



## **The First Sunday of Christmas and Holy Innocents**

**Year B**

**28<sup>th</sup> December, 2014**

The notes for this week and next week are not as comprehensive as customary or as we would wish.

Apologies for any inconvenience - the situation is not of our making or liking! The readings in the C of I Lectionary at times are not in synch with the RCL as used in most other parts of the Anglican Communion. This affects the use of our sources.

### **READINGS**

#### **The First Sunday of Christmas Year B**

**The First Reading** - Isaiah 61:10 - 62: 3

**The Psalm** - Psalm 148

**The Second Reading** - Galatians 4: 4-7

**The Gospel Reading** - Luke 2: 15-21

[Click here to view the readings](http://bible.oremus.org/?show_adj=no&passages=Isaiah%2061:10%20-%20%2062:%203%0Acw%20Psalm%20148%0AGalatians%204:%204-7%0ALuke%202:%2015-21)

[http://bible.oremus.org/?show\\_adj=no&passages=Isaiah%2061:10%20-%20%2062:%203%0Acw%20Psalm%20148%0AGalatians%204:%204-7%0ALuke%202:%2015-21](http://bible.oremus.org/?show_adj=no&passages=Isaiah%2061:10%20-%20%2062:%203%0Acw%20Psalm%20148%0AGalatians%204:%204-7%0ALuke%202:%2015-21)

#### **Holy Innocents Year B**

**The First Reading** - Jeremiah 31: 15-17

**The Psalm** - Psalm 124

**The Second Reading** - 1 Corinthians 1: 26-29

**The Gospel Reading** - Matthew 2: 13-18

[Click here to view the readings](#)

[http://bible.oremus.org/?show\\_adj=no&passages=Jeremiah%2031:%2015-17%0Acw%20Psalm%20124%0A1%20Corinthians%201:%2026-29%20%0AMatthew%202:%2013-18](http://bible.oremus.org/?show_adj=no&passages=Jeremiah%2031:%2015-17%0Acw%20Psalm%20124%0A1%20Corinthians%201:%2026-29%20%0AMatthew%202:%2013-18)

## COLLECTS OF THE DAY

### Collect One

Almighty God,  
who hast given us thy only-begotten Son  
to take our nature upon him,  
and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin;  
Grant that we being regenerate,  
and made thy children by adoption and grace,  
may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit;  
through the same our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who liveth and reigneth with thee and the same Spirit,  
ever one God, world without end.

### Collect Two

Almighty God,  
who wonderfully created us in your own image  
and yet more wonderfully restored us  
through your Son Jesus Christ:  
Grant that, as he came to share in our humanity,  
so we may share the life of his divinity;  
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 1

*Presider or deacon*

As we join the whole creation and celebrate with joy the Word made flesh, let us offer

prayers to God who dwells among us to the end of time.

*Deacon or other leader*

By the wedding of the human and divine natures in Christ Jesus.

**Glory and praise to you, O living God.**

For *N* our bishop and the presbyters, for the deacons and all who minister in Christ, and  
for all the holy people of God.

**Glory and praise to you, O living God.**

For all believers who put their trust in the incarnate Son of God.

**Glory and praise to you, O living God.**

For the leaders of the nations and all in authority, and for peace and justice.

**Glory and praise to you, O living God.**

For the conversion of the whole human race to our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

**Glory and praise to you, O living God.**

For travellers, for the sick and the suffering, for the hungry and the oppressed, for those in  
prison, and for the dying and the dead.

**Glory and praise to you, O living God.**

For our deliverance from all affliction, strife, and need.

**Glory and praise to you, O living God.**

Remembering *N*, and all the saints, let us  
offer ourselves and one another to the living God through Christ. **To you, O Lord.**

*Presider*

Source of grace and truth, accept the prayers we offer on this joyful feast.

