Suggested Opening Song: All Are Welcome, #215

Ever since Christmas we have heard how Jesus was revealed over time to the wider world. He was made manifest to the nearby shepherds on the night of his birth. The magi followed the star from distant lands to the east. Last week we heard that the Holy Spirit descended like a dove, revealing Jesus at his baptism. Today we hear John the Baptist see Jesus and testify, "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." We say the same words at each Eucharist. May they resonate with us today and always.

As we gather let us begin our service by professing what we believe.

Profession of Faith p. 144
I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, (*bow as we say*) ***and by the Holy Spirit he was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.*** **For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

Introductory Rite:
Greeting:
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.
Blessed be God forever. **Blessed be God forever.**

Penitential Rite: p. 12
Brothers and sisters, let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to participate in this sacred celebration.

I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen**

Opening Prayer:
Almighty ever-living God, who governs all things, both in heaven and on earth, mercifully hear the pleading of your people and bestow your peace on our times.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Liturgy of the Word:
First Reading p. 88
A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah *Isaiah 49:3, 5-6*

The LORD said to me: You are my servant, Israel, through whom I show my glory. Now the LORD has spoken who formed me as his servant from the womb, that Jacob may be brought back to him and Israel gathered to him; and I am made glorious in the sight of the LORD, and my God is now my strength! It is too little, the LORD says, for you to be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and restore the survivors of Israel; I will make you a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

Responsorial Psalm *Psalm 40:2, 4, 7-8, 8-9, 10*

R/. Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.
R/. Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will

I have waited, waited for the LORD, and he stooped toward me and heard my cry.
And he put a new song into my mouth, a hymn to our God. **R/.**

Sacrifice or offering you wished not, but ears open to obedience you gave me.
Holocausts or sin-offerings you sought not; then said I, "Behold I come." **R/.**

"In the written scroll it is prescribed for me, to do your will, O my God, is my delight,
and your law is within my heart!" **R/.**

I announced your justice in the vast assembly;
I did not restrain my lips, as you, O LORD, know. **R/.**

Second Reading

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians *1 Corinthians 1:1-3*

Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, to the church of God that is in Corinth, to you who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be holy, with all those everywhere who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel *John 1:29-34*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John **Glory to you, O Lord**

John the Baptist saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. He is the one of whom I said, 'A man is coming after me who ranks ahead of me because he existed before me.' I did not know him, but the reason why I came baptizing with water was that he might be made known to Israel." John testified further, saying, "I saw the Spirit come down like a dove from heaven and remain upon him. I did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'On whomever you see the Spirit come down and remain, he is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' Now I have seen and testified that he is the Son of God."

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Reflection on the Word:

- Today's Gospel begins with John the Baptist's bold proclamation: "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). But John goes on to confess—twice—that at first he did not know him. Even though the whole reason he called on people to repent and be baptized was to prepare for the Lord's arrival, he himself did not recognize Jesus until he saw the Holy Spirit come down upon him like a dove. We all likely visualize Jesus somewhat differently. We may picture him the way renaissance artists portrayed him, or from an image used on a holy card, or an image we've seen developed by forensic anthropologists or even one recently created by AI. But no matter which image we're picturing, we too would probably not recognize him in a crowd. We know him from what he does. As John testified, he "takes away the sin of the world."

- Many expected that the Messiah would take away sin by defeating it or driving it out, much as a general would lead an army to do. But defeating or driving out an enemy does not finish that enemy off forever. Sin would always return to wreak destruction and death. To truly overcome sin, Jesus had to suffer from the sins of others, like Isaiah's suffering servant, as the Lamb of God, the innocent who is sacrificed, to overcome sin and death and open the door to salvation.

- Once John witnessed the Holy Spirit descending like a dove upon Jesus, he gave witness, pointing him out and testifying that he is the one God sent to take away the sin of the world. We witness Jesus, but in other ways. Here, in the Eucharist and in each other gathered in his name. We may also witness him in the person in need, the least of our sisters and brothers, and in an act of forgiveness. We, like John, are called to give witness, in words and in deeds, to his presence in our lives.

Question of the Week
How will I witness to my faith, to Jesus, this week?

Prayer of the Faithful:
We call to mind our needs and the needs of the world, ever willing to do God's will.

- For the Church, that we may be a light to the nations and a sign of God's love and mercy, so that the salvation of God may reach to the ends of the earth, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For our nation as we celebrate Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr., Day this Monday, that we may help bend the arc of the moral universe toward justice, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For Christians of every denomination on this first day of the week of prayer for Christian unity, that we may draw ever closer to each other as we live out our common baptism, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For those who work to promote the dignity of every human life, that they may help move the minds and hearts of people around the world, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For all of us gathered here today, that we may respond willingly and joyfully to God's call whenever we hear it, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For what else should we pray? Let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For all the prayers that we hold in the silence of our hearts; for all our intentions spoken and unspoken, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Glorious God, your Son gave witness to your justice and mercy. Teach us to give witness as well as we listen to your call. Hear this and all our prayers through your Son and our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Communion Rite

The Lord's Prayer: p. 180
Let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Savior gave us.

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.

Rite of Peace:
The sign of peace outwardly expresses a deep spiritual reality; through this sign we acknowledge Christ's presence in each other and share the peace we have received from Him. Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

Communion:
Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

The body of Christ. **Amen.**

Prayer after Communion:
Pour on us, O Lord, the Spirit of your love, and in your kindness make those you have nourished by this one heavenly Bread one in mind and heart.

Through Christ our Lord. **Amen**.

Concluding Rite:
Final Blessing:
May the Lord bless us, ✠ protect us from all evil and lead us to everlasting life. **Amen**

Go in peace! **Thanks be to God.**

Suggested Closing Song: They'll Know We Are Christians by Our Love, #251