

December 24, 2020
4PM/6PM Christmas Vigil Mass
Is 62:1-5
Acts 13:16-17, 22-25
Mt 1:18-25

HE CAME FOR US!

A student asked a Christian professor how Confucius and Buddha would differ from Christ. He responded with a parable. He said, "A woman fell into a deep hole. Try as she might, she could not climb out. Confucius looked in. He told her, **"Poor woman, if you had paid attention to me, you would not have fallen in there in the first place."** Then he disappeared. Buddha approached. He too spotted the woman. He said to himself, **"If she can just manage to get out of that hole, I can give her genuine aid."** He continued his journey. Along came Jesus. He spotted the woman. He was moved with pity. He jumped into the hole immediately to assist her out."

The story conveys to us the very reason for the Incarnation - our God becoming man, the Word made flesh. God's incarnation shows his concern for each one of us. The Emmanuel will never hesitate to jump into the hole and help us out.

If the reason for the Incarnation is our salvation, **what then should be our response?** Our responsorial psalm gives us the answer. We proclaimed – **"For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord."** Yes, our unceasing proclamation of God's goodness is the appropriate response to his willingness to be 'one-with-us' except sin. Our joyful proclamation of God's goodness is the best way we can give witness to the Good News.

We are gathered here today to celebrate Christmas, the Incarnation of Christ Jesus. This celebration calls us for great rejoicing. **Why do we have to rejoice? Is there really a reason to rejoice during this time of pandemic?** Let me give you **three reasons** why we have to rejoice even during this difficult time.

1. We have to rejoice because this is the feast wherein God manifested his willingness to share his love for each one of us. This love will be highlighted later on in his life-giving offering on the Cross. From the manger to the Cross, the Incarnate God is all about love, mercy and forgiveness.
2. We have to rejoice because this is the feast wherein God sends his Son to be our Savior. John 3:16 says, **"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life."** Yes, in the midst of sin and death, our greatest need is a Savior and that's what God gives us in the person of Christ Jesus. As our Savior, he comes, not to condemn, but to liberate and save us. He comes to offer us life eternal.
3. We have to rejoice because this feast reminds us that our God is not a distant God. Rather, he is the God who lives with us and within us. He did not hesitate to come

down from on high to journey with us. His action gives us a glimpse of his glory. Dietrich Bonhoeffer (*Feb 04, 1906 - Apr 09, 1945*) was a Lutheran pastor, theologian, anti-Nazi dissident, and key founding member of the Confessing Church, reflected on this and said: **"Who among us will celebrate Christmas correctly? Whoever finally lays down all power, all honor, all reputation, all vanity, all arrogance, all individualism beside the manger; whoever remains lowly and lets God alone be high; whoever looks at the child in the manger and sees the glory of God precisely in his lowliness."**

We have reasons to rejoice this Christmas because God loves us; God saves us; and God is with us!

As we rejoice in our God who loves us, saves us and with us, let us not forget that he is inviting/calling us all the time to share his love to all the people we are going to meet along the way. He is also inviting/calling us to have an awareness that he is with us and within us. **What happens when we do have such awareness?** His presence will shine thru us and every day will be Christmas.

**A FAITH-FILLED CHRISTMAS
AND A BETTER AND HEALTHIER 2021
TO YOU AND YOUR WHOLE FAMILY!**