
« A CHILD IS BORN TO US! »



My best wishes to you all, this Christmas of the year 2002! May you experience peace, happiness and joy unreservedly. May we discover or rediscover the great mystery of the birth of Jesus the Son of God and son of Mary. May we see Jesus in every person we meet, in days to come. May we discover him in the joys and hopes, the sorrows and anxieties of men, women, and children of our time, especially the poor and the sick. May we find him in the midst of our communities: whenever there are two or three gathered in his name, he is there! May we discover him at the heart of each sacrament we celebrate. "A child is born to us, a son is given us! His glory is everlasting!"

A CHRISTMAS FULL OF BLESSINGS

"Blessed be the new day which is Christmas on earth, and because Jesus wants to relive it in me." To Madeleine Delbrêl (1904-1964), author of "La joie de croire" [The Joy of Believing] and "Nous autres, gens des rues" [We the Street People], Christmas is possible anytime we let Jesus walk among us men, women, and children. In this way Jesus greets everyone who comes to my home, everyone I meet on the street, all the rich and poor of today, wise people and plain, little people and old men and women, saints and sinners, and the healthy and the sick. He comes for all, he comes to save them all. He will speak to all who speak to me, and to those I miss he will give something. Each one will receive his undivided attention, as if alone in the world. His silence will be there in the midst of noise, and in turmoil will be his peace.

SENT BY GOD INTO THE WORLD

In all things, Jesus never stopped being the Son; everything will be allowed the following day, and will require my saying yes. The world he leaves me in, to be there with me, cannot keep me from being with God. Like a child in its mother's arms is no less in her arms because she is walking through a crowd, Jesus, though everywhere, has never stopped being sent. We cannot help being at every moment, God's own messengers to the world. Jesus in us does not cease being sent along the day just beginning, to all of humankind from then and now, in my town and throughout the world. Through the close brothers and sisters he will have us serve, love, and save, waves of his charity will sweep to the ends of the earth, and will continue to the end of time. Madeleine Delbrêl never stopped repeating this.

THE LUCK OF BEING CHRISTIAN

Being a Christian does not mean to cogitate, invent, or imagine, but to speak and to act, to speak what God has said to speak, and to act in order to carry out what God has said. The Christian is commissioned to act; God invents, God creates. Christians have had the chance to know what God has said to a few for the benefit of all humankind, and this was written down and transmitted through the centuries. Christians must continue repeating to all people what God expects of them; and they themselves must act by applying what they have learned. That is why it is so important to read and meditate Holy Scripture, especially the accounts relating the coming of Jesus, Emmanuel, among us.

KEEPING OUR EYES ON JESUS

More than ever we must, during this holiday season, keep our eyes fixed on Jesus. In the quiet of the night, a Saviour has been born to us. Despite the poorness of the manger, you cannot miss recognising him. The most beautiful of children calls you joyfully to his crib. Happy news, a Saviour child is born today! He was born in a manger. Christ was born this very night, for us the Christ was born; come shepherds, open your hearts and show your love to this most loving child. Jesus Emmanuel, Redeemer of the world, was born in a poor and cold abode wrapped in a blanket of snow. The choir of angels and archangels, the very stars in the heavens proclaim the God-Child. Let us worship Him! Love, honour, praise to Jesus the Redeemer. Yes, let us get inspiration from all the Christmas carols we hear and sing at Christmas: they are bearers of the Good News: a Child is born today!

LET US LOOK AT MARY AND JOSEPH

Let us look at and contemplate the angels present at the event, and each person around Jesus: Mary is very proud to show the world her Son Jesus. The thoughtful Joseph is there, watching over the child. And the shepherds. Such faith brought them to the manger, to acknowledge the Messiah! And such a great message they receive in their humble hearts! "Glory to God and goodwill to all!" The magi, who came from afar, taking to the road in response to a heavenly message... they were not afraid to ask about and walk endlessly until they came upon Jesus himself, and once they recognised him, on divine command they returned home by another route. These shepherds and wise men represent all of humankind... and what a pilgrimage they make, in faith, to Jesus the Messiah of God!

PRAISE TO MARY

This Christmas, and this year dedicated to the Rosary, I would like to say with you a prayer of praise to Mary, composed by St. John Eudes: "O Mother of my God, may every creature in the world be changed into as many tongues and hearts to bless you and love you unceasingly! O Mother of love, since you have given me your heart, be the complete mistress of my heart in order to offer it entire to the pure love and sole glory of your beloved Son. O Mother of all love, please make us share in the holiness, fervour and love with which you sang on earth your wonderful Magnificat! Obtain for us through your Son the grace of being among those who praise him eternally with you, giving everlasting thanksgiving to the most adorable Trinity for all the great things it has accomplished in you and through you, and the graces it has showered, through you, on humankind." Merry Christmas!

+ François Thibodeau

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« From A Bishop's Journal » (468) (24 December 2002)