

DECEMBER 25, 2022

THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD



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Christmas Message

My dearly beloved in Christ,

“Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various by the Prophets, but in these last days, he has spoken to us by the Son.” (Hebrews 1:1-2)

With deep joy and gratitude, I extend to you my prayerful best wishes for a holy and blessed Christmas.

During this Advent Season, it has been my prayer that each of you would find opportunities to reflect on your own faith and relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and His Church. Whatever it is that our hearts and souls desire, whether we realize it or not, our ultimate desire is Jesus Himself, for this reason, we are filled with joy at Christmas to know that all that we hoped for has been fulfilled in the person of the Christ Child.

In the midst of all our current challenges and concerns, the love of God the Father is made manifest to us in the wonderful gift of His Son, Jesus. With the angels in Bethlehem, our faith moves us to sing: ***“Glory to God in the highest and peace to His people on earth!”*** We recognize that true peace on earth flows from our recognition and praise of God in our lives.

Christmas has a way of bringing to Church individuals and families who, for various reasons, have not been to Mass or the Sacraments for months or years. What a wonderful and grace-filled opportunity to put aside past differences and old habits and begin anew that prayerful relationship with the Lord and His Church community. I extend to all of you an open, grateful heart of welcome. Together, may we grow in strength and grace to know and celebrate together God's presence in our lives and His dominion over all things of this world.

May our Lord Jesus Christ, born in Bethlehem, bless you, your families and loved ones at this blessed time of hope and grace. May Mary, Joseph, the parents of the Child Jesus, watch over you and your parishes.

Wishing you a blessed Merry Christmas,

Yours sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Luan Vu

The Nativity of the Lord

1st Reading: Isaiah 62, 11-12

2nd Reading: Titus 3, 4-7 Gospel: Luke 2, 15-20

Pondering the Birth of Christ

So they went in haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known the message that had been told them about this child. All who heard it were amazed by what had been told them by the shepherds. And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart. Luke 2:16–19

Merry Christmas! Our Advent preparations have been completed, and we are now invited by our Lord to enter into the glorious celebration of His birth!

How well do you understand the awe-inspiring mystery of Christmas? How fully do you comprehend the significance of God becoming a human, born of a virgin? Though many are quite familiar with the beautiful and humble story of the birth of the Savior of the World, that familiarity can have the surprising negative effect of keeping our intellect from deeply probing the depths of the meaning of what we celebrate.

Notice the last line of the Gospel passage quoted above: “And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart.” What a beautiful line to ponder this Christmas day. Mother Mary was the one person who would have understood the mystery of the birth of her Son, the Son of God, the Savior of the World, far more deeply than anyone else. It was to her that the Archangel Gabriel appeared, announcing her pregnancy and His birth. It was her who carried her Son, the Son of God, in her Immaculate womb for nine months. It was to her that Elizabeth, her cousin, cried out, “Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb” (Luke 1:42). It was Mary who was the Immaculate Conception, the one who was preserved from all sin throughout her life. And it was her who gave birth to this Child, carried Him in her arms and nursed Him at her breast. Our Blessed Mother, more than any other, understood the incredible event that had taken place in her life.

But, again, the Gospel above says that “Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart.” One thing this tells us is that even Mary, the Mother of Jesus and the Mother of God, needed time to ponder, reflect and savor this most holy mystery. She never doubted, but her faith continually deepened, and her heart pondered the unfathomable and incomprehensible mystery of the Incarnation.

Another thing this tells us is that there is no end to the depth of the “pondering” to which we must commit ourselves if we want to enter more deeply into the mystery of the birth of the Son of God. Reading the story, setting up a nativity scene, sharing Christmas cards, attending Mass and the like are central to a holy celebration of Christmas. But “pondering” and “reflecting,” especially during prayer and especially at the Christmas Mass, will have the effect of drawing us ever deeper into this Mystery of our Faith.

Reflect, today, with our Blessed Mother. Ponder the Incarnation. Place yourself into the scene that first Christmas. Hear the sounds of the town. Smell the smells of the stable. Watch as the shepherds come forth in adoration. And enter the mystery more fully, acknowledging that the more you know about the mystery of Christmas, the more you know how little you actually know and understand. But that humble realization is the first step to a deeper understanding of what we celebrate this day.

Lord, I gaze at the wonder of Your birth. You Who are God, the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity, God from God and Light from Light, became one of us, a humble child, born of a virgin and laid in a manger. Help me to ponder this glorious event, to reflect upon the mystery with awe and to more fully grasp the meaning of what You have done for us. I thank You, dear Lord, for this glorious celebration of Your birth into the world. Jesus, I trust in You. (mycatholiclife.com)

Sick? Shut-in?

Would you like to receive communion? Please call the office at 780-987-2858 to arrange communion, and/or to be put on our prayer list.