

## **CHRISTMAS MASS DURING THE DAY C/2009**

Today we celebrate one of the most incredible events in human history, the birth of Jesus Christ and the beginning of our redemption. The incarnation of Jesus has changed the face of the universe and has given a new orientation to human history. Before Jesus Christ, and after Jesus Christ, human history is not the same anymore.

All the readings of this day carry us to this wonderful celebration where God shares with us his Son in order to bring us joy and peace. The first reading retraces the historical background that preceded the birth of Jesus. At that time, the people of Israel were in exile in Babylon. In the middle of the exile, Isaiah announces a time of liberation and the return to Jerusalem.

God himself will reign over his people and bring them back home. There will be a time of salvation and of great joy that has never been before. God will not only comfort his people and redeem them by bringing them peace, but he will also restore the ruins of Jerusalem, in the sight of all the nations.

All that explains the beautiful words the prophet uses: "how beautiful upon the mountains" are the feet of those who bring glad tidings, announcing peace and good news of the salvation of Zion. The sentinels raise a cry, shouting for joy as they see directly, before their eyes, the Lord restoring Zion. Break out together in song, O ruins of Jerusalem!

However, this joy would be short lived, because the people would turn away again and again from God. They would forget time and time again the good deeds of the Lord. They would rebel repeatedly against God until, when the time came, God intervened by sending his Son, Jesus Christ, to be the savior of the world.

The letter to the Hebrews describes the many attempts God made to bring his people back and to reconcile them with him. It describes also the various ways God tried to speak and to reveal his love. He tried, first, to reveal himself to our ancestors through the work of his creation, but this way was not sufficient. He tried also to communicate his message through the mouth of the prophets. But even this way did not succeed at all. In the end, God sent his Son into the world. This Son is the One through whom he made all things from the beginning of the world. In him, with him and through him, he created the universe and sustained it.

In this respect, the incarnation of Jesus is the highest point of the revelations of God to the world. Jesus is the perfect image of the invisible God. He is the reflection of the glory of the Father and the fingerprint by which He sustains all existing things in being. Without Jesus, there is no life; without him, the world is lost. It is Jesus who has accomplished our purification from sins and obtained for us a place in the kingdom, where he sits already at the right hand of the Father.

At the center of the celebration of Christmas, there is a mystery, namely that God has become a human being. In Jesus, the ever-invisible God has taken flesh and become a human being like us. In Jesus, God has taken a human face and espoused human nature. Jesus is not only the

Son of Mary, but also the Son of God, the Savior. He was from the beginning with God and he is God.

Jesus is the light that the Father has sent into the world to enlighten our darkness. Whoever accepts God's light will never be lost. Jesus, the word of the Father, is God's gift to the world to bring us peace and joy. Whoever welcomes him and walks in his paths will have the peace of heart that surpasses any good someone can have in this life.

If we want God's light and life to be manifested in us, we need to change our lives, to make them conform to the image of the One who has become one of us so that we become part of him. We must give up evil behaviors that push us to choose sin and death instead of life. That is why the celebration of Christmas challenges us so that we come to live, not according to human patterns, but according to God's words of life.

We come here in order to celebrate the beginning of our redemption and our salvation. As Christians we witness to the truth that, in spite of difficulties and crises in our world and in our own lives, we are not alone; God is with us in his Son, Jesus Christ; he loves us. To know that God loves us and wants us to become his children, makes a difference in our lives. This gives us courage to confront the present and to hope for the future.

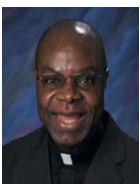
Christmas is not a celebration of a past event, but of an event that takes place today as we try hard to live in the spirit of Christ. In Christmas, there is the revelation of God who made himself one of us, but there is also the revelation of a new humanity, a beginning of a new history between God and us.

Christmas is not an event of the past; it is an event that happens anytime we create a new world and a new humanity around us. Anytime we give the best of ourselves in order to make others happy and to improve the human condition, we bring Christ into the world.

Christmas is the celebration of our God who became a man like us in order to live with us and to save us from sins and death. Christmas teaches that our God is loving, caring and forgiving. He wants us to live by believing in his Son Jesus. Christmas reminds us that we are the bearers of God to others. At Christmas, Jesus gives the duty of bringing him to others so that they know him. At Christmas, Jesus challenges us to live as he did, totally given to others through our humble and generous service to our brothers and sisters.

God has become one of us to share with us his life. He has given us a real proof of his love by becoming one of us. Let us respond to him with love and listen to his cry as he begs our love. Let us not miss the opportunity to welcome him in our hearts and to receive his peace on this day. Blessed Christmas to all!

**Isaiah 52, 7-10; Hebrews 1, 1-6; John 1, 1-18**



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Contact: [www.mbala.org](http://www.mbala.org)

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