Dear-ly be-lov-ed, to-day our Sav-ior is born let us re-joice.

Sadness should have no place on the birthday of life. The fear of death has been swallowed up; life brings us joy with the promise of e-ter-nal hap-pi-ness. No one is shut out from this joy: all share the same rea-son for re-joic-ing. Our Lord, vic-tor o-ver sin and death, finding no man free from sin, came to free us all. Let the saint rejoice as he sees the palm of vic-to-ry at hand. Let the sin-ner be glad as he re-ceives the of-fer of for-give-ness. Let the pa-gan take cour-age as he is summon ed to life. In the fullness of time, chos-en in the un-fath-om-a-ble depths of God’s wis-dom, the Son of God took for him-self our common hu-man-i-ty in or-der to re-con-}

cile with its cre-a-tor. He came to o-verthrow the dev-il, the ori-gin of death, in that ver-y na-ture by which he had o-ver-thrown man-kind. And so at the birth of our Lord the an-gels sing in joy: Glo-ry to God in the highest, and they proclaim peace to his people on earth as they see the heav-en-ly Je-ru-sa-lem be-ing built from all the nations of the world. When
The Nativity of the Lord

the angels on high are so exultant at this marvellous work of

God’s goodness, what joy should it not bring to the lowly hearts

of men? Beloved, let us give thanks to God the Father, through

his Son, in the Holy Spirit, because in his great love for us

he took pity on us, and when we were dead in our sins he

brought us to life with Christ, so that in him we might be a new

creation. Let us throw off our old nature and all its ways,

and, as we have come to birth in Christ, let us renounce the works

of the flesh. Christian, remember your dignity, and now that

At Vigils. Second Reading

you share in God’s own nature, do not return by sin to your former

er base condition. Bear in mind who is your head and of whose

bod- y you are a member. Do not forget that you have been

rescued from the power of darkness and brought into the light

of God’s kingdom. Through the sacrament of baptism you have

become a temple of the Holy Spirit. Do not drive away so
great a guest by evil conduct and become again a slave to

the devil, for your liber- ty was bought by the blood of Christ.

Tone for the patristic lesson of Christmas Vigils taken from a manuscript of the monastery of Maria Einsiedeln, as given in Laudes Festivae: Lectionarium et Cantuarium pro Diversitate Temporum et Festum, edited by P. Beatus Reiser, O.S.B., Typis Polyglotis Vaticanis, 1932. Cantillation of the English text arranged by Fr. Samuel F. Weber, O.S.B., Copyright © 2009 Saint Meinrad Archabbey, St. Meinrad, IN 47577-1010 U.S.A. All rights reserved.

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