Christmas: Mass at Midnight

Gospel text (*Lk* 2,1-14): In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. So all went to be enrolled, each to his own town. And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there, the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over their flock. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were struck with great fear. The angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying: “Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

«Today a Savior has been born to you in David's town; he is the Messiah and the Lord»

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Today, the Savior has been born. This is the good news of this Christmas eve. Like in every Christmas, Jesus is born again in the world, in each home, in our heart.

But unlike what our consumerist society celebrates, Jesus is not born in an environment of waste, purchases, comfort, whim and meals. Jesus is born in the humility of the Nativity scene.

And he does it this way because he has been refused by men: nobody had wanted to house them, neither in homes nor in hostels. Mary, Joseph and the just born Jesus felt what rejection ,lack of generosity and of solidarity mean.

Later on things will change with the Angel's announcement: «Don't be afraid; I am here to give you good news, great joy for all the people. Today a Savior has been born to you in David's town; he is the Messiah and the Lord» (Lk 2:10). Everybody will run towards the Nativity scene in order to adore the Son of God. A bit like in our society where many people are marginalized, because they are poor, aliens or simply different from us, while we celebrate Christmas speaking words of peace, solidarity and love.

We Christians are joyous today, we are rightfully happy. As Saint Leo the Great said: «There is no place for sadness now that life has been born». But we can not forget that Jesus' birth means a commitment for us all: living Christmas in the most similar way as the Holy Family lived it. That is, no ostentation, no unnecessary expenses. Celebrating and having a party is compatible with austerity and even with poverty.

On the other hand, if we do not have true feelings of solidarity towards those who have been rejected, aliens or homeless people during these days, it is because we are like the inhabitants of Bethlem: we do not welcome the infant Jesus in our hearts.