

## Homily For Christmas Day (Mass During the Day) - Year A

### St Peter's 11:30 AM Mass, December 25, 2019

**Isaiah 52:7-10** "Beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces salvation."

**Psalms 98** "The Lord has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness."

**Hebrews 1:1-6** "In these days (God) has spoken to us by the Son, through whom he created the ages."

**John 1:1-18** "What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of the human race."

#### Introduction

Johnny was in Grade Two when his class was preparing for their First Communion. The pastor came for a visit and was thinking of what kind of questions to ask to test their knowledge of the sacrament. So he started like this: "Children, where is Jesus? Then he looked at little Johnny hiding his face: Johnny, can you tell me where Jesus is? Johnny looked frightened and didn't open his mouth, so Father asked him again: Come on Johnny, tell me, where is Jesus? Looking more terrified, Johnny just shrunk into his seat a little further. One more time, Father said to him, I think you know the answer to where Jesus is. At that moment, Johnny bolted out of his seat, ran out of the room knocking over his books, went straight out of the school and didn't stop for the two blocks to his home, ran inside past his mother and up to his room. His mother rushed after him and, opening the door to his closet, she asked, Johnny what's wrong? Starting to cry, he blurted out, "Jesus is missing and the priest thinks I took him!"

We know it's Christmas. That is what we are celebrating today. The problem is that the readings don't sound like it. It seems like Jesus is missing. Where is the baby Jesus? Where are Mary and Joseph, dragging themselves from house to house desperately looking for a place for her to give birth? Where are the angels and the shepherds and the Wise Men?

Charlie Brown yells out a similar question in frustration: "Isn't there anyone who knows what Christmas is all about?" Unlike Johnny, Linus had the answer to Charlie's question: "Sure, Charlie Brown, I can tell you what Christmas is all about:" There were some shepherds in the field, keeping watch over their flock by

night. And the angel of the Lord came to them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them and they were afraid. But the angel said to them, Do not be afraid for I bring you news of great joy for all people, for unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign to you; You shall find the baby wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward people.

### Gospel of John

If we had been at mass last evening, or at midnight, or early this morning, we would have gotten some of that story. But today we get this: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of the human race. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. A man sent from God, whose name was John, came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. To all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only begotten son, full of grace and truth. From his fullness we have all received grace upon grace.

John 50 years after Jesus had seen all of the other Apostles die for what they knew to be true - that Jesus of Nazareth was truly God made man, who gave himself up in total self giving love. Who held nothing back. And who was raised to life at the resurrection. They didn't hide Jesus. They lived what they had seen. John is putting into words what everyone who was closest to Jesus knew.

We are here today to praise God. God does not need our praises. But we need to praise God:

a) because it is right and just to praise the one who brought everything into being and

b)because we are worshipping beings. We are going to raise something up and make it a thing we bow down to. If we do not worship God, we will worship something else: a thing, a person, even an idea. That is what we do here on Sundays. We worship the one through whom all came to be because that is our DNA. But our DNA can get messed up and we worship something that cannot handle it, or something that feeds off it, not for our good, or something that wants to control or manipulate us.

Every traditional culture worships the spirit they see active in nature.

Ancient peoples made gods, then they gave them personalities and fed them sacrifices, sometimes even their children.

Today we have so many things that can be objects of worship - good things that we become so attached to that they take up all the space that we might have for God. Today's motivational speakers and writers all have their ways of telling us how we can be wonderful and happy and successful, but they leave out the one who made us for happiness. Here are a few of their ideas that people follow:

Bruce Van Horn: Your life will not be wonderful until you decide that your life *is* wonderful. He says, "Always believe that something wonderful is about to happen!"

Sean Croxton is getting people to study something called The Science of Getting Rich.

Darren Hardy: The root cause of all results in your life is your choices

Zig Ziglar: You have to put something in to get something out. It's not enough just to 'give it a try.'

Benjamin Hardy: You can only have what you see yourself having. To do this you have to change your self image.

Bob Proctor: There is greatness all around you, but you are going to have to ask for help.

But then we come to John's message.

We must believe in God's Word, that God wants to come to us and fulfil his promise to us and in us. God who made and moves the sun, moon and stars, wants to be present to us and with us.

Pope Francis offered this reflection about Christmas: "These are days in which we raise our eyes to heaven and commend to God those people and situations that are closest to our heart. In this gaze, we acknowledge ourselves to be sons and daughters of one Father, brothers and sisters. We give thanks for all the goodness present in this world, and for all those who freely give of themselves, those who spend their lives in service to others, those who do not give up but keep trying to build a more humane and just society. We know well that we cannot be saved alone. Let us invite the Christ child to be born into our hearts spiritually, to transform our lives, and to strengthen the witness of our faith so that we might grow in love for our brothers and sisters. May we proclaim His Birth with great joy and announce the saving love of Jesus Christ in the daily living of our lives.

Where is Jesus? In heaven, in his Word, in his people, in the Eucharist,

Where does Jesus want to be? In our hearts, in our daily lives, in every act of love or service.

Little Johnny didn't take Jesus, but we can hide him under the things of this world that we worship. We can make it impossible for him to work in us.

Will there be room for Jesus, the eternal Word of God, this Christmas? That's the better question. Will we let his light into our lives to transform us into the creatures of light he has made us for? Let us welcome the light of Emmanuel - God With Us - as the light which we give worship and praise.