

12.25.2018 – Tuesday – Christmas Day – Homily

Is 52:7-10 Heb 1:1-6 Jn 1:1-5, 9-14

In this reflection, perhaps we can consider but one line in the Gospel which both challenges our love, and is a sign of God's humble and abiding love for us: *For there was no room for them in the Inn.*

I. The Scene – There is a knock at midnight. Joseph speaking on behalf of both Mary and Jesus (who is in her womb still), seeks entrance to the homes and lodgings of those in Bethlehem. And though the Jewish people, in those ancient days, placed a high obligation upon the duty of hospitality to the stranger and passerby, the answer is repeatedly, “No room here.” Mary's obvious pregnancy and imminent delivery make little difference, it would seem.

This indeed is a cold night, not so much in terms of the air temperature, but in terms of the hearts of the people. Even at the local Inn, (Surely someone could make room for a pregnant woman!), No room at the Inn.

Scripture says,

The ox knows his master, the donkey his owner's manger, but Israel does not know me, my people do not understand....They have forsaken the LORD; they have spurned the Holy One of Israel and turned their backs on him. (Isaiah 1:3-4)

A knock at midnight, the animals received him and gave warmth. His own people, knowing him not, received him not but the animals received Him.

II. The Stooping – Surely God stoops low to come from lightsome heaven to our war torn, dark and cold world. And as he stoops, he stoops to the lowest place, being born not in a palace or even a comfortable home. He stoops to a manger. For God will defeat Satan's pride with humility. And all who will find him this fateful night must also stoop.

It was there, down under, where Joseph and Mary sought hasty shelter, for it was a cold and dark midnight, and Mary's time had come. God stoops with them to be born, among the animals and agricultural implements, in the damp under-cave of some house or inn.

And, for those who will find our God. They too must stoop low. Even to this day when one visits Bethlehem and wants to see the place of Jesus' birth, one must first enter the Church through what is termed the "Door of Humility." For security reasons this ancient door was built only about four feet high. And one must stoop greatly to enter the church. Yes, we must stoop to find our God. The site of the birth is at the other end of the basilica, under the altar area. Here again, more stooping; down steep stairs and through another low and narrow door, into the cave. To touch the spot, one must kneel and reach forward, into a narrower part of the cave. *Here Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary*, says the inscription. And the only to get there is to stoop.

Yes, Our God stoops, he stoops to the lowest place, and to find him, and be with him we too must be willing to stoop. God hates pride, he just can't stand it. For he sees what it does to us and he comes to break its back, not with clubs and swords, or by overpowering, but with humility. Darkness does not defeat darkness, only light can do that. Hate does not defeat hate, only love can do that. Pride will not defeat Pride, only humility will do that. So God stoops.

And today God calls us with this same humility. He could have ridden down from Heaven on a lightning bolt and stunned us into fearful submission. Instead he goes to the lowest place. He comes quietly, non-violently, without threat, as an infant. But even in this lowly way, he is still calling.

And so there is a knock at midnight. Scripture says, *Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me* (Rev 3:20). An old song says, "Somebody's knocking at your door! Oh Sinner, why don't you answer?"

And this leads us to the final point –

III. The Saddest thing – When human history is complete and the last books are written, one of the saddest lines in all of that history will be simply the line, *For there was no room for them in the Inn*. No room, no room. How strange and sad for this world that God simply doesn't fit.

Again, as Scripture says,

He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. (Jn 1:11)

But that same passage goes on to add:

Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believe in his name, he gave the power to become children of God— (John 1:12)

What could be more sad than to miss this gift to become the very Children of God? Yes, the saddest line that will ever be written of this world is that there was no room for him in the Inn.

Reflections:

- 1. And what of us? Is there room for Jesus** in the “Inn” of our hearts? For if there is, Jesus comes bearing many gifts. Today is a day of gifts. There is a knock at this very day. Sounds like Jesus! Oh Sinner, why don't you answer, somebody's knocking at your door.
- 2. Make room for Jesus. Every year/day he comes knocking**, he stoops low and invites us to find him in the lowly places of this world, in the lowly places of our own life. What are the things in your life that may be crowding out Jesus? What obstacles and preoccupations leave little or no room for Jesus? What keeps you from recognizing him and opening the door wide when he comes?
- 3. If you've already opened** the door to him for many years, praise God, and ask the Lord to help you open wider. For it remains true

for many of us that although Jesus has been invited in, his accommodations are poor, perhaps the couch or the floor.

- 4. Make room for Jesus**, make more and more room for him, in the Inn of your soul and I promise you that what Scripture says is true: *Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believe in his name, he gave the power to become children of God—* (John 1:12).

If we will receive the gift of him today, and make greater room for him in our heart, we receive total victory and transformation in Christ Jesus. There will come to us the increasing gift of transformation into the very likeness of God. For today is a day of gifts and Jesus stoops low to give us a priceless gift: the power to become the children of God.

Listen there is a knock at the door.

Let us Pray

Lord give me the grace to listen to your knocking the door of my heart and Soul. May I open the door and make room for you every day to dwell in my heart. May I experience the incredible love you have for me. May I know that you came for me, to save me and to invite me to worship.

Jesus I trust in you