



Founded 1168

**SAINT MARY'S
CATHEDRAL**
LIMERICK

A Christmas Service

Devotional Prayers

Before Service

O Lord, open our Lips, that our mouths may proclaim your praise, and purify our hearts that we may worthily magnify your glorious Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lord God You are here, may we come to You with a mixture of humility and joy.
May we feel Your nearness and learn from You. Amen.

Lord, it is not easy to be humble; but in this service we ask for humility, so that it is You who may be seen by each person here. May Your will be done. Amen.

Before a Celebration of the Holy Eucharist

Cleanse us, O Lord, and keep us undefiled, that we may be numbered among those blessed ones, who, having washed their robes, and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb, stand before your throne, and serve you day and night in Your Temple. Amen.

Father in heaven, you have made us for yourself; our hearts are restless until they rest in you. Fulfill this longing through Jesus, the bread of life, so that we may witness to him who alone satisfies the hungers of the human family.

By the power of your Spirit lead us to the heavenly table where we may feast on the vision of your glory forever and ever. Amen.

After Celebration

O God, who in this wonderful Sacrament left us a memorial of your Passion: grant, we implore you, that we may so venerate the sacred mysteries of your Body and Blood, as always to be conscious of the fruit of your Redemption.
You who live and reign forever and ever. Amen.

After Service

Grant, O Lord, that what we have sung with our lips we may believe in our hearts, and may always steadfastly fulfil; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Organist is Mr Peter Barley



A message from the Dean

Happy Christmas! On behalf of the chapter and parish I welcome you to Saint Mary's Cathedral, Limerick. You are very welcome, whether you are visiting for the first time or for the 1000th time! We share in worship which has been offered here for 850 years.

We hope this service booklet is easy to follow and that in the worship you will really know that God is close to you. Please say the words printed in bold text as your response during the worship. At times you are invited to stand, sit or kneel. These are helpful ways to engage in the service, but please be comfortable and don't worry if you need to do something different! Some parts of the service are louder and some quieter, as you will notice.

To the parents of our young children, may we suggest...

Relax! God put the wiggle in children; don't feel you have to suppress it in God's house. All are welcome!

Sit toward the front where it is easier for your little ones to see and hear what's going on. They tire of seeing the backs of others heads. Quietly explain the parts of the services and actions of the clergy, wardens, choir, etc. Enjoy the music, pray and join in the responses. Children learn liturgical behaviour by copying you.

The numbers in brackets denotes pages in the Children's Communion Book (available at the church door) and activity packs for children are also available. Feel free to use the space across at the back of the cathedral if your children become restless; please stay with your children in this area for their safety. If required, the Churchwardens can direct you to the toilets.

If you have to leave the service with your child, feel free to do so, but please come back. As Jesus said, "Let the children come to me". Remember that the way we welcome children in church directly affects the way they respond to the Church of God, and to one another. Let them know that they are at home in this house of worship.

To the adults

The presence of children is a gift to the Church and they are a reminder that our parish is growing. Please welcome our children and give a smile of encouragement to their parents 😊 Finally, if you need any assistance during service, please speak to one of the Churchwardens by the church doors.

The Very Rev'd Niall J. Sloane,
Dean.

Order of Service

The Choir & Clergy assemble in Saint James' Chapel for the Vestry Prayer. Please Stand.

HYMN 166

1

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
let ev'ry heart prepare him room,
and heav'n and nature sing.

2

Joy to the world, the Saviour reigns!
Let all their songs employ;
while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
repeat the sounding joy.

3

He rules the world with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness
and wonders of his love.

WELCOME

READING

THE PRAYER FOR THE LIGHTING OF THE CHRISTMAS CANDLE

LET US PRAY TOGETHER

LORD, IN A WORLD THAT THREATENS TO BECOME OVERWHELMED WITH THE DARKNESS OF EVIL, HELP US TO SEEK YOUR LIGHT AND TO FOLLOW THE LIGHT OF YOUR LOVE SO THAT YOUR PURPOSE FOR THE WORLD WILL BE REVEALED AND FULFILLED. AMEN.

A VARIATION ON HYMN 176, DURING MUSIC – 'TENEBRAE CANDLES LIT'

NARRATOR

READING

NARRATOR

ORGAN PRELUDE: 'LITTLE DONKEY'

NARRATOR

READING

NARRATOR

LET US PRAY TOGETHER

LORD, WE GIVE YOU THANKS FOR THE GIFTS OF NATURE AND FOR OUR ENJOYMENT OF THOSE GIFTS. WE THANK YOU FOR THE MANY WONDERS OF OUR WORLD THAT UNFOLD AROUND US EACH DAY. HELP US TO GUARD AND PROTECT THE BEAUTY OF OUR WORLD, HELP US TO PROTECT ALL FORMS OF LIFE FROM ABUSE, HELP US TO SHOW RESPECT AND KINDNESS TO EVERYONE WE MEET. AMEN.

