

Every child is a Child of God

Year B – 2020 Christmas Day

Is 52:7-10 , Ps 98:1, 2-3, 3-4, 5-6, Heb 1:1-6, Jn 1:1-18



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Merry Christmas! Hopefully our time in Advent prepared us for our celebration of Christmas. This year was different to be sure. For many, issues of health, did not allow them to attend church or be with family. That is difficult at best. If we are to learn anything from the pandemic, it is that we are social beings.

Renata and I, for the most part, have limited our family visits to FaceTime and Zoom. Our daughter and son-in-law would often FaceTime with us when our grandson Oliver was in his highchair at mealtime. How else does one contain the marathon energy of a two year old? With the meal over, mom or dad would grab a washcloth and wipe down Oliver's face and hands. I have never seen such twisting, gyration and flailing of limbs. Children are like that. I imagine that Mary and Joseph probably went through the same with young Jesus.

This year I knew that it would be different. In the days leading up to Christmas, the differences weighed on me. Christmas is a time that we celebrate family and the Christ child at the heart of it all. I prayed about our St. Tom's community and mourned the fact that we would not be able to gather filling our church. I prayed for our homebound and hospitalized who have so few to comfort them.

I woke one morning at about three. I realized, I am awake because, "I have a headache, congestion and a heavy heart." I held my hands under the water in the bathroom sink waiting for it to warm up. When it warmed, I splashed some water on my face. Then, wetting a washcloth, I brought it to my face. The steamy warmth brought some relief and I thought, "Oliver, this is not so bad." In that moment, it was no longer my hand holding the washcloth. I was a young child and it was the hand of a very loving parent. It was a love so deep that I felt it before I could frame the words, "Peace be with you." My concerns washed away.

Taking the experience to prayer, I reflected on the incarnation, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Every child is overshadowed by the Holy Spirit. I think that is what Jesus tried to tell us. Everything that he spoke of pointed to the Father and the mystery of incarnation. Jesus tells us that our path to the Father is through the inner room. Look within yourself and find the goodness that you seek. “Knock and the door shall be opened.” Matthew 7:7

It is good to know that you are a Child of God. It is even better to feel it when people afford you the respect and dignity as part of the incarnation. Jesus came to tell us of a divine reality not beyond, but within.

After finding the inner room, nothing is the same. It is kind of like our vision after cataract surgery, everything is so much clearer, there is greater detail and the colors are brighter. We realize our relationship to God, others and the earth all have consequence. There is a synchronicity of Spirit within creation. Christmas is the time to celebrate the mystery of that incarnation.

The next time that you wash up, warm the water and washcloth before bringing it to your face. Feel the warmth, then extend that warmth to the hurting and marginalized of the world. I actually had the opportunity to apply a warm compress once in a hospital setting. It was a grace filled moment. God bless our health care workers. Their touch, their compassion is an extension of God’s love for us.

Merry Christmas, from the St Tom’s family to yours.

References

All scripture quotations are taken from. (1987). *The New American Bible, Revised edition*. USCCB.

Note: Due to Covid-19 this homily was not delivered in person but posted on the St. Thomas More Catholic Student Parish website.