



THE PROCLAMATIONS

One summer, while I was helping out at a parish in Provincetown, Massachusetts, I was told to be sure and go down to the courthouse at noon on Saturday. Promptly at noon, an imposing man dressed in Colonial finery appeared and began to proclaim in a clear, chanting voice all the events that had happened in the area during the past week. He then proceeded to solemnly announce to us what was scheduled for the coming week. I became aware that what had been a motley crowd of individuals now began to feel like a community of people with a shared past, present, and future. If I had read that same information in the weekly paper I would not have experienced the sense of belonging I felt at having heard it. No wonder the Roman Catholic liturgy insists that we hear the good news of our salvation as a group and not just read about it individually in our missal or parish bulletin.

The solemn, public proclamation of the Christ's birth and of the principal festivals of the Church year can produce much the same effect that I experienced at Provincetown that summer. The *Sacramentary Supplement*, published by the Catholic Conference of Bishops in 2004, contains both of these proclamations along with a brief description of their content and use.

The Proclamation of the Birth of Christ was originally done during the Liturgy of the Hours at the office of prime. With the suppression of that hour of prayer, the proclamation seems to have practically disappeared from use. At St. Meinrad it occurs at the beginning of first vespers of Christmas on Christmas Eve. The *Sacramentary Supplement*, on page 41, suggests singing it after the greeting and introduction of the Christmas Midnight Mass. It's immediately followed by the singing of the Gloria, which acts as the assembly's response to this good news of the birth of our savior. If it is sung at morning or evening prayer, it follows the introduction of the hour and precedes the hymn. When it is sung at the office of readings, it precedes the *Te Deum*. It can be sung at the ambo by a deacon, cantor, or reader. In other words, anyone capable of singing it may do so. See the sample page given from the conclusion of the proclamation with its rising to the interval of the

fourth above to announce the birth of our savior.

The Proclamation of the Date of Easter on Epiphany originated at a time when printed calendars, parish bulletins, and Palm Pilots were not available. Despite the fact that we have these resources now, the *Sacramentary Supplement* still insists that a public proclamation has value as "a reminder of the centrality of the resurrection of the Lord in the liturgical year and the importance of the great mysteries of faith which are celebrated each year" (47). I would add that a sung proclamation of these dates draws the listeners into an experience of what it is to be God's people on a shared journey of faith to our heavenly home. Like my experience of the town crier at Provincetown, the act of hearing the proclamation together as a group deepens our experience of being members of the same family of faith.

When proclaiming the date of Easter, the dates for the coming liturgical year are to be given in a day/month format, so, for example as the 7th of April (not April 7th). The proclamation may be sung at the ambo by a deacon, cantor, or reader after the Gospel and the homily; it's also suitable following the prayer after communion. Again, anyone capable of singing it may do so. See the attached sample page from the beginning of this proclamation.

Chant style settings of these two proclamations in either modern or square notation are available through St. Meinrad (saintmeinrad.edu). These proclamations should be sung with great solemnity and conviction since they are indeed proclamations of the good news of our salvation, from its beginning in creation to its climax each year in our liturgical participation in the very life of the risen Christ.

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Benedictine Father Columba Kelly is the director and composer for the Gregorian Schola at St. Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad, Indiana. He is considered one of the foremost experts on Gregorian chant in the United States. Father Columba holds a doctorate in church music from Musica Sacra in Rome. He has set the current Lectionary text for St. John's Passion to the traditional, ancient tone for this proclamation (OCP 20016TL). His memories of the Second Vatican Council are found in Voices from the Council (OCP 12222TL).

Proclamation of the Date of Easter at Epiphany

Sung Speech ♩ = 140

Columba Kelly

Dear brothers and sis- ters, the glory of the Lord has shown u- pon us,
 and shall ever be manifest a- mong us, until the day of his re- turn.—
 Through the rhythms of times and sea- sons let us celebrate the mysteries of sal- va- tion.
 Let us recall the year's cul- mi- na- tion, the easter Triduum of the Lord:
 his last... sup- per, his cru- ci- fix- ion, his bur- ri- al, and his ris- ing
 celebrated between the evening of the twentieth of March
 and the evening of the twenty-third of March.— Each Eas- ter-
 as on each Sun- day— the Holy Church makes present the great and sav- ing deed

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by his bless- ed pre- sence, Jesus Christ, eternal God
 and Son of the eternal Father,
 conceived as man by the overshadowing
 of the Ho- ly Spir- it, after nine months of growth
 in the womb of his mo- ther...
 was born of the Vir- gin Mar- y
 and for our salvation be- came man in Bethlehem of Ju- da.
 Now in our own times this marks the birth- day
 Our Lord Je- sus Christ
 the manner of all flesh.

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The Proclamation of the Birth of Christ

for Kevin Walsh

Ricky Manalo, CSP

Handbell arrangement by Gerard Chiusano

Handbells
 Cantor
 Organ
 To- day, the twenty- fifth day of De- cem- ber, un- known
 A
 Several thousand years af- ter the flood, when
 ag- es from the time when God created the heavens and the earth and
 D7/A A Gm6/A A
 God made the rainbow shine forth as a sign of the cov- e- nant.
 D7/A A

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then formed man and woman in his own im- age.
 A
 A
 Several thousand years af- ter the flood, when
 [A]
 God made the rainbow shine forth as a sign of the cov- e- nant.
 D7/A A