

Lessons & Carols

GAUDETE SUNDAY

14 December 2025 | 7:00 pm

ST. MICHAEL'S ABBEY

We invite you to contemplate the birth of Christ our King with these readings and songs.
Please join us in singing the hymns printed here!

Out of respect for the sacredness of this place, we kindly ask you to silence all electronic devices
and to refrain from applause during the entire duration of the service, even at the end.
Thank you, and may God bless you!

PROCESSIONAL HYMN: *Once in Royal David's City*

[Verse 1 sung only by the choir]

2 He came down to earth from
heaven,
Who is God and Lord of all,
And His shelter was a stable,
And His cradle was a stall;
With the poor, and mean, and lowly,
Lived on earth our Savior holy.

3 And through all His wondrous
childhood
He would honor and obey,
Love and watch the lowly maiden,

In whose gentle arms He lay:
Christian children all must be
Mild, obedient, good as He.

4 For He is our childhood's pattern;
Day by day, like us He grew;
He was little, weak and helpless,
Tears and smiles like us He knew;
And He feeleth for our sadness,
And He shareth in our gladness.

5 And our eyes at last shall see Him,
Through His own redeeming love;
For that Child so dear and gentle
Is our Lord in heaven above,
And He leads His children on
To the place where He is gone.

6 Not in that poor lowly stable,
With the oxen standing by,
We shall see Him; but in heaven,
Set at God's right hand on high;
Where like stars His children crowned
All in white shall wait around.

Words, C. F. ALEXANDER
Melody, H. J. GAUNTLETT

INTRODUCTION *and* OPENING PRAYER

LESSON 1: Isaiah 7:10–14

A Virgin Most Pure
arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872 – 1958)

LESSON 2: From a Commentary by St. Ephrem, deacon

HYMN: *Savior of the Nations, Come*

1 Savior of the nations, come;
Virgin's Son, here make Thy home!
Marvel now, O heav'n and earth,
That the Lord chose such a birth.

2 Not by human flesh and blood;
By the Spirit of our God, Was the
Word of God made flesh, Woman's
offspring, pure and fresh.

3 Wondrous birth! O wondrous
Child of the Virgin undefiled!
Though by all the world disowned,
Still to be in heav'n enthroned.

4 From the Father forth He came
And returneth to the same,
Captive leading death and hell,
High the song of triumph swell!

*Verses 5 and 6 sung only by the
choir.*

7 Praise to God the Father sing,
Praise to God the Son, our King,
Praise to God the Spirit be;
Ever and eternally.

Words, St. Ambrose (d. 397); trans. W. Reynolds & M. Seltz
Melody, *Nun Komm, Der Heiden Heiland*, 1524

LESSON 3: From *The Reed of God* by Caryll Houselander

Tu Scendi dalle Stelle
Words and melody by St. Alphonsus Liguori (1696 – 1787)
Words ed. Bl. Pope Pius IX; melody arr. Francesco Spiga

<p>Tu scendi dalle stelle, o Re del Cielo, E vieni in una grotta al freddo, al gelo. O Bambino mio Divino, Io ti vedo qui tremar. O Dio beato, E quanto ti costò l'avermi amato!</p> <p>A Te, che sei del mondo il Creatore Mancano panni e fuoco, o mio Signore. Caro eletto Pargoletto, Quanto questa povertà Più m'innamora, Giacché ti fece Amor povero ancora.</p>	<p>From starry skies descending, Thou comest, glorious King, A manger low Thy bed, In winter's icy sting; O my dearest Child most holy, Shudd'ring, trembling in the cold! Great God, Thou lovest me! What suff'ring Thou didst bear, That I near Thee might be!</p> <p>Thou art the world's Creator, God's own and true Word, Yet here no robe, no fire For Thee, Divine Lord. Dearest, fairest, sweetest Infant, Dire this state of poverty. The more I care for Thee, Since Thou, o Love Divine, Will'st now so poor to be.</p>
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LESSON 4: Matthew 2:1–12

Omnes de Saba Venient

Matteo Asola (1524 – 1609)

<p>Omnes de Saba venient, aurum et thus deferentes, et laudem Domino annuntiantes. Alleluia.</p>	<p>All they from Saba shall come, bringing gold and frankincense, and announcing the praise of the Lord. Alleluia. (cf. Isaiah 60:6)</p>
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LESSON 5: From a Sermon by St. Bernard, abbot

HYMN: *The Holly and the Ivy*

The Holly and the Ivy when they are
both full grown, of all the trees that
are in the wood, the holly bears the
crown.

***O the rising of the sun, And the
running of the deer, The playing of
the merry organ, Sweet singing in
the choir.***

The Holly bears a blossom, as white
as lily flower; and Mary bore sweet
Jesus Christ, to be our sweet Savior.

Refrain

The Holly bears a berry, as red as any
blood; and Mary bore sweet Jesus
Christ, to do poor sinners good.

Refrain

The Holly bears a prickle, as sharp as
any thorn; and Mary bore sweet Jesus
Christ on Christmas Day in the morn.

Refrain

The Ivy bears a bark, as bitter as any
gall; and Mary bore sweet Jesus
Christ, for to redeem us all.

Refrain

Words, Anonymous
Melody, Traditional English Melody

LESSON 6: Sirach 24:9, 13–17

Blessed Be That Maid Marie

arr. Jim Leininger

LESSON 7: Isaiah 9:1–6

'Twas in the Moon at Wintertime

Words by St. Jean de Brébeuf, SJ (1593 – 1649), trans. J. Middleton
Traditional French folk melody, ed. John Murphy

LESSON 8: A Christmas Carol by G.K. Chesterton

I Saw a Maiden

Traditional Catalan, arr. Alan Simmons

LESSON 9: From a Discourse on the Psalms by St.
Augustine, bishop

CLOSING PRAYER

RECESSIONAL: *Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending*

1 Lo, He comes with clouds
descending,
Once for our salvation slain;
Thousand thousand saints
attending
Swell the triumph of His train.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia,
Christ the Lord returns to reign.

2 Every eye shall now behold Him,
Robed in dreadful majesty:
Those who set at naught and sold
Him,

Pierced and nailed Him to the tree,
Deeply wailing, deeply wailing,
deeply wailing,
Shall the true Messiah see.
[Verse 3 Sung only by the choir]

4 Yea! Amen, let all adore thee,
High on Thine eternal throne;
Savior, take the power and glory;
Claim the kingdom for Thine own!
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia,
Thou shalt reign, and Thou alone!

Words, C. WESLEY
Melody, HELMSLEY

Blessed Advent & Merry Christmas
To you and yours