

Solemnity of The Nativity: Mass During the Night A2022

When someone loves another person, he gives her or him everything he has or she has and is, including her or his own life. The feast of Christmas is the feast of the love of God for us, a feast in which we contemplate the incredible event of God becoming a human being, like us, to save us.

The Apostle Saint John, meditating on the beauty of that wonderful exchange that brought God to the world, says: "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but might have eternal life." (John 3:16).

That is what we celebrate tonight, that is, the coming of God into our world. We salute with joy the entry of God into human history. Where God comes, darkness gives way to light, sadness gives way to rejoicing, wars give way to peace, division gives way to reconciliation, discord gives way to mutual understanding and sins give way to repentance.

This is the longing of our world today, which is also the longing of our hearts. Who would not like to be at peace with himself, his family, his God and his fellows? Who would not like to be rejoicing and spared from calamities and miseries? And yet, that is the reason why Jesus has come into our world. He has come to transform our world so that as he has shared in our humanity, we too share in his divinity.

Already at the beginning of the adventure of God with the people of Israel, as he announced his coming through the mouth of the prophets, it was exactly such an intent he made manifest, as we heard in the first reading of tonight: people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in the land of gloom are rejoicing like the farmers when they have an abundant harvest.

What God did on his own from the beginning, he does it today through his Son, Jesus Christ whose birthday we celebrate tonight. The prophet Isaiah, enlightened by a divine revelation, calls Jesus "a Child born for us, a Son given to us, Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, and Prince of Peace.

Jesus is the Son of the promise whose birth was announced by the angel and celebrated by the shepherds. Jesus is the Savior who brings peace to the world and to those who listen to God and want to live by his rules. Jesus is the Savior the Father has sent to deliver us from all lawlessness and to cleanse us from our sins so that we become God's people, eager to do what is good in his presence

Jesus is the lighthouse that warns us about the rocks and the ridges in the sea of life that can prevent us from coming to the safety of a harbor. By sailing in the waters of life, if you remove your eyes from the light coming from the lighthouse, you are in danger. You run the risk of finding yourself in the direction opposite to where you should go. I hope no one will be embarrassed if I extend to everyone an invitation to come here again. I hope you feel welcome and fully at home. For this church is for you, this community is for you, and Jesus truly present here in the Eucharist longs to give himself to you

Be sure of one thing, brother and sister: God loves you. That is why he sent Jesus to be one of us. You do well to join us tonight in celebrating this Holy Night. Know, however,

that love never forces entry. Love always requires a welcome, and this goes for God's offer of love as well. If we want to do more than celebrate Christmas for reasons of nostalgia; if we want to open our hearts to the amazing offer of grace that comes with this season, we have to change.

Listen to what Saint Paul tells us to do if we want to remain in God's love: Reject all godless ways of life and worldly desires. Live temperately, justly, and devoutly in this troubled age. Change your life and make it conform to the image of the One who has become one of us so that we become part of him. Give up all evil behavior that pushes to choose sin and death instead of life. Strive for justice and peace; cling to honesty and detach yourself from anything that prevents God's love to grow in you.

Let me say it again. At the center of Christmas, there is a mystery of God who has become one of us. 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 and history. From now on, we know that God has a face and a name. From now on, we know who God is for us because he is "Emmanuel."

As Christians we witness to the truth that, in spite of wars in our world and many difficulties 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 belong to him makes a difference in our lives. It gives us the courage to confront the present and the hope to fight 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. Christmas leads us to the contemplation of the face of God in the child in the crib. In this night, there is a revelation of God who made himself poor, but there is also a revelation of a new world and, a beginning of a new history between God and humanity.

Christmas invites us to live our present life out of the values of God's kingdom. The child in the crib reminds us that in him we have become brothers and sisters. Therefore, we have to get out of ourselves, to go toward others, not to be scared of others even if they are different from us. Let us open ourselves to the differences, for we are all equal before the crib.

This Christmas is overshadowed by the war in Ukraine, the civil war in Ethiopia and the East of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Each one of us is a battle field. If you do not win the war inside yourself, you will never bring peace to others. May the birth of Jesus help us work for peace! The joy and the peace of Christ are more compelling than prejudices that divide us. May we listen to the voice of wisdom the child in the crib addresses us! God has become one of us to share with us his life. Let us respond to him with love and listen to his cry as he begs our love. Blessed Christmas to everyone!

Isaiah 9: 1-6; Titus 2: 11-14; Luke 2: 1-14



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Contact: www.mbala.org
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