

CHRISTMAS VIGIL MASS

December 24, 2021, 5:30 PM

THE LORD DELIGHTS IN YOU

We begin the Christmas season this evening and there is great joy and hope that very soon the Savior will be born. God promised the Israelites a Messiah who would save them from slavery. At that time, they would be called by a new name, and be a glorious crown in the hand of the Lord. They would not be called "Forsaken", or your land "Desolate", but would be called "My Delight". All would see the glory of Israel.

This change of life and status is reflected in the lives of the lineage of the Savior. Paul in Antioch reminded them how God promised that the Messiah would come from the house of David. David, and some ancestors of Jesus, had question marks on their ways of life.

One would have expected that the Messiah would be born in a palace and His ancestors would be people without faults. But they were made up of foreigners and sinners who were late to become special people or gave birth to important people.

Judah took his daughter-in-law, Tamar and gave birth to Perez. Rahab was a prostitute but helped Israel to conquer Jericho. She gave birth to Boaz who married Ruth, a Moabite, and gave birth to Obed. David committed adultery and murder, and from that relationship, Solomon was born. Manasseh was a wicked king. From these and other faithful ones like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the Savior was born.

Jesus is born to rewrite our history. He has come to live among us to renew our lives and change our names; not to be called "Forsaken" but "My Delight". Because the Lord God delights in you and me. He has come to teach us how to live godly lives and do away with what is evil. He doesn't want us to wander about in hopelessness.

We have been given hope that we can move from being nobody to becoming somebody, and from the state of sin to the state of grace. What preparations have we made to welcome such an important guest? I know by now we have done all the necessary shopping; the candles, chocolate, cakes, and fish and meat of all kinds are ready; outside decorations are visible for all to see. What about the spiritual preparations? Is the soul also happy that something is in store for it? Is the heart clean to receive the word and keep it?

The new visitor we are going to receive is not so much interested in external preparations, but inner purity. God has given us His best; we are to give Him our best by being faithful to Him and being generous in everything; to show love and concern for the other person.

The secular culture is working hard to ensure that Jesus' coming this Christmas is unrecognized, as it happened during His first coming. The culture has replaced Jesus' Christmas coming with the 'holiday' coming of Santa Claus. But we forget that the gifts from Santa Clause vanishes within hours, but the gifts the child Jesus brings – grace and hope – last forever.