May we come

to see the true light who shines throughout the world and who is God for all eternity;

through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 2**

Gracious God, Precious Saviour, Sustaining Spirit, all time is in your hands. We confess the trivial ways in which we misuse precious moments, days, and years. Help us hear anew your call to holy living and use the time we have been given to be productive builders of your Kingdom here... Lord hear our prayer....

Loving God, maker of heaven and earth and all that is in them, we give you thanks for the newness of life each day, each year; and for your holy

presence with us in all times of work and play, joy and difficulty. Help us in this hour, at the doorway to a new era, to be good stewards of time; to be always engaged in doing your will; and to be ever watchful for the new thing you are doing; so that we might be partners in your mission of reconciling the world through Jesus your Son, he who lights our way and who has proclaimed this the year of your favour... Lord hear our prayer...

Father - as we recall this day your purpose to have all people live an abundant and wholesome life, your desire that the blind might see, the lame walk, the poor have good news proclaimed to them, and the prisoners set free, we remember before you those in special need this day. We hold up before you O God..... Lord hear our prayer....

We recall too O God, those who are especially upon our hearts this morning, those named before you - and those whom we name silently before you now.... Lord hear our prayer...

Bless O God all people of this world - and most particularly smile upon your Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church - that world wide congregation called into being by your Son, Christ Jesus, the one who first taught us to pray to you as one family, saying... Our Father

## **POST COMMUNION**

Heavenly Father,  
you have refreshed us with this heavenly sacrament.  
As your Son came to live among us,  
grant us grace to live our lives,  
united in love and obedience,  
as those who long to live with him in heaven;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

## **PRAYERS**

O Holy One,  
heavenly angels spoke to earthly shepherds  
and eternity entered time in the child of Bethlehem.  
Through the telling of the Christmas story,  
let our temporal lives be caught up in the eternal  
in that same child,  
that we might join shepherds and all the heavenly host  
in praising the coming of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

God of glory,  
your splendour shines from a manger in Bethlehem,  
where the Light of the world is humbly born  
into the darkness of human night.  
Open our eyes to Christ's presence in the shadows of our world,  
so that we, like him, may become beacons of your justice,  
and defenders of all for whom there is no room. Amen.

Light of life, you came in flesh,  
born into human pain and joy,  
and gave us power to be your children.  
Grant us faith, O Christ, to see your presence among us,  
so that all of creation may sing new songs of gladness  
and walk in the way of peace. Amen.

We bless you, Abba, Father,  
for you have visited your people  
in one like us in all things but sin,  
and in human fragility you have revealed  
the face of divinity.  
Gather into your arms  
all the peoples of the world,  
so that in your embrace  
we may find blessing, peace,  
and the fullness of our inheritance  
as your daughters and sons. Amen.

With the angels of heaven we proclaim your glory, O God.  
As the radiance of your presence lights up the heavens,  
we pray for enlightenment  
for your church on behalf of the whole world.  
Grant that, through our prayers,  
our lives may radiate the presence of Christ  
to all who dwell on earth,  
for he is our Lord for ever and ever. Amen.

God of all ages,  
in the birth of Christ  
your boundless love for your people  
shattered the power of darkness.  
Be born in us with that same love and light,

that our song may blend with all the choirs of heaven and earth to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

## LECTIONARY NOTES

### **Isaiah 61:10-62:3:**

"my whole being shall exult in my God." How do you exalt God with your *whole being*? We think of ourselves so much as in our heads, so much about our souls, relegating our bodies to just be flesh-things that contain us on earth. But Isaiah sees a whole-body worshipping of God. Do you put your *whole self* into worship?

I don't usually feel inspired by bride-to-be imagery in the Bible, but I get what it means to convey. Have you ever been part of a wedding and the preparations of the wedding party? All decked out, in the best finery, with so much desire to please the other spouse-to-be. That's how we, God's people, are meant to feel about being ready to meet God.

### **Psalms 148:**

I like Psalms that are simple and clear in their focus: Praise God, everything and everyone. It is a reminder to me, to us, in our worship preparations, to remember what is our focus: Praise God, everything and everyone. Sometimes we try so hard for something fantastic that we lose focus on why we put together such wonderful music, beautiful liturgies, and carefully crafted sermons. Praise God!

