



WEEKLY GOSPEL REFLECTION



Mary, the Holy Mother of God, Cycle C

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This passage repeats the gospel that is used at the Christmas Mass at Dawn and then adds a verse that links it to this feast by recalling Jesus' circumcision and naming. At the same time, this passage helps us to focus on Mary as the Mother of God, treasuring the events of his birth in her heart.

The final verse echoes the second reading by reminding us that Jesus was circumcised according to the law. This calls us to reflect on God's perfect plan for Jesus, and all of us: conceived and incarnate at a time and place, according to God's perfect plan. This reading stresses the truth of the Incarnation, that Jesus fully shared our human condition.

This verse also echoes the first reading with its stress on the name of God. The name given to Jesus is divinely chosen; it was announced by Gabriel even before his conception.

Reflecting on this story again only a week after Christmas need not make it redundant. There is a need to contemplate the birth of Christ and meditate on the events that surrounded it, much as Mary did. Because there are several Gospels on Christmas, you may not have heard this passage. If you did not come to the dawn Mass. Try to reflect on this story as if you were hearing it for the first. We rejoice that Mary desires to be a mother to each of us, eager to have us formed to the purpose for which each of us was conceived. That was her destiny for Jesus. That is her desire for each of us. Whenever you ask, "*Holy Mary, Mother of God pray for us*" you can be assured that she will hear and answer.

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A reading from the holy gospel according to Luke.

When the angels had left them
the shepherds said to one another,
*"Let us go now to Bethlehem
and see this thing that has taken place,
which the Lord has made known to us."*

So they went with haste
and found Mary and Joseph,
and the child lying in the manger.

When they saw this,
they made known what had been told them about this child;
and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them.

But Mary treasured all these words
and pondered them in her heart.

The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God
for all they had heard and seen,
as it had been told them.

After eight days had passed,
it was time to circumcise the child;
and he was called Jesus,
the name given by the angel
before he was conceived in the womb.