

CHRISTMAS DAY  
WE CAN BECOME THE CHRISTMAS

“In the beginning was the Word: The Word was with God and The Word was God  
... The Word became flesh and lived among us” (Jn. 1: 1, 14).

***At Christmas, we celebrate the coming of Christ into the world.*** We commemorate this great event that changed the history of mankind and wrought our salvation. God sent His Only-begotten Son, The Incarnate Word, to live among us; to die in order to save us. St. Augustine captures the significance of Christmas in such succinct fluidity that wraps up the importance of the Christ-Birth in our lives as believers in these words:

*Eternal death would have awaited you had He not been born in time. Never would you have been freed from your sinful flesh, had He not taken to Himself the likeness of your sinful flesh. Everlasting would be your misery, had He not performed this act of mercy. You would not have come to life again, had He not come to die your death. You would have broken down, had He not come to help you. You would have perished, had He not come.*

Without the Word becoming Flesh, and living among us, and dying for us, we would have been eternally damned. This is the reason for our joyful celebration in anticipation of the glorious union that awaits us.

***The mystery of the incarnation*** is summed up in the words of St. John in the Gospel (Jn. 1: 1-18): “In the beginning was The Word: The Word was with God and The Word was God ... The Word became flesh and lived among us” (Jn. 1: 1, 14). He is the *good news proclaimed in Zion, consoling God’s people and redeeming Jerusalem. He is the Prince of Peace, the Wonderful Counsellor and Mighty God. Through Him, God speaks to His people, no longer with prophets, but directly so that they can experience the radiant light of His glory.* This whole mystery was in fulfilment of God’s promises to His humanity in the Book of Genesis, right after the Fall, when God promised that through the woman he would bring forth an offspring, who would be an eternal enemy of the ancient serpent (cf. Gen. 3: 15). It was a fulfilment of the salvation promised in all God’s Covenant to His people. Therefore, the Birth of our Christ is the manifestation of God’s love and faithfulness.

***How was He received then? How do we receive Him now?*** St. John states, rather disappointedly, that “He came to His own domain and His own people did not accept Him” (Jn. 1: 11). This describes the unfortunate reception that was given to Christ among His own people: at birth, He came to Bethlehem, and there was “no room in the inn.” Therefore, he had to be birthed in the stable. He went to Nazareth, he was rejected and ridiculed as “The Son of a carpenter.” He taught and worked miracles in the temple in Jerusalem. There, the Chief Priests, the Pharisees and the Scribes accused Him of breaking the Sabbath and questioning His authority. Finally, he was betrayed with a kiss from a friend and led through the mockery of a prosecution in a kangaroo court. He was condemned to death on the cross to die a shameful death. Before we dare to condemn these ones, let us pause for a moment and ask: “How is he received today in our world?” Christ has come to us in so many ways, including technology and social media platforms. Do we listen to Him? Our world has paid Him back with no less an indifference as did the Jews on the streets of Jerusalem. The world today knows so much about the Messiah but ignores Him with reckless ignominy. We ignore Him in the poor on our streets; in the immigrants who have no roof over their heads, to live, work to earn a living, no status to be provided for by our social aids systems; we ignore him in the broken and separated families that cannot tolerate and accept each other; we ignore Him in the weak and the lonely who are denied justice daily in our courts because they have no one to speak for them; we ignore Him in our neighbours who are hungry, thirsty, naked, abandoned, sick and in prison with no one to attend to them. Like the men in Bethlehem, we have no rooms in the inns of our hearts for the Saviour of the world to be born – we are simply too occupied.

***Dear friends,*** the joy, peace and love of Christmas can only be made real when we choose to become what the others were not, namely, “welcomers”, who readily open the doors of our hearts so that Jesus can be born in and through us. When we choose light instead of darkness so that through us the world can be brightened by His undying love. When we live the life of empathy, forgiveness and love, sharing our blessings with those in need. The Word becomes incarnate in us when we live the life of the gospel and share the same joy with the others. In these ways, we become Christmas!

**MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOU ALL**