

The Nativity of the Lord

The masses for Christmas are complex - hence this guide is extended and slightly different from most of the other hymn guides.

First of all, there are masses for the vigil, and at St. Agathas we typically have 3 vigils with very different congregations, at 5 pm, 7 pm and 9 pm. Secondly, the vigil, the mass at midnight, the dawn mass and the mass during the day all have different sets of readings. So rather than there being a “one size fits all” approach to Christmas, each group should attempt to tailor the music to work best with the readings, while being aware of the congregations we will be ministering to. As a broad generality, the 5 pm mass often has many of the very young children, the 7 pm a slightly older age group, the 9 pm may attract the teens and younger adults. This guide reflects that: Guides for each mass, where hymns which better suit a particular mass are pointed out. This is largely not prescriptive. A hymn may be less suited for a mass, but more suited to the congregation.

There is one major exception to this rule. There are two well loved Christmas carols: We Three Kings, and The First Nowell. The first is solely about the adoration of the Magi, the second largely so (starting at verse three.) They really belong 12 days later, at the feast of the Epiphany, and you will find them in this section of the hymn book, after Christmas. Please don't use We Three Kings before Epiphany. Should you choose to use The First Nowell, use it at a time when you can only play verses 1 & 2, and stop there. References to the angel, and to shepherds appear in the gospels for the midnight and dawn masses, but are not inappropriate elsewhere.

The other point of context: On Christmas Eve, the sun sets after 8 pm, very different from the European context where the longest night of the year was just passed. So it makes very little liturgical sense to sing Silent Night other than at the 9 pm Vigil and Midnight mass. Avoid it during the day if you can, there is plenty of music around. Play it if you feel you must for pastoral reasons, but not just because you love the music. I do as well, and have resisted my own feelings every time we play music for 9 am mass.

We come from a time of preparation, Advent, and into one of the great celebrations. The feel of our mass should make that obvious. The Gloria comes back: sing it. Vestments are white, not purple. Put Mass for Moderns (MfM) away and use something different. In common for all the masses, we have the following

Mass: Mass Shalom or Mass of Spirit & Grace or from the mass setting

Include a sung Gloria: the opening words are the words the angels sang. Make sure you don't use the one from MfM.

Suggested Alleluia: Celtic Alleluia

Vigil Mass

Key Themes: The Lord takes delight in you. Forever I will sing of the Lord's goodness. My covenant with you shall endure. God chose David to be king, and raised up for Israel one of his descendants, Jesus, as saviour, whose coming was heralded by John. The line of Jesus' descent. An angel counselled Joseph not to put Mary aside, as she bore the prophesied son.

Psalm:	Forever I Will Sing	Colin Smith		
	Forever I Will Sing	Heagney	GAUS	50
	Forever I Will Sing	Willcock	CWB	385
		Vss 1, 3, 5		

Suggested Hymns:	The Angel Gabriel	CWB	815
	Hark The Herald Angels Sing	GAUS	294
	Joy To The World	GAUS	295
	O Come All Ye Faithful	GAUS	287
	O Little Town Of Bethlehem	GAUS	296
	Once In Royal David's City	GAUS	297

Midnight Mass

Key Themes: To you a son is born, who is given dominion over all. Today is born our saviour, Christ the Lord. God's grace has been revealed to all people. At the birth of Jesus, angels appeared to shepherds bringing good news of great joy.

Psalm:	Today Is Born Our Saviour	Colin Smith		
	Today Is Born Our Saviour	Isele/Murray	CWB	189

Suggested Hymns:	Angels We have Heard On High	GAUS	286
	Away In A Manger	GAUS	289
	Hark The Herald Angels Sing	GAUS	294
	Joy To The World	GAUS	295
	O Come All Ye Faithful	GAUS	287
	O Little Town Of Bethlehem	GAUS	296
	Once In Royal David's City	GAUS	297
	Silent Night	GAUS	290
	While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks	GAUS	288

Dawn Mass

Note that in Australia, it is well past dawn when the 7:30am mass starts. Check if this mass will be said, as it is more likely to be the mass of the day.

Key Themes: Your Saviour is born. A light will shine on us this day. God saved us through his own compassion, by the cleansing water of rebirth. The shepherds found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a Manger.

Psalm:	A Light will Shine For Us	Colin Smith		
	A Light will Shine For Us	Carroll/Gelineau	CWB	190

Suggested Hymns:	Away In A Manger	GAUS	289
	Hark The Herald Angels Sing	GAUS	294
	He Came Down	GAUS	293
	Joy To The World	GAUS	295
	O Come All Ye Faithful	GAUS	287
	O Little Town Of Bethlehem	GAUS	296

Mass during the Day

Key Themes: To you a son is born, who is given dominion over all. Today is born our saviour, Christ the Lord. God's grace has been revealed to all people. At the birth of Jesus, angels appeared to shepherds bringing good news of great joy.

Psalm:	All The Ends Of The Earth	Colin Smith		
	All The Ends Of The Earth	Willcock	PFS	
	All The Ends Of The Earth	Roff/Gelineau	CWB	185
Suggested Hymns:	Hark The Herald Angels Sing		GAUS	294
	He Came Down		GAUS	293
	Joy To The World		GAUS	295
	O Come All Ye Faithful		GAUS	287
	O Little Town Of Bethlehem		GAUS	296
	Sing A New Song		GAUS	414
	(remember to not sing "Yahweh" in verse 1. The new line is "Shout with gladness! Dance for joy!" - ensure you have this on overhead if you are using it)			

General Hymns not in GAUS

Other Hymns:	Awake, Awake And Greet The New Morn	GTR	151
	Born In The Night	AOV2	101
	Born Of Peace	GTR	144
	Carol At The Manger	GTR	152
	A Child Is Born In Bethlehem	CWB	612
	Christmas In The Scrub	AOV2	168
	A Dulcimer Carol	GTR	150
	Good Christians All Rejoice	CWB	697
	A Light Will Shine On Us	CWB	614
	My Heart Is A Stable	AOV1	147
	Night Of Silence	GTR	146
	Of The Father's Love Begotten	CWB	779
	Sing To The Lord	AOV1	46
	Sing We, Sing We Noel	AOV2	124
	Star Child	AOV2	43
	Unto Us A Boy Is Born	CWB	849
	What Child Is This?	AOV1	165