

Christmas, 25 December 2022

Scriptures: Isaiah 9:1-6; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14

Homily: Fr. Ken

Christmas is not just for children, although they're cute, but somewhat rare these days. No, Christmas is for each one of us, for all of us because we are the sisters and brothers of Jesus Christ, and of each other.

As we express in our hymns and our songs, Christmas is a celebration of joy and a celebration of hope. But unfortunately for many people it is not always easy to experience this in today's world.

Overwhelmed by the ever-increasing poverty of so many women and men worldwide, our songs of joy at the birth of Jesus seem to choke up in our throats. For many people, bewildered by the difficulty of finding solutions to this predicament, discouragement destroys the energy needed to face this situation.

Yet, the presence of Jesus in our history is a permanent call to return to the sources of our religious faith. Jesus was born in Bethlehem, surrounded by shepherds and animals. Joseph and Mary had come to a stable because they had found no place in the Inn. There, in marginality, the Son of God entered history, the Word became flesh.

We heard this read in the Gospel account: "In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and it was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria."

In its simplicity that text conveys an important message: Jesus was born in a determined place and time, under Augustus and Quirinius, and at the time of King Herod, a traitor to his people.

Jesus was born at that moment, insignificant in the eyes of arrogance and cynical power, and in the eyes of cowardice disguised as peace and political realism.

During this period of Christmas, people often say that Jesus is born in every family and every Christian heart. But these "births" must not bypass the primary and undeniable reality: Jesus was born of Mary in the midst of a people dominated at the time by the greatest empire of those days. If we forget this, Jesus' coming into the world can become an abstraction. For Christians, Christmas manifests God's irruption into human history—a Christmas of lowliness and of service in the midst of the power of domination and the predominance of the powerful of this world.

From the first Christmas onward, we cannot separate Christian faith from human history.

Christmas, then, is a time marked by hope, a hope that has become flesh in human history. That is what we are celebrating on the feast of Christmas, God becoming one of us, in the person of our brother Jesus Christ.

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