

Vigil of the Nativity of the Lord

24th December 2020



First Reading: Is 9:1-7

A son is given to us.

The people that walked in darkness has seen a great light; on those who live in a land of deep shadow a light has shone. You have made their gladness greater, you have made their joy increase; they rejoice in your presence as men rejoice at harvest time, as men are happy when they are dividing the spoils. For the yoke that was weighing on him, the bar across his shoulders, the rod of his oppressor, these you break as on the day of Midian. For all the footgear of battle, every cloak rolled in blood, is burnt and consumed by fire. For there is a child born for us, a son given to us and dominion is laid on his shoulders; and this is the name they give him: Wonder-Counsellor, Mighty-God, Eternal-Father, Prince-of-Peace. Wide is his dominion in a peace that has no end, for the throne of David and for his royal power, which he establishes and makes secure in justice and integrity. From this time onwards and for ever, the jealous love of the Lord of hosts will do this.

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 95:1-3. 11-13 R. Lk 2:11

R/ Today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord.

Second Reading: Ti 2:11-14

God's grace has been revealed to all people.

God's grace has been revealed, and it has made salvation possible for the whole human race and taught us that what we have to do is to give up everything that does not lead to God, and all our worldly ambitions; we must be self-restrained and live good and religious lives here in this present world, while we are waiting in hope for the blessing which will come with the Appearing of the glory of our great God and saviour Christ Jesus. He sacrificed himself for us in order to set us free from all wickedness and to purify a people so that it could be his very own and would have no ambition except to do good.

The Word of Lord

Gospel Acclamation: Luke 2:10-11

Alleluia, Alleluia! Good News and great joy to all the world: today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord. **Alleluia!**

Gospel: Luke 2:1-14

Today a saviour has been born for you.

Caesar Augustus issued a decree for a census of the whole world to be taken. This census – the first – took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria, and everyone went to his own town to be registered. So Joseph set out from the town of Nazareth in Galilee and travelled up to Judaea, to the town of David called Bethlehem, since he was of David's House and line, in order to be registered together with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to a son, her first-born. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them at the inn. In the countryside close by there were shepherds who lived in the fields and took it in turns to watch their flocks during the night. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone round them. They were terrified, but the angel said, 'Do not be afraid. Listen, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in the town of David a saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. And here is a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.' And suddenly with the angel there was a great throng of the heavenly host, praising God and singing:

'Glory to God in the highest heaven and peace to men who enjoy his favour.'

The Gospel of the Lord



We proclaim a crucified Christ

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**A message from Most Rev Peter A Comensoli, Archbishop of Melbourne
Christmas 2020**

Friends,

Christmas celebrations in the city of Bethlehem are likely to be very quiet this year.

Under the weight of a global pandemic, and the ongoing troubles in the Middle East, this special destination for thousands of pilgrims and tourists will resemble something more akin to that familiar Carol, 'O little town of Bethlehem... how still we see thee lie...'

Perhaps it was a similar stillness that met the Holy Family more than 2000 years ago, as they sought a place of safety to welcome the birth of their child.

Doors had been shut to them, amidst their own time of worrying restrictions. How familiar is this aspect of the nativity story to our own lives this year?

Jesus was born in such a time as this, and in fact, is born for such a time as this. He comes to us always in our need and our reality.

There has been much said about what a 'COVID Christmas' will be like, but is that the question we need to be asking? This year has challenged us in ways that have been unimaginable; it has turned our levels of comfort and security on their head.

And whilst we've sought creative ways to engage in our worship and our connections, it's never been about reinventing something.

Christmas too is not of our own making. The tinsel and gifts, food and holidays certainly play their part in how we acknowledge the festivity of the season, but they're not Christmas.

Jesus is Christmas: then – now – always.

Whether it is into a peaceful landscape, or a war torn one; a time of uncertainty and isolation, or one of abundant friendship and family; whether it is in poverty or in plenty – the question we should ask is what is the kind of Christmas we want to live?

Isn't it one that holds close the promise of life and hope that the birth of Jesus gives us? And in that very gift, is not our calling to bring this life and hope to the world?

Jesus is the gift beyond all gifts, which we receive; and He is the gift we can always give.

Which brings me back to the next part of the Carol:

"Yet in thy dark streets shineth, the everlasting light.

The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight"

When you gather this Christmas, in whatever way that is, don't labour on the darkness and of this year - recall the wonder of that birth and the light by which we can see ahead.

May you, your families, loved ones, your friends and neighbours be filled with the everlasting light of life and hope this year.

Jesus is Christmas.

***May the Joy and Peace of Christmas be with you today
and throughout the New Year
from Fr Jan, Fr Aloysius and the Pastoral team***