VARIATION ON HYMN 350

NARRATOR

READING

LET US PRAY TOGETHER

LORD, AS WE SHELTER IN OUR WARM HOMES FROM THE BITTER COLD AND FROST OF WINTERTIME, MAY WE NEVER FORGET THAT THERE ARE THOUSANDS LESS FORTUNATE THAN OURSELVES WHO STRUGGLE EACH DAY TO BEAR THE BURDEN OF FINDING SOMEWHERE TO SLEEP, WHO EXPERIENCE LONELINESS AND REJECTION; WHO SUFFER THROUGH HUNGER AND ADDICTION. GIVE US GRACE AND GUIDANCE TOWARDS ANY PART WE CAN PLAY TO RELIEVE THIS SITUATION; AND MAY WE ALWAYS SEEK TO SHARE WHAT WE HAVE WITH HUMBLE AND GENEROUS HEARTS. AMEN.

HYMN 149

1

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus lay down His sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where He lay,
The little lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

2

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes
But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.
I love Thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky.
And stay by my side till morning is nigh.

3

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask Thee to stay
Close by me for ever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care
And take us to Heaven to live with Thee there.

NARRATOR

READING

LET US PRAY TOGETHER

WE PRAY THIS MORNING FOR ALL THOSE WHO ARE SEPARATED FROM THEIR FAMILIES THROUGH WORK DURING THIS FESTIVE SEASON. WE THINK OF THOSE AT SEA, FAR FROM HOME, MISSING THEIR LOVED ONES BUT WORKING HARD TO MEET OUR MATERIAL NEEDS. WE ASK GOD TO BLESS THEM AND KEEP THEM SAFE AND MAY THEY FIND COMPANIONSHIP WITH ONE ANOTHER AND A SENSE OF GOD'S PRESENCE IN THEIR MIDST. AMEN.

VARIATION ON HYMN 612

NARRATOR

READING

NARRATOR

READING

NARRATOR

LET US PRAY TOGETHER

FATHER, WE GIVE YOU THANKS FOR THE MANY BLESSINGS WE RECEIVE: FOR THE SHELTER OF OUR HOMES; FOR LOVE AND LAUGHTER; FOR FRIENDS AND FAMILY; FOR OUR COMMUNITY. WE THANK YOU FOR THE COMING OF CHRIST AND FOR ALL WE HAVE LEARNED THROUGH HIS LIFE AND WITNESS. GRANT US THE GRACE TO WALK IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS SO THAT YOUR LOVE WILL BE EXPRESSED IN OUR LIVES IN KINDNESS AND HUMILITY AND GENEROSITY OF SPIRIT. AMEN.

A VARIATION ON HYMN 173

NARRATOR

READING

NARRATOR

LET US PRAY TOGETHER

FATHER, IN A WORLD WHERE THE GAP BETWEEN RICH AND POOR IS EVER WIDENING HELP US TO BE GENEROUS AND GENTLE WHERE WE SEE SUFFERING. TEACH US NOT TO JUDGE BUT TO KEEP OPEN HEARTS AND MINDS TOWARDS EVERYONE WE MEET AS WE RECALL THE WORDS OF JESUS: "I CAME TO YOU TODAY IN EVERY ONE OF THOSE YOU HELPED AND WELCOMED." BLESS US FATHER, WITH EYES TO SEE CLEARLY AND HANDS EVER READY TO CARRY OUT YOUR WORK ON EARTH. AMEN.

HYMN 162

1

In the bleak mid winter frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone:
Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
In the bleak mid winter, long ago.

2

Our God, heav'n cannot hold him nor earth sustain;
Heav'n and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign;
In the bleak mid winter a stable-place sufficed
The Lord God almighty, Jesus Christ.

3

Enough for him, whom cherubim worship night and day,
A breastful of milk and a mangerful of hay;
Enough for him, whom angels fall down before,
The ox and ass and camel which adore.

4

What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man, I would do my part;
Yet what I can I give him, give my heart.

NARRATOR

READING

LET US PRAY TOGETHER

OUR FATHER, WHO ART IN HEAVEN, HALLOWED BE THY NAME, THY KINGDOM COME, THY WILL BE DONE, ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN. GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD. AND FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES, AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US. AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL. AMEN.

VARIATION ON HYMN 134

THE BLESSING

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