



## God's humanity lives in us

Avery Dulles, who died before Christmas in 2008, was a distinguished theologian, Jesuit priest and a member of the College of Cardinals. Reflecting on Christmas, he once wrote: *“The incarnation does not mean that God saves us from the pains of this life. It means that God-is-with-us. For the Christian, just as for everyone else, there will be cold, lonely seasons, seasons of sickness, seasons of frustration, and a season within which we will die. Christmas does not give us a ladder to climb out of the human condition. It gives us a drill that lets us burrow into the heart of everything that is and, there, find it shimmering with divinity.”*

These words became very personal for Avery Dulles when he experienced his own pain. He had been seriously ill for some time prior to his death, afflicted by growing paralysis which saw him lose the ability to speak and to move his arms. He knew well that God's presence in our world, through the birth of Jesus, doesn't take us

beyond our struggles and our pain. He knew that, rather, it helps us to look honestly at ourselves.

Avery Dulles looked honestly at his situation and found words of embrace and acceptance: *“I can identify with the many paralytics and mute persons in the Gospels, grateful for the loving and skillful care I receive and for the hope of everlasting life in Christ. If the Lord now calls me to a period of weakness, I know well that his power can be made perfect in infirmity. Blessed be the name of the Lord.”*

Christmas leads us directly to God's divine love – a love so great that God chose to dwell with us in the fullness of our humanity, one like us in all things but sin. Through Jesus' birth everything is touched by God. May the light of Christ within us glow with divinity so we may bring happiness, peace, and joy into the lives of those around us.

## We Respond ...

### VIGIL MASS

#### ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (or a hymn)

Today you will know that the Lord will come, and he will save us, and in the morning you will see his glory.

#### RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 88)

ANTIPHON: For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

RESPONSE (R): For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

LECTOR: "I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant: I will establish your dynasty for ever and set up your throne through all ages." **R.**

LECTOR: Happy the people who acclaim such a king, who walk, O Lord, in the light of your face, who find their joy every day in your name, who make your justice the source of their bliss. **R.**

LECTOR: "He will say to me: 'You are my father; my God, the rock who saves me.' I will keep my love for him always; for him my covenant shall endure." **R.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:** Alleluia, alleluia! Tomorrow the wickedness of the earth will be destroyed: the Saviour of the world will be our king. Alleluia!

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON** (or a hymn): The glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all flesh will see the salvation of our God.

READINGS Isaiah 62:1-5; Acts 13:16-17, 22-25; Matthew 1:1-25

### MIDNIGHT MASS

#### ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (or a hymn)

The Lord said to me: You are my Son. It is I who have begotten you this day.

Or

Let us all rejoice in the Lord, for our Saviour has been born in the world. Today true peace has come down to us from heaven.

#### RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 95)

ANTIPHON: Today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord.

RESPONSE (R): Today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord.

LECTOR: O sing a new song to the Lord, sing to the Lord all the earth. O sing to the Lord, bless his name. **R.**

LECTOR: Proclaim his help day by day, tell among the nations his glory and his wonders among all the peoples. **R.**

LECTOR: Let the heavens rejoice and earth be glad, let the sea and all within it thunder praise, let the land and all it bears rejoice, all the trees of the wood shout for joy at the presence of the Lord for he comes, he comes to rule the earth. **R.**

LECTOR: With justice he will rule the world, he will judge the peoples with his truth. **R.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION** Alleluia, alleluia! Good News and great joy to all the world: today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord. Alleluia!

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON** (or a hymn) The Word became flesh, and we have seen his glory.

READINGS Isaiah 9:1-7; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14

### DAWN MASS

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON** Today a light will shine upon us, for the Lord is born for us; and he will be called Wondrous God, Prince of peace, Father of future ages: and his reign will be without end.

#### RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 96)

ANTIPHON: A light will shine on us this day: the Lord is born for us.

RESPONSE (R): A light will shine on us this day: the Lord is born for us.

LECTOR: The Lord is king, let earth rejoice, the many coastlands be glad. The skies proclaim his justice; all peoples see his glory. **R.**

LECTOR: Light shines forth for the just and joy for the upright of heart. Rejoice, you just, in the Lord; give glory to his holy name. **R.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION** Alleluia, alleluia! Glory to God in the highest, peace to his people on earth. Alleluia!

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON** (or a hymn) Rejoice, O Daughter Sion; lift up praise, Daughter Jerusalem: Behold, your King will come, the Holy One and Saviour of the world.

READINGS Isaiah 62:11-12; Titus 3:4-7; Luke 2:15-20

### MASS DURING THE DAY

#### ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (or a hymn)

A child is born for us, and a son is given to us; his sceptre of power rests upon his shoulder; and his name will be called Messenger of great counsel.

#### RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 97)

ANTIPHON: All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.

RESPONSE (R): All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.

LECTOR: Sing a new song to the Lord for he has worked wonders. His right hand and his holy arm have brought salvation. **R.**

LECTOR: The Lord has made known his salvation; has shown his justice to the nations. He has remembered his truth and love for the house of Israel. **R.**

LECTOR: All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Shout to the Lord all the earth, ring out your joy. **R.**

LECTOR: Sing psalms to the Lord with the harp, with the sound of music. With trumpets and the sound of the horn acclaim the King, the Lord. **R.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION** Alleluia, alleluia! A holy day has dawned upon us. Come you nations and adore the Lord. Today a great light has come upon the earth. Alleluia!

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON** (or a hymn) All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

READINGS Isaiah 52:7-10; Hebrews 1:1-6; John 1:1-18