

**Readings for 4th Advent and Christmas Vigil, combined Liturgy,
December 24, 2017**

FIRST READING

A Reading from the 1st Book of Samuel

1:1-3a, 7, 9-11, 13-17, 20; 2:1, 4-7, 8a-d (edited)

There was a man named Elkanah who had two wives, one named Hannah, the other Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children... Each year Elkanah man went up from his city to... offer sacrifice to God...at Shiloh...Year after year, when Hannah went up to the house of God, Peninnah would provoke her, and Hannah would weep and refuse to eat...

One year, Hannah ...presented herself before God. At that time Eli the priest was sitting on a chair near the doorpost of God's temple. In her bitterness, Hannah prayed to God, weeping freely, and made this vow: "O Holy One, if you look with pity on the hardship of your servant, if you remember me and do not forget me, if you give your handmaid a... child, I will give the child to You for all the days of their life...Hannah prayed silently. Though her lips were moving, her voice could not be heard.

Eli, thinking she was drunk, said to her, "How long will you make a drunken spectacle of yourself? Sober up from your wine!" "No! Sir!", Hannah answered. "I am an unhappy woman. I've had neither wine nor liquor. I am only pouring out my heart to God. Don't think your servant a worthless. My prayer has been prompted by my deep sorrow and misery." Then, Eli said, "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have requested."

Hannah conceived and... bore a son whom she named Samuel: "Because I asked God for him."

The Word of an Israelite Court Historian.

Thanks be to God.

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PSALM

1 Samuel 2:1-11

The Psalm response is: God puts to death and God gives life.

R: God puts to death and God gives life.

Hannah conceived and... bore a son whom she named Samuel:

“Because I asked God for him.”... And Hannah rejoiced, singing:

“My heart exults in You, O God!

My horn, my dignity, is exalted in You.

I have swallowed up my enemies. I rejoice in my victory...

R: God puts to death and God gives life.

The bows of the mighty are broken,
while the tottering put on strength.

The well-fed hire themselves out for bread,
while the hungry feast on spoil.

The barren wife bears seven children,
while the mother of many languishes.

God puts to death and God gives life,
casts down and raises up again.

R: God puts to death and God gives life.

God makes the poor and makes the rich, humbles and exalts.

“God raises the needy from the dust,
lifting the poor from the ash heap,
seating them with nobles
and making a glorious throne their heritage.”

R: God puts to death and God gives life.

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SECOND READING

A Reading from the Prophet Isaiah 9:2-9

In darkness a light was born;
From deep darkness a crest of dawn shines.
You enlarged life
and Your people were born.

Even though they knew pain and suffering,
You increased their joy.
They rejoice before You
as with joy at the harvest,
as children exult at play,
and delight in sharing gifts.

For You have shattered the yoke that burdens them,
the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor.
Every warrior's boot used in battle
and every garment rolled in blood
will be destined for burning,
will be fuel for the fire.

For to us a baby is born,
to us a child is given,
on whose shoulders our future rests.

The child will be called:
Wonderful Counselor, Strength of God,
Everlasting One, Champion of Peace.
And of the peace this Child brings,
there will be no end.

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From the ancestral House of David and Bathsheba this child will come,
bringing a reign built on justice,
upheld with right living,
from that time forward and forever.

The zeal of our Cosmic God will accomplish this.

The Word of First Isaiah.

Thanks be to God.

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GOSPEL

Our God is with you...

A Reading from the Gospels attributed to Luke and to John

Luke 1:39-55; 2:1-14; John 1:1-5, 10-14, 18

Glory to you, O God.

During those days, Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb...And Mary said:

Magnificat [sung]

The lights are slowly dimmed into darkness.

One minute of darkness and silence follows.

*After 1 minute, full light is restored and the **Gloria** is Sung.*

In those days, a decree went out from the Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered... This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was betrothed, and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Sung refrain

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In the beginning was the Word, Wisdom.
The Word, Wisdom, was with God,
and the Word, which was Wisdom, was God.
The Word, Wisdom, was in the beginning with God.
Through God's Word, through Wisdom, all things came into being.
Not one thing came into being except through it.
What has come into being in the Word, in Wisdom, was Life,
Life that was light for all creation.
This light was not like the lights of this world,
but an eternal radiance, -
an interplay of light and darkness,
a flaring forth that has never ended.

This light, born of nurturing darkness, -
This radiance through which all created things came into being, -
was in the universe,
Earth, our world, came into being through it;
yet many did not recognize it...

In the fullness of time,
the Word became flesh,
Wisdom pitched a tent among us.
And we have seen this glory,
- the very glory of God,
full of grace and truth.
No one has ever seen the Holy One,
but all that is close to the heart of Holy Mystery,
makes God known.