God of Jacob. **R.**

**SECOND READING** A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans (1:1-7)

From Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus who has been called to be an apostle, and specially chosen to preach the Good News that God promised long ago through his prophets in the scriptures.

This news is about the Son of God who, according to the human nature he took, was a descendant of David: it is about Jesus Christ our Lord who, in the order of the spirit, the spirit of holiness that was in him, was proclaimed Son of God in all his power through his resurrection from the dead. Through him we received grace and our apostolic mission to preach the obedience of faith to all pagan nations in honour of his name. You are one of these nations, and by his call belong to Jesus Christ. To you all, then, who are God's beloved in Rome, called to be saints, may God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ send grace and peace.

**The word of the Lord.**

**Alleluia, alleluia! The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and they will call him Emmanuel, a name which means 'God is with us.' Alleluia!**

**GOSPEL** A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew (1:18-24)

This is how Jesus Christ came to be born. His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph; but before they came to live together she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a man of honour and wanting to spare her publicity, decided to divorce her informally. He had made up his mind to do this when the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because she has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins.' Now all this took place to fulfil the words spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and they will call him Emmanuel, a name which means 'God-is-with-us.'

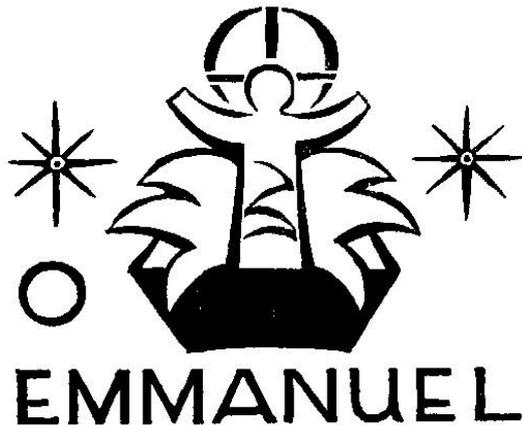
When Joseph woke up he did what the angel of the Lord had told him to do: he took his wife to his home. **The**

**Gospel of the Lord.**

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The Nicene Creed

**I believe in one God,  
the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all things visible and invisible.**

**I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Only Begotten Son of God,  
born of the Father before all ages.  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
consubstantial with the Father;  
through him all things were made.  
For us men and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven, *(all Bow until man)*  
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate  
of the Virgin Mary,  
and became man.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,  
he suffered death and was buried,  
and rose again on the third day  
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.**

**I 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 adored and  
glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.**

**I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.  
I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins  
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead  
and the life of the world to come. Amen**

## Year A – Matthew’s Gospel

*"When we turn to Matthew, we turn to the book which may well be called the most important single document of the Christian faith, for in it we have the fullest and the most systematic account of the life and the teachings of Jesus."  
William Barclay.*

The Gospel of Matthew has long been the most popular of the four Gospels: consistently placed first in the canonical lists, it was widely used in early Christian communities. Even today, people are often most familiar with Matthew’s Gospel. For example, over the next year, you’ll be encountering some of Jesus’ most famous teachings: “Love your enemies,” “Turn the other cheek,” “Do not be anxious about tomorrow,” “Let the children come,” “Go make disciples of all nations,” and the Lord’s prayer in the form most churches use today. As the most Jewish of the four Gospels, Matthew also provides a nice bridge between the two testaments of the Christian Bible.

The author implied by the text itself was clearly an early Jewish Christian who was well-educated and multilingual (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek). Most scholars believe the Gospel was written from Antioch in Syria during the late 70’s early 80’s AD

Matthew’s intended audience was probably a relatively well-to-do city church made up mostly of educated Jews who already believed Jesus was the Messiah. It includes 61 quotations from the Old Testament, (31 in Mark, 26 in Luke, and 16 in John). Underlying these quotations is the conviction that God actively works, accomplishing the divine purposes foretold in the Jewish Messianic prophecies.

Matthew’s is the most clearly organized of the four Gospels. Matthew adheres fairly closely to the structural outline of the Gospel of Mark, although he clearly found Mark’s beginning and ending to be insufficient, since he added birth stories (such as we have in today’s gospel) and post-resurrection scenes to his version. Alternating between blocks of narrative and blocks of discourse, Matthew’s Gospel is built around five major speeches of Jesus, each of which concerns the Kingdom of Heaven:

The Sermon on the Mount (The Ethics of the Kingdom)  
The sending the Twelve (The Mission of the Kingdom)  
Parables (The Nature of the Kingdom)  
Community Instructions (The Governing the Kingdom)  
The Olivet Discourse (The Future of the Kingdom)