

Christmas: Mass at Midnight

Gospel text (Lk 2,1-14): At that time the emperor issued a decree for a census of the whole empire to be taken. This first census was taken while Quirinus was governor of Syria. Everyone had to be registered in his own town. So everyone set out for his own city; Joseph too set out from Nazareth of Galilee. As he belonged to the family of David, being a descendant of his, he went to Judea to David's town of Bethlehem to be registered with Mary, his wife, who was with child. They were in Bethlehem when the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to a son, her firstborn. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in the manger, because there was no place for them in the living room.

There were shepherds camping in the countryside, taking turns to watch over their flocks by night. Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared to them, with the Glory of the Lord shining around them. As they were terrified, the angel said to them, «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. Let this be a sign to you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger». Suddenly the angel was surrounded by many more heavenly spirits, praising God and saying, «Glory to God in the highest; peace on earth for God is blessing humankind».

«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.