

(Station at st. Mary Major)

The shortness of the winter days and the difficulty of going in procession to the Vatican lead to the substitution of St. Mary Major as the station Church instead of St. Peter's. In the Middle Ages the Pope celebrated Mass in the great hall of Sicininus with unusual ceremony and great solemnity. The Introit is from Isaiah: "Behold a child is born to us, and a son is given to us," Who, notwithstanding the infinite nothingness to Which He stoops, is God eternal, the creator of the universe, Who rules and governs all things in the power of His Word, and upon Whose shoulder rests the divine and universal monarchy. He, as the brightness and express image of the Father, will reveal Him to men, and will be to them the envoy of the Most Holy Trinity, the angel or messenger of the glad tidings of redemption.

The Gospel, from St. John contains, perhaps, the most sublime page to be found in the whole of the Scriptures. It speaks of the twofold begetting of the Word in His divine and in His human nature. As the image of the supreme artificer, the Word is at once the prototype and the pattern of all that is created; but in Him this image is identical with His own substance, so that all things live in Him.

Jesus is born of woman in order that we may one day cease to be the children of woman and may be raised to the dignity of sonship to almighty God. The Word joins our human nature to His person, to make us sharers in the divine grace.

INTROIT Isaiah 9: 6

Puer natus est nobis, et filius datus est nobis: cujus impérium super húmerum ejus: et vocábitur nomen ejus, magni consilii Angelus. (Ps. 97: 1) Cantáte Dómino cánticum novum: quia mirabilia fecit. Glória Patri et Fílio et Spíritui Sancto, sicut erat in princípío, et nunc, et semper, et in sæcula sæculórum. Amen. Puer natus est nobis, et filius datus est nobis: cujus impérium super húmerum ejus: et vocábitur nomen ejus, magni consilii Angelus.

COLLECT

Concéde, quæsumus, omnipotens Deus: ut nos Unigéniti tui nova per carnem Natívitatis líberet; quos sub peccáti jugo vetústa sérvitus tenet. Per eúndem Dóminum nostrum Jesum Christum, Fílium tuum, qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitáte Spíritus Sancti, Deus, per ómnia sæcula sæculórum.

EPISTLE Hebrews 1: 1-12

Multifáram multísque modis olim Deus loquens pátribus in prophétis novíssime diébus locútus est nobis in Fílio, quem constitúit hærédem universórum, per quem fecit et sæcula. Qui cum sit splendor glóriæ, et figúra substántiæ ejus, portánsque ómnia verbo virtútis suæ, purgatiónem peccatórum fáciens, sedet ad dexteram majestátis in excélsis: tanto mélior Ángelus efféctus, quanto differéntius præ illis nomen hæreditávit. Cui enim dixit aliquándo Angelórum: Fílius meus es tu, ego hódie génuí te? Et rursus: Ego ero illi in patrem, et ipse erit mihi in filium. Et cum íterum introducít primogénitum in orbem terræ, dicit: Et adórent eum omnes Ángeli Dei. Et ad Ángelos quidem dicit: Qui facit Ángelos suos spíritus, et ministros suos flammam ignis. Ad Fílium autem: Thronus tuus, Deus, in sæculum sæculi: virga æquitátis, virga regni tui. Dilexísti justítiam, et odísti iniquitátem: proptérea unxit te Deus, Deus tuus, óleo exsultatiónis præ partícipibus tuis. Et: Tu in princípío, Domine, terram fundásti; et ópera mánuum tuarum sunt cæli. Ipsi peribébunt, tu autem permanébis; et omnes ut vestiméntum veteráscent, et velut amíctum mutábis eos, et mutabúntur: tu autem idem ipse es, et anni tui non deficiunt.

GRADUAL Psalms 97: 3-4, 2

Vidérunt omnes fines terræ salutáre Dei nostri: jubilaté Deo omnis terra. Notum fecit Dóminus salutáre suum: ante conspéctum géntium revelávit justítiam suam.