Psalms like this that include things like: sun, moon, stars, mountains, fire, hair, hills, trees, cattle, birds, young, old, men, women, rules, snow, and wind, all in one litany remind us of our relationship with ALL creation. A little stewardship of the earth, please? If the psalm says all creation praises God, we do a good job of putting a stop to the praise when we destroy the creation...

This image sort of reminds me of *The Lion King* when all the animals come to see the new baby Simba be 'baptized' – all creation is joining in. What a picture!

Creation is commanded by the psalmist to give praise because of its existence. Do we require more of God to give God praise? Do we only feel like praising when things are going our way or when we've received some desired request? Or do we praise because we are, because we have being?

V. 11-12 say that Kings and the regular people, rulers, young men and women, old men and women, all should praise together. Is that a good picture

of worship today? How do we worship together from different walks of life? Who is missing from this full picture in our own congregations?

**Galatians 4:4-7:**

Adoption language. I have trouble with this language of Paul's. I don't know what to think. Are we only God's adopted children because of Jesus Christ, or are we God's children already because we are created in God's image? I can see good theological arguments either way. If we're God's adopted children, then that means like parents adopt children today, God *chooses* to be our parent. I like that image. But I don't like an implication that we're only God's children because of Christ. Aren't all people God's children?

What does it mean to be a child of God? Think about the place of children in the Bible - in Jesus' teaching. How are you entering God's kingdom in a childlike way?

**Luke 2:22-40:**

Simeon in particular has been waiting for sometime to see the Messiah, even though he had no idea when this would happen. What have you been waiting your whole life to see? What's worth such wait?

I feel sorry for poor Mary, hearing Simeon's confusing and upsetting words about her son. Do you think she thought he was a crazy man, or do you think she already had a feeling about what he said?

When you look at a child, can you envision in them all that they might be? God looks at us that way, I think, even when we are no longer young in years, always seeing all that we might be.

*By Beth Quick*

**ONLINE SERMON SOURCES**

**Richard Fairchild - Luke 2: 15 - 40**

This morning we heard a portion of the "Christmas Story" that we do not hear as often as the rest. Beginning from the worship of the Shepherds and the naming of the child, we heard what happened when, in accordance with the law of God, Mary and Joseph presented Jesus at the temple...

**The first thing** is that they named Jesus in the manner God had commanded through the Angel Gabriel. They gave him the name "Saviour" for through him God would redeem his people. They believed in what they had been told in their dreams and visions - and obeyed the giver...

**That is the second thing** Joseph and Mary did - they made Jesus a part of the family of God. They said to God - look he is a child of promise - this baby is meant with all who call on your name - to inherit your kingdom. He is your servant - he is one of us - the ones you gave yourself to after the time of Noah - the ones you said to Abraham and to Moses would be a nation of priests and kings to serve you and bring everlasting glory to your name amongst all the nations...

**The third thing** that Mary and Joseph did was, when the time of purification was over was present Jesus, as their first born, to God at the temple.

This is a very special thing to do - a thing that is related to all the commands regarding things that are first. Each of them - from the first fruits of our gardens to the first born of our loins and wombs - belong to God. And God asks that we present them to him where he abides. And name them his. Full text at -

<http://www.rockies.net/~spirit/sermons/c-ch01su.php>

### **The New Normal - Matthew 2: 13 - 23. Day 1**

Since Christmas Day has just passed, I have an obligation to remind you of what you already know: "Christmas is not just one day of the year! It is a whole season. There are twelve wonderful days of Christmas!"

It's my job as a preacher to say that; but, now, here's a confession. I don't care how many times I countdown that holiday song...the one with the drummers drumming and the ladies dancing and the swans a-swimming...all the way down to today, "on the second day of Christmas," with its duet of doves...though I know it is still Christmas...in a way...it feels like Christmas already is over.

