

December 25, 2021
Christmas Day (Mass during the Day)
Is 52:7-10
Heb 1:2-6
Jn 1:1-18

JUMPING INTO OUR SITUATION!

There was a story about a student who asked his Christian professor how Confucius and Buddha would differ from Christ Jesus. The Christian professor responded with a parable. He said, **"There was a woman who fell into a deep hole. She tried to climb out, but she could not. 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 Christ Jesus. He spotted the woman. He was moved with pity. He jumped into the hole immediately to assist her out."**

The story depicts to us what Incarnation is about. The God we believe is the "Word who became flesh." He came into our world to bring us out from the hole. He did not mind 'jumping into our situation' to help us out. God took our human form to convey to us that he is not a 'distant God' but 'God-with-us' – the Emmanuel.

In the gospel proclaimed, the 'God-with-us' – the Emmanuel - is the Light that will bring us out of darkness. And John the Baptist testified that indeed the Emmanuel is the true Light that will enlighten everyone. Aside from being the Light, the Emmanuel is not only the Giver of Life but Life itself. His coming into the world is not only to live among us but to manifest to us what it means to live life to the fullest.

"Rejoice! It is Christmas!" they say. **Is there really a reason to rejoice with all the trials and difficulties we are experiencing due to this pandemic?** How can the people of Dawson Springs, Kentucky, for example, rejoice this Christmas when they were severely devastated by the tornado a couple of weeks ago? How can the people from the Visayas and Mindanao in the Philippines, for example, rejoice this Christmas when they are suffering right now due to the strong typhoon Odette last week? **What is the cause for rejoicing this Christmas?**

Let me propose/offer three (3) reasons for us to rejoice this Christmas.

1. **We have to rejoice in spite of the sufferings around because Christmas is about God sending us a Savior.** The Incarnation of His Son, Jesus – the God-made-man - is to free/save us from bondage/burden of sin. God knows what we need. We need a Savior every day. Christmas reminds us of this gift, Jesus Christ, our Savior, and when we surrender our lives to Him, he will liberate from everything that hinders us from living holy lives. He will deliver us from our evil addictions like gossiping, watching pornographic materials on the internet, unjust practices, and other uncharitable tendencies. Yes, we must rejoice because our Savior, Jesus Christ is always willing to save from the great abyss.
2. **We have to rejoice in spite of the sufferings around because Christmas is about God sharing his love with us.** The 'Word becoming flesh' proves to us that our God is a loving, merciful, and forgiving God. If he is not loving and forgiving, it will be condemnation and not redemption he will give us. But, no! It is love that he became man to redeem us. It is love that he keeps on being patient with us. Love is the reason why he never gets tired of forgiving us!
3. **We have to rejoice in spite of the sufferings around because Christmas is about God living with us (Emmanuel) and within us.** By virtue of our baptism, he is already within us. He is also with us through the Sacraments. And so, Christmas reminds us that we are bearers of God with the responsibility to proclaim him to those around us. **How can we proclaim that he is truly with us and within us?** By loving without conditions the people around us. By humble, sacrificial, and committed service to humanity. By building bridges in our relationships and tearing walls that divide us. By being true to our call to be stewards of the Gospel. Sharing Jesus with others is the best Christmas gift we can give to others and to Jesus, the birthday celebrant!

With or without the pandemic, let us continue to rejoice because a Savior is born for us. Let us continue to rejoice because God loves us. Let us continue to rejoice because God is with us and living within us.

As we offer this Mass, we pray for the grace to be able to proclaim with love to others that, indeed, Jesus Christ is our Savior and Lord, and he is truly present in our works and words.

A faith-filled Christmas and A grace-filled New Year to you and your whole family!