LESSER ALLELUIA Psalms 2: 7

Allelúja, allelúja. Dies sanctificátus illúxit nobis: Veníte, gentes, et adoráte Dóminum: quia hódie descendit lux magna super terram. Allelúja.

GOSPEL John 1: 1-14

In princípío erat Verbum, et Verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat Verbum. Hoc erat in princípío apud Deum. Omnia per ipsum facta sunt: et sine ipso factum est nihil quod factum est: in ipso vita erat, et vita erat lux hóminum: et lux in ténebris lucet, et ténebræ eam non comprehendérunt. Fuit homo missus a Deo, cui nomen erat Joánnes. Hic venit in testimónium, ut testimónium perhibéret de lúmine, ut omnes créderent per illum. Non erat ille lux, sed ut testimónium perhibéret de lúmine. Erat lux vera, quæ illúminat omnem hóminem veniéntem in hunc mundum. In mundo erat, et mundus per ipsum factus est, et mundus eum non cognóvit. In própria venit, et sui eum non recepérunt. Quotquot autem recepérunt eum, dedit eis potestátem filios Dei fieri, his, qui credunt in nómine ejus: qui non ex sanguínibus, neque ex voluntáte carnis, neque ex voluntáte viri, sed ex Deo nati sunt. *(Hic genuflectitur.)*

ET VERBUM CARO FACTUM EST, et habitávit in nobis: et vídimus glóriam ejus, et glóriam quasi Unigéniti a Patre, plenum grátiae et veritátis.

OFFERTORY Psalms 88: 12, 15

Tui sunt cæli, et tua est terra, orbem terrárum, et plenitúdinem ejus tu fundásti: justítia et júdicium præparátió sedis tuæ.

SECRET

Obláta, Dómine, múnera nova Unigéniti tui nativitate sanctifica: nosque a peccatórum nostrórum máculis emúnda. Per eúndem Dóminum nostrum Jesum Christum, Fílium tuum, qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitáte Spíritus Sancti, Deus, per ómnia sæcula sæculórum.

PREFACE OF THE NATIVITY

Vere dignum et justum est, æquum et salutáre, nos tibi semper, et ubique grátias ágere: Dómine sancte, Pater omnipotens, ætérne Deus. Quia per incarnáti Verbi mystérium, nova mentis nostræ óculis lux tuæ claritátis infúlsit: ut dum visibíliter Deum cognóscimus, per hunc in invisibílium amórem rapiámur. Et ídeo cum Ángelis et Archángelis, cum Thronis et Dóminatióibus, cumque omni milítia cæléstis exércitus, hymnum glóriæ tuæ cánimus sine fine dicéntes:

COMMUNICANTES FOR CHRISTMAS

Communicántes, et diem sacratíssimum celebrántes, quo beátæ Mariæ intemeráta virgíntas huic mundo édidit Salvatórem: sed et memóriam venerántes, in primis ejúsdem gloriósis semper Virgínis Mariæ, Genetrix ejúsdem Dei et Dómini nostri Jesu Christi: sed et beáti Joseph, ejúsdem Virgínis Sponsi, et beatórum Apostolórum ac Mártyrum tuórum, Petri et Pauli, Andréæ, Jacóbi, Joánnis, Thomæ, Jacóbi, Philíppi, Bartholomæi, Matthæi, Cleméntis, Xysti, Cornélii, Cypriáni, Lauréntii, Chrysógoni, Joánnis et Pauli, Cosmæ et Damiáni: et ómnium Sanctórum tuórum; quorum méritis, precibúisque concédis, ut in ómnibus protectiósne tuæ muniámur auxilió. Per eúndem Christum Dóminum Nostrum. Amen

COMMUNION Psalms 97: 3

Vidérunt omnes fines terræ salutáre Dei nostri.

