

Rorate Mass (Extraordinary Form) – December 14, 2019 – Very Rev. Bryan W. Jerabek, J.C.L.  
Cathedral of St. Paul, Birmingham, Ala. – 6:15am – English: 425 words – Spanish: 225 words

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

*Announcement about communion in first pew.*

This evocative Rorate Mass crowns a week of Marian celebrations, during this intensely Marian season of Advent. First, there was the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, taking us back to the first moment of our Blessed Mother's existence, when she was preserved by God from all stain of Original Sin – an utterly unique privilege, preparing her to be a fitting bearer of God the Son.

Then we had – at least in the Novus Ordo calendar – a newly “reconstituted” feast: that of Our Lady of Loreto. We called to mind the Holy House of Loreto, said to have been miraculously carried by angels to Italy from Palestine. It was in that very house that the Angel Gabriel had appeared to Our Lady, announcing her divine motherhood – and indeed, it was there that her divine motherhood began.

Finally, we had the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Recall how she appeared to Juan Diego pregnant with the true God, thus bringing a profound respect for life to the American continent and an end to the abomination of human sacrifice. Pope Benedict XIV, learning of this miracle two centuries later, exclaimed, “Non fecit taliter omni nationi” (quoting Psalm 147): God “has not done thus for any other nation”!

Now we celebrate this beautiful devotion of the Rorate Mass, imagining how, by now, Our Lady is very pregnant and about to give birth to her beloved Son – her Savior and ours. The candles remind us that the light of Christ overcomes all darkness: indeed, that the hope of salvation existed before his arrival and remains even now amidst the obscurity of our world, as we await his return.

We expect his return in glory at the last day, but we also recognize his coming to us even now in the Holy Sacrament of the Altar. Through the Blessed Eucharist his incarnation and birth are renewed until the end of time; more than that, we who worthily receive him are gradually transformed into his likeness. Thus the light that only he can give continues to shine through us in a dark world.

The Blessed Virgin Mary was the first bearer of Christ's light; indeed, as the Litany of Loreto has it, she is the “Morning Star”. As we honor her today, may she help us more fully to usher the true light into our homes, our families, our workplaces – our world. And we ask her also to obtain once again a singular grace: that all innocent life may be revered, not just in our land, but throughout the whole world.

Expreso mi gratitud a todos ustedes por haber venido a esta Misa Rorate. Vemos en esta Misa cuán bella y humana es nuestra fe. La fe no es algo meramente abstracto o teórico, sino algo palpable también, de carne y hueso. Toda esta hermosura nos ayuda a considerar las realidades y las verdades espirituales. En esta Misa, le pedimos a nuestra Santísima Madre obtenernos la gracia de tener una visión pura.

En las Letanías Lauretanas le llamamos a la Virgen “estrella de la mañana”. Antes de la alborada, a menudo hay una estrella visible en el horizonte, que en realidad es el planeta Venus; a ese planeta o estrella le llamamos “estrella de la mañana” – un indicio del amanecer. Eso es lo que hizo la Virgen María también en la historia de la salvación: fue la estrella que anunció la aurora de la salvación, Cristo nuestro Señor.

Por ello, esta Misa empieza en oscuridad, sólo a la luz de velas; pero mientras prosigue, sale el sol y la iglesia gradualmente se ilumina. Las velas representan a la Virgen, la estrella de la mañana, y el sol es nuestro Señor. Al contemplar estos símbolos, hacemos bien si le pedimos a la Virgen ayudarnos a ser “estrellas de la mañana” también; qué nuestras vidas sean siempre como un anuncio – un indicio – de la luz de Jesucristo. Amén.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.