



Nativity of the Lord – Christmas 2017 ***YEAR B– December 25, 2017***

More than 2000 years ago, the Son of God came into our world as a little child because we needed him. We needed him to remind us that God loves us and asks us to love him as he loves us, and he asks us to

love each other as we love ourselves.

Seems simple but we had forgotten. We had forgotten then and it seems we are forgetting again. Our culture has been on a downward trend since 1947 and that trend is now on a steep descent. Rick Warren, the pastor of a mega church in Texas puts it this way: in our country today -

- *Materialism is idolized*
- *Truth is minimized*
- *God is marginalized*
- *Immorality is glamorized*
- *Sin is marginalized*
- *Divorce is rationalized*
- *Abortion is legalized*

ON TV AND IN OUR MOVIES

- *Crime is legitimized*
- *Comedy is vulgarized*
- *Sex is trivialized*
- *Bible is fictionalized*
- *Churches are satirized*
- *God is marginalized*
- *Christians are demonized*
- *Elderly are de-humanized*
- *Sick are euthanized*
- *Poor are victimized*

- *Mentally ill are ostracized*
- *Children are tranquilized*

IN OUR FAMILIES

- *Manners are uncivilized*
- *Speeches are vulgarized*
- *Faith is secularized*
- *Everything is commercialized*
- *Christians are disorganized*
- *Pastors are de-moralized*
- *Faith is compartmentalized*
- *Witness is compromised*

WE NEED

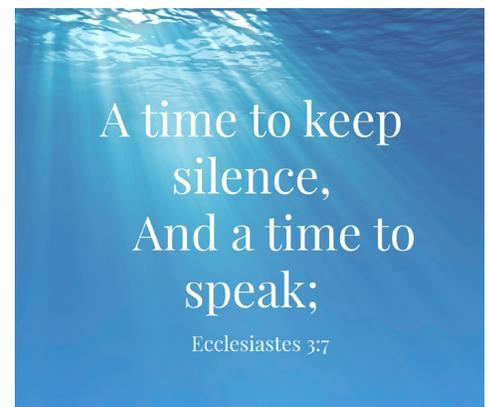
- *Worship to be re-vitalized*
- *Differences to be minimized*
- *Members to be mobilized*
- *Marriages to be re-energized*
- *Everyone to be re-Catechized*

It seems to me that Christmas is a good time to focus our attention on changing things. In the book of Ecclesiastes God tells us there is a time for everything under the sun. There is a time to be born and a time to die. There is a time to speak and a time to be silent. The time to speak is now. Be proud to be Christian, Be proud to be a Catholic. Be proud to take the message of the Christ Child and shout it from the rooftops. There are people in our country who need to hear it.

By the way, there is a time to be silent too...

Let me share with you a little story sent to me some time ago. It proves the point;

Morris and his wife Esther went to the state fair every year, and every year Morris would say, "Esther, I'd like to ride in that helicopter". Esther always replied, "I know Morris, but that helicopter ride is 50 dollars -- and 50 dollars is 50 dollars". One year Esther and Morris went to the fair, and Morris said, "Esther, I'm 85 years old. If I don't ride that helicopter, I might never get another chance." Esther replied,



"Morris that helicopter is 50 dollars -- and 50 dollars is 50 dollars".

The pilot overheard the couple and said, "Folks I'll make you a deal. I'll take the both of you for a ride. If you can stay quiet for the entire ride and not say a word I won't charge you! But if you say one word, it's 50 dollars." Morris and Esther agreed and up they went.

The pilot did all kinds of fancy maneuvers, but not a word was heard. He did his daredevil tricks over and over again, but still not a word. When they landed, the pilot turned to Morris and said, "By golly, I did everything I could to get you to yell out, but you didn't. I'm impressed!"

Morris replied, "Well, to tell you the truth, I almost said something when Esther fell out, but you know -- 50 BUCKS IS 50 BUCKS!"

On a more serious note: the message of Christmas is simple and clear: God loves us and he wants us to love him. He wants us to help each other, to love each other as we love ourselves.

For a few moments in silence reflect on that message and on what Christmas means to you.