For good or bad, you may have already sent the shepherds back to the attic, back to their Styrofoam fields to keep watch over their china crèche flock by night. You may be ready to move on because it feels like Christmas should be over.....

[http://day1.org/2534-the\\_new\\_normal](http://day1.org/2534-the_new_normal)

### **Herod and Historical probability - Matthew 2: 13 - 23. Sermons from Seattle**

There are so many wonderful stories in the Christmas saga. We know the story about the sheep and the shepherds and the angels above them, singing

"Glory to God in the highest." We know the story of the shepherds going to the stable and the manger and visiting the baby Jesus who is lying in a manger. We love the story of the wise men with their gold and frankincense and myrrh. These are wonderful Christmas stories.

But so quickly the story turns ugly, and we often forget that in the Christmas season. The Christmas scene on Christmas Eve is such an idyllic moment but it turns so quickly into an ugly moment. Herod the beast, Herod the murderer, became insanely jealous for his own reign, and he decided to murder all the baby boys two years and under. The mothers began to wail in pain.

[http://www.sermonsfromseattle.com/series\\_a\\_herod\\_and\\_historical\\_probability.htm](http://www.sermonsfromseattle.com/series_a_herod_and_historical_probability.htm)

### **Touched by an Angel - Matthew 2: 13 - 23. Sermon help.com**

A British newspaper ran a story reported by the staff members of Dorset County Hospital. It concerned a little boy's personal account of his recent tonsillectomy at the hospital. He said, "When I went into the big room it was very bright there were two lady angels dressed in white. Then two men angels looked down my throat and one said, 'God! Look at that child's tonsils.' Then God looked and said, 'I'll take them out at once'."

The lad obviously mistook a doctor for an angel. And yet, it seemed perfectly natural to him that angels should be in the operating room watching out for him. Are angels just a figment of a child's imagination? Or, is there something to the whole ideal of angels with whom it is possible for human beings to experience a close encounter of the spiritual kind? The popularity of the CBS show, "Touched by an Angel" has brought many to the question, "Is this stuff for real -- could I be touched by an angel?"

<http://www.lectionarysermons.com/ADV-X5-98.html>

### **CHILDREN**

#### **Richard Fairchild - Children's Gifts**

<http://www.rockies.net/~spirit/sermons/c-ch01su.php>

#### **New Year Resolutions - Anna's Hosannas**

Scroll down to 'Teaching on your own'...

<http://annashosannas.net/New-Years-A.php>

["Christmastide: A Reminder Where Our Hearts Belong."](#) the Rev. William McCord Thigpen, III, *Day 1*

[http://day1.org/1676-christmastide\\_a\\_reminder\\_where\\_our\\_hearts\\_belong](http://day1.org/1676-christmastide_a_reminder_where_our_hearts_belong)

"In the Temple," the Rev. Dr. Barbara K. Lundblad, *Day 1*

[http://day1.org/1023-in\\_the\\_temple](http://day1.org/1023-in_the_temple)

"Honor Life - in Its Early Years and in Its Decline," Dianne Bergant, CSA, *America*

[http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article\\_id=3358](http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article_id=3358)

"Words to Live By: A Light to Guide," John R Donahue, SJ, *America*

[http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article\\_id=2399](http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article_id=2399)

## HYMN SUGGESTIONS

- [By the Creator, Joseph was appointed](#)
- [Come now, and praise the humble saint](#)
- [Love came down at Christmas](#)
- [O God of Bethel, by whose hand](#)
- [O Savior of our fallen race](#)
- [O sleep now, holy baby](#)
- [Once in royal David's city](#)
- [Our Father, by whose Name](#)
- [Sing of Mary, pure and lowly](#)
- [When Jesus left his Father's throne](#)

Use Oremus Hymnal site for words

**Please commend this resource to colleagues - they simply send an email to [churchnewsireland@gmail.com](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.com) with the message Passwords in the title**