

Christmas, 25 December 2016

*"The Nativity of the Lord"***Reading 1:** Isaiah 52:7-10**Responsorial Psalm:**

Ps 98:1, 2-3, 3-4, 5-6

Reading 2: Hebrew 1:1-6**Gospel**

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John 1:1-18

Gospel Reading: *John 1:1-18*

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race; the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came to be through him, but the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, but his own people did not accept him. But to those who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to those who believe in his name, who were born not by natural generation nor by human choice nor by a man's decision but of God. And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth.

Meditation:

Why was it necessary for the Word of God to become flesh? We needed a savior who could reconcile us with God. Throughout the ages Christians have professed the ancient Nicene Creed: "He became man for our sake and for the sake of our salvation." The eternal Word became flesh for us so he could offer his life as an atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world through the shedding of his blood on the cross. The Word became flesh to show us the infinite love and tender mercy of God for us sinners.

In the feast of Christmas we celebrate present realities - Jesus Christ our redeemer who reigns in heaven and who also lives and reigns in our hearts through the gift and working of the Holy Spirit. And we commemorate past events - the birth of the newborn Messiah King and his manifestation to Israel and to the gentile nations. We thank and bless God for the way in which he has saved us from the power of sin and the curse of death and destruction by sending his son to ransom us and give us pardon and abundant life through the gift and working of the Holy Spirit. Today we celebrate the birthday of our King and Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

God wants to fill our hearts anew with joy and gratitude for the greatest gift he could possibly give us - his beloved Son Jesus. What can we give thanks for in this great feast of the Incarnation? We can praise and thank God our Father for the fact that the Son of God freely and joyfully assumed a human nature in order to accomplish our salvation in it. Jesus came to release the captives from slavery to sin and to open the gates of paradise once again. This day the Holy Spirit invites us to make haste - as the shepherds of Bethlehem did - to adore Jesus our King and Messiah. The Lord Jesus Christ is our eternal good shepherd who guides and cares for us unceasingly and who gives us abundant everlasting life and union with the triune God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

This day the whole community of heaven joins with all believers of good will on earth in a jubilant song of praise for the good news proclaimed by the angels on Christmas eve: Behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people, for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord (Luke 2:10-11).

The joy of Christmas is not for a day or a season. It is an eternal joy, a joy that no one can take from us because it is the joy of Jesus Christ himself made present in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who dwells within us (see Romans 5:2-5). The Lord gives us a supernatural joy which no pain nor sorrow can diminish, and which neither life nor death can take away. Do you know the joy of your salvation in Jesus Christ?

Questions for Community Faith Sharing:

1. The love of the Father becomes flesh when His only Son born as human this Christmas. What is your gift to Him?
2. How do you apply the humility of our King who was born in the manger in your daily life?
3. How do you continue living the joy of Christmas?

"Lord our God, with the birth of your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, your glory breaks on the world. As we celebrate his first coming, give us a foretaste of the joy that you will grant us when the fullness of his glory has filled the earth."

OUR PARISH VISION – A PARTICIPATIVE CHRIST-CENTERED COMMUNITY OF DISCIPLES BUILDING THE KINGDOM OF GOD.