POSTCOMMUNION

Præsta, quæsumus, omnipotens Deus: ut natus hódie Salvátor mundi, sicut divínæ nobis generatiónis est auctor; ita et immortalitátis sit ipse largítor. Qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitáte Spíritus Sancti, Deus, per ómnia sæcula sæculórum.

A Child is born to us, and a Son is given to us: Whose government is upon His shoulder and His Name shall be called the Angel of Great Counsel. (Ps. 97: 1) Sing ye to the Lord a new canticle: for He hath done wonderful things. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. A Child is born to us, and a Son is given to us: Whose government is upon His shoulder and His Name shall be called the Angel of Great Counsel.

Grant, we beseech Thee, almighty God, that the new birth in the flesh of Thine only-begotten Son may set us free, whom the old bondage doth hold under the yoke of sin. Through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who lives and reigns with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever.

God, Who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, last of all in these days hath spoken to us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the world: Who being the brightness of His glory and the figure of His substance, and upholding all things by the word of His power, making purgation of sins, sitteth on the right hand of the Majesty on high: being made so much better than the angels, as He hath inherited a more excellent name than they. For to which of the angels hath He said at any time: Thou art my Son, today have I begotten Thee? And again: I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son? And again, when He bringeth in the first begotten into the world, He saith: And let all the angels of God adore Him. And to the angels indeed He saith: He that maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire. But to the Son: Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a scepter of justice is the scepter of Thy kingdom. Thou hast loved justice and hated iniquity: therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows. And: Thou in the beginning, O Lord, didst found the earth: and the works of Thy hands are the heavens. They shall perish, but Thou shalt continue: and they shall all grow old as a garment: and as a vesture shalt Thou change them and they shall be changed: but Thou art the self-same, and Thy years shall not fail.

All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God: sing joyfully to God, all the earth. The Lord hath made known His salvation: He hath revealed His justice in the sight of the Gentiles.

Alleluia, alleluia. A sanctified day hath shown upon us: come, ye Gentiles, and adore the Lord: for this day a great light hath descended upon the earth. Alleluia.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was made nothing that was made: in Him was life, and the life was the light of men; and the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to testify concerning the light, that all might believe through Him. He was not the light, but he was to testify concerning the light. That was the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them He gave power to become sons of God, to them that believe in His Name, who are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

(Here all kneel)

AND THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH, and dwelt among us: and we saw His glory, the glory as of the Only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Thine are the heavens, and thine is the earth, the world and the fullness thereof Thou hast founded: justice and judgment are the preparation of Thy Throne.

Sanctify, O Lord, the gifts offered to Thee, by the new birth of Thine Only-begotten Son: and cleanse us from the stains of our sins. Through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who lives and reigns with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever.

It is truly meet and just, right and for our salvation, that we should at all times and in all places, give thanks unto Thee, O holy Lord, Father almighty, everlasting God: for through the Mystery of the word made flesh, the new light of Thy glory hath shone upon the eyes of our mind, so that while we acknowledge God in visible form, we may through Him be drawn to the love of things invisible. And therefore with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dóminations, and with all the hosts of the heavenly army, we sing the hymn of Thy glory, evermore saying:

Communicating, and keeping this most holy day, in which the spotless virginity of blessed Mary brought forth a Savior to this world and also reverencing the memory of the same glorious Mary, ever Virgin Mother of the same our God and Lord Jesus Christ: as also blessed Joseph, Spouse of the Virgin, and of Thy blessed Apostles and Martyrs Peter and Paul, Andrew, James, John, Thomas, James, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Simon and Thaddeus: Linus, Cyprian, Clement, Sixtus, Cornelius, Cyren, Lawrence, Chrysogonus, John and Paul, Cosmas and Damian, and of all Thy Saints, through whose merits and prayers, grant that we may in all things be defended by the help of Thy protection. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

Grant, we beseech Thee, almighty God, that as the Savior of the world, born on this day, is the Author of our heavenly birth, so He may also be to us the Giver of immortality. Who lives and reigns with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever.