

CHRISTMAS: VIGIL MASS

Today we celebrate the Nativity of Christ.

In the moment of original sin when all seemed dark and lost God already foresaw restoration. The first Adam had lost the glory of God. We needed a second Adam to recover it.

Through the prophets God promised us a savior. His promise was fulfilled with the birth of his only begotten son.

Today's gospel reading speaks about how the birth of Jesus came about. Joseph did not know that Mary's pregnancy was a supernatural event. It came about through God's powerful action in the world, the Holy Spirit.

In his innocence Joseph had wanted to divorce Mary quietly. As Joseph pondered this matter the Lord sent the angel Gabriel to him in a dream. It was a belief at that time God was so mighty that he needed messengers to go between himself and man.

The angel told Joseph that Mary's pregnancy did not come about by another man, but through the Holy Spirit affirming the child divine origins. Joseph was told to accept the child as his own and name him Jesus which means God saves.

God through his son would save his people from their sins. Sin is a more dangerous enemy than all enemies because it separates us from God.

According to Matthew all this was to be in fulfillment of what the Lord has spoken through prophet Isaiah. Isaiah prophesized that the people of Judah were about to be delivered back to Jerusalem and this deliverance would be so striking that a young woman would conceive and give birth and him Emmanuel which means "God is with us" that is, God's own presence in the world.

The point is Jesus, whose ultimate origin is in God, will carry out God's work, through him the original divine purpose of creation will reach completion.

Jesus whose birth we celebrate at Christmas is indeed the savior of the world. He is the one who can save us.

Now, it might sound easy to make the admission that we need a savior, but in reality it is tough because sometimes we feel rather self-sufficient, independent. We feel we are able to do all things all by ourselves. Yet if we are truly honest with ourselves, we admit that there are certain things in our lives that we need God's grace to overcome.

Today as we celebrate the birth of our savior let us continue to see our need for God made man, who has broken the history of the world, to save us. We should not keep God out of all that we do.

Like Joseph let us rely on God's grace to handle any difficulty and challenge we face with firm trust and faith in God. God's grace is forever sufficient.

It my prayer that our whole life will be a continuous Christmas, that is, feeling God's presence with us, His concern for us and His protection over us always.

Merry Christmas to you all!