

Christmas Mass Day A/2010

The celebration of the Christmas feast opens with this wonderful hymn from the prophet Isaiah: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings glad tidings, announcing peace, bearing good news, announcing salvation and saying to Zion, "Your God is King".

Why such a joy? Why such a jubilation? This is the joy of the good news of liberation from exile and the announcement of the restoration of Zion. In fact, those who, generation after generation, spent the whole of their life in exile, now feel blessed and privileged as they are about to return back to Jerusalem and to take possession of their country and to enjoy the beauty of its valleys and hills. Now that Jerusalem is redeemed and the devastated city restored, all the nations will see the power of God's saving act.

That joy has to be put into perspective, because what God did at that time was not only intended for Israel, but for the whole world so that it may see how he is able to change sorrow into joy, and sadness into smile. In fact, what God has done with Israel was just a beginning of a great adventure he initiated and which has culminated in the sending of Jesus in the world. That is why the joy of Israel points to the joy of the whole world that is jubilating on the feast of the birth of Jesus Christ as our savior and the redeemer of the world.

What happened with Jesus' incarnation was something unique in human history. Its significance is highly important as the event itself. God, who nobody had ever seen before with his own eyes, has made himself available to us so that we may see him, touch him, know him, talk with him in a way that has never been before.

The description from the letter to the Hebrews gives a new perspective to understand the scriptures and grasp the mystery we celebrate today. At Christmas, we celebrate the best of the communications God has ever given of himself to the world.

In the past human history, God tried many times and in many ways to reconnect with the world, but these attempts did not give him satisfaction. He revealed himself first to the ancestors of humanity through the work of his creation, but this way was not sufficient. He tried also through the work of the prophets. But even this way did not succeed at all. Finally, when the fullness of time came, God sent his Son into the world to be its savior.

This Son is the one God made the heir of all things and through whom he created the universe and sustains it. In that respect, the incarnation of Jesus is the highest point of the revelations of God to the world. 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.

What is the true identity of Jesus? Is he just a man? Is he an angel? The Letter to the Hebrews says that Jesus is the son of God and far superior to the angels. He is the shining glory of the Father and the fingerprint by which God sustains all existing things into being.

St John, in turn, says that Jesus is the Word of the Father with whom he created the universe. He preexists from the beginning of the world, because all things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. He exists from the beginning with God and he is God. He gives life to the human race and to those who believe in him.

All this comes to just one thing: Christmas is the celebration of the mystery of God becoming a human being in order to save the world. 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 the light that the Father has sent into the world to enlighten our darkness. Whoever accepts God's light will never be lost. Jesus is God's gift to the world to bring us peace and joy.

As Christians, we are assembled this day in order to celebrate the beginning of our redemption and the incarnation of the Son of God in the world for our salvation. As Christians we witness to the truth that, in spite of difficulties and conflicts in the 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 be his children makes a difference in our lives. It gives us the courage to confront the present and the strength 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. On this day, there is a revelation of God who made himself one of us, but there is also a revelation of a new world and a beginning of a new history between God and human beings. Christmas is not an event of the past; it is an event that happens any time we create a new world and a new humanity around us. When, instead of the culture of death, we spread life and joy around us, we make Christ to be born again in our midst, our hearts, and in our world.

Because our salvation has already started, let us rejoice with the angels and all men and women of good will. Let us make our own the joy and the cheerfulness that stirred up Jerusalem at the return of the deportees. Let us call upon Jesus, the prince of peace, and ask him to bring peace to our hearts and our world. May Jesus bless all the children all over the world on this Christmas season! May the blessed Mary, the mother of Jesus, wrap in her mantle all the mothers who have recourse to her in their difficult task of bringing up their children! May all the parents be blessed by Jesus for all the sacrifices they accept for their children! Peace to you who have accepted to come to pray with us today! May Christ take away all darkness that prevents us to see and follow his light! Peace to your family and your loved ones! Merry Christmas to all!

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



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