

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we celebrate Christmas, we are thankful for the gift of faith, that opens up for us the beautiful message of this holy season, namely, that God loves us so much that he sent his only Son to redeem us and to show us the way to the Father in heaven.

My hope for us is that we share our faith with loved ones and strangers alike, proclaiming the joyous tidings, “EMMANUEL”, which means 'God is with us.' And we should not just share our faith but we should reach out to one another with all the blessings God has given us, especially the gift of peace, and may the peace of God and the joy of the season illumine your heart and lead you to the heart of God.

Fr. Donatus and the Parish Council wishes peace and good will to our parish community, assuring you of our prayers and best wishes always.

Merry Christmas

BEWARE * BEWARE *

Please be aware of this **HOLIDAY SCAM** these scams are on the rise. Father Donatus has been informed that someone is using his name to receive money from unsuspecting parishioners. Below is what is being sent. Please pass it on. Thanks and God bless

Hi, How are you?

I need a favor from you, please text me back as soon as you get this message.

Blessings, Pastor. Donatus Chris Mgbeajou,

And it goes on to ask for iTunes gift cards in the amount of \$500, in \$100 denominations.

PLEASE IGNORE

St. Therese Catholic Church

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THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

CHRISTMAS DAY

December 25, 2020

“Word is Made Flesh”



THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD CHRISTMAS

Glory

The parish church I grew up in is now paired with the parish church in a neighboring village on the prairie. The first Mass of Christmas is no longer held at midnight. The scheduling is complex; the parishioners are older now. But one Christmas we were together at the third Mass for Christmas, the Mass during the day. The sky was clear; the air cold; the sun bright. Young parents were the strong ones then. They were strong from hard farm work. They were strong for their aging parents and strong for their squirming children. The church was flooded with morning sunlight strong enough to recall the dawn of creation. On that Christmas day in full sunlight, it felt like all the ends of the earth had seen the glory of the only Son, coming from the Father, filled with enduring love.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 52:7–10 RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Psalm 98:1, 2–3, 3–4, 5–6

SECOND READING: Hebrews 1:1–6 GOSPEL: John 1:1–18

(Readings are from the Mass During the Day)

Comment

Isaiah announces Israel's great return from exile and darkness to Jerusalem on Mount Zion. We have three perspectives all in one reading—the messenger who announces; the sentinels and city dwellers who hear and rejoice; the whole world that beholds this marvelous God of Israel.

The news is so good that even the messenger's very footprints are blessed. We can imagine him skipping over the hills with glad tidings. The sentinels at the walls of the city can make out the messenger coming, with voice ringing out. Finally, the Lord comes to comfort the broken people, to rebuild the ruined city of Jerusalem.

The rest of the world stands by and marvels at God's holiness and strength. Israel self-consciously boasts: "All the ends of the earth will behold the salvation of our God!"

Indeed! We can see it in the Gospel according to John. This Gospel begins in the heavens; it soars from beginning to end. It speaks of glory and light and eternity and triumph. This Gospel seems to be born of the sun and familiar with the heights. It thunders forth for us magnificently: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God." This opening reminds us of the first words of the Bible: "In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth ..."

The Word of God was before time and will be for all time. This dazzling Gospel pours out its message: "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us."

Conclusion —>

Reflection

What does Christmas celebrate? Christmas celebrates a human event, an encounter with Jesus' humanity. Christmas recognizes how the God who created human beings to know, love, and serve realized that human beings could not know, love, or serve anything they couldn't wrap their arms around. Thus, God became a human being in Jesus.

As a human, Jesus was born, grew, worked, sweated, suffered, laughed, cried, and died as all humans do. In his body, he knew the smell of bread baking and the warm breath of animals. He felt the heat of the sun and the touch of a friend's hand. He woke up to the cooing of doves and was lulled to sleep by the slap of water on the side of a fishing boat. He heard the cry of a widow whose son had died. He tasted new wine, the dust of the road, and charbroiled fish shared with the apostles. He saw the world around him, and he looked into people's hearts.

On Christmas, the Church celebrates Jesus' experience of being a human being in a unique, concrete manner. More than that, we make memorial of that experience in our own life situation. At its core, Christmas celebrates the meaning of the experience of being human: pain and pleasure, suffering and joy, dying and rising to new life. That is why Christmas is such a hospitable feast. This hospitality is rooted in what it means to be a new creation, to be open to the stranger in our midst, and to be open to new experiences. Ultimately, Christmas means being willing to recognize that our everyday living is a sign of what will come. Why? Because the Word of God has taken on bone and blood and has entered into our human actions, experiences, and lives. Because of Christmas, our faith-filled eyes can see that our humanity now is our salvation.

Praying for the Family

Father, we pray for the family and circle of friends who are grieving the loss of **Deacon Julian Richard**, who passed away Wednesday, December 23, 2020. He served as Deacon at St. Therese for over 25 years.

They're hurting for many reasons, and we ask You to help them through this season of loss. We reach out to You Lord, the Father of compassion and the Source of every comfort, asking You to touch them with Your unfailing love and kindness. Be their God who comforts them as they're going through their struggles, and bring them through the tough things ahead. Come alongside them in their pain, and strengthen them so they'll one day be able to help others who face the same struggles. (2 Corinthians 1:3–4; Psalm 33:22; 1 Samuel 20:14a)