Christmas: Mass at Dawn

Gospel text (*Lk* 2,15-20): When the angels had left them and gone back to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, «Let us go as far as Bethlehem and see what the Lord has made known to us». So they came hurriedly and found Mary and Joseph with the baby lying in the manger. On seeing this they related what they had been told about the child, and all were astonished on hearing the shepherds. As for Mary, she treasured all these messages and continually pondered over them. The shepherds then returned giving glory and praise to God for all they had heard and seen, just as the angels had told them.

«Found Mary and Joseph with the baby lying in the manger»

Fr. Bernat GIMENO i Capín
(Barcelona, Spain)

Today, a light will shine on us: the Lord is born for us! Just as the Sun rises every morning to light up and enliven our world, this Christmas Mass at Dawn, when still quite murky, calls forth the figure of the small Infant born at Bethlehem as a rising Sun that rises to illuminate the human family.

After Mary and Joseph, those shepherds of the Gospel were the first ones to be enlightened by the presence of the Infant Jesus. Those shepherds, that were meant to be the last ones in their society. We also have to become shepherds to welcome the Infant, while realizing our own nothingness.

That Jesus is light cannot leave us unconcerned. Let us look at the shepherds: the joy they felt for what they had seen was so great they could not stop talking about: «And all were astonished on hearing the shepherds» (Lk 2:19).

«Your Saviour comes», the prophet tells us, and we are filled up with joy and peace. Dear brothers, this is what we are lacking now a days: to be able to speak about Him with joy, peace and conviction; each one of us from his/her own vocation, that is, from the eternal design God has “for me”. And this will only be possible if we are previously convinced of our identity: the lay, the monastic and the priests. We all form “the holy people” prophet Isaiah speaks about.

It was God's design the shepherds went to worship the Infant Jesus. We are all shepherds too. We must be poor and humble, the very last ones... When we look at the manger at home, with its plastic or ceramic shepherds, we see an image of the Church, which the prophet in the first lecture describes as a “city that is not forsaken” and calls “My Delight” (cf. Is 62:4-12). This Christmas we have to set up our mind upon loving more our Church... which is not ours, but His, and which we receive and go into to participate as

unworthy servants. Our Church, which we receive as a gift, as an unmerited present. This is why, this coming Christmas, our outburst of joy must be a sincere and profound thanksgiving.