# “God in Search of His People”

Tonight as we are gathered here to celebrate the Vigil Mass of Christmas, our hearts are beating in anticipation of the second coming of our Lord. But first, we are remembering His first coming and reenacting the scene at Bethlehem on the glorious night our Lord was born. His birth was in a simple place, yet magnificent. It was in a lowly place yet glorified and filled with joy because the angels were singing **“Glory to God in the Highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests”** Some few minutes ago, we saw His image placed in a manger we rejoiced because, heaven has come to earth. The Son of God has come to search for His people on earth.

God always invites His people to come to Him. To know Him and to love Him with all their heart, mind, and strength. But we humans are fickle. We have eyes that wonder away from God from time to time. As God is reaching out to us, we seem to always pull back. It is like the painting of God and Adam in the Sistine Chapel. While God is leaning forward with is finger extended, Adam seems to be leaning backwards with his finger pointing down instead of out. He is depicted as not eager to touch the hand of God. So it is with humans and God. We are always turning away from God even though **“*our hearts are restless until they rest in Him*.”**

In our first reading, through Prophet Isaiah, we heard how God said, He would persistently search for His people and would not give up on them. He promised not to keep silent or keep quiet. His love for his people would keep burning until they are vindicated and given a new name. Instead of Israel, they would now be called **“Church”** as our Lord pronounced directly from His mouth to Peter **“Upon you, I will build my Church.”** The Church would become His people and He will be their God. We are the people in the Church of God, we are privileged to be in this era, experiencing His first coming, and awaiting His second coming.

The Church would be held in high esteem and will not be cast aside as unimportant. Since our Lord said, the gates of hell will not prevail against her, she will never be forsaken by God who would always be in search of her. She will grow like a planted smallest of seeds like a mustard seed. She will grow into a bush that all birds of the air would come to rest on, meaning she will grow all over the world with people of every nation being her members and be a measure of observation of the will of God. She will become the bride of Christ, the bridegroom.

When will reflect on the Old Testament Scripture, we will see how God had being in search of us expecting us to return to Him like the prodigal son that we are. In the story of the prodigal son, we found out that when his father saw him from afar, the father ran to him. So it is with God. He wants to throw us the biggest of all banquets at His heavenly table. That is why He sent us His only begotten Son so we can be saved. He wants us to listen to His Son so we will not be cast aside outside where there will be untold pain and gnashing of teeth in the everlasting fire.

In our second reading, St. Paul in Antioch told fellow Israelites and Gentiles how God freed the Jews from captivity and slavery in Egypt with mighty power and mighty deeds. God freed them slavery so they could know Him as the one true God and be in awe of Him. After their disobedience on many occasions, God always sent someone to lead them back to Him. On asking for a king so they could be like their neighbors, God still looked kindly on them even though they rejected Him. God chose Saul as their first king.

After Saul fell out of favor by disobedience in the eyes of God, God raised up David to replace Saul as their king. God saw in David, a man after His heart because David would be obedient to God. God was pleased with him. Again in search of us, God went further by picking David’s lineage fas the one the Messiah, the Key of David, Root of Jesse His Son would come from, so His promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would be fulfilled.

St. Paul in our second reading, then told them that in God’s search for humanity, He sent John the Baptist ahead of the Messiah as a forerunner who would preach a message of repentance and baptize His people with a baptism of repentance.

The people in anticipation of the Messiah, thought in their hearts that John the Baptist was the Messiah. John set them straight that he was not. He pointed to the one coming after him as the Messiah and that he was unworthy to loosen the strap of His sandals. John, in his humility who did not desire false glory for himself, pointed to Jesus as the next prophet coming after him who was anointed not by oil, but by the Holy Spirit. He told them that Jesus is the Messiah.

St. Mathew in our Gospel reading, gave us a full account of God’s search for us by tracing the linage of Jesus from Abraham our father in faith through 14 generations, and 14 generations from David to the Babylonian exile and form the Babylonia exile to St. Joseph the earthly father of Jesus. He then connected Joseph as the husband of Mary because in those days, Jews did not marry out of their clan. The connection tells us that automatically, Mary was also from the lineage of David meaning the promise God made to David was fulfilled.

Seeing that Mary was pregnant, Joseph wanted to divorce her quietly. He knew Mary did not commit adultery. Because someone who thinks their spouse had been unfaithful to them would not be afraid but would be angry at the betral. Matthew told us that, Joseph was afraid to take marry as his wife. That was probably because in his humility, Joseph was afraid to raise Jesus the Son of God. He thought he was unworthy to be the father and husband of two people who were sinless.

As we come to receive Jesus in the Eucharist, Let us give thanks to our God who is in search of us and ultimately gave us His Son to redeem us.