

DECEMBER 24, 2019
December 25 - Mass During the Night
Luke 2: 1-16

“NOW I SEE WHY YOU HAD TO DO IT.”

There was *A Christmas Parable* that goes this way: “Once upon a time there was a man who looked upon Christmas as a lot of nonsense. But he was a kind and decent person, generous to his family, upright in all his dealings with other men and women. But he didn’t believe all that stuff about Incarnation which churches proclaim at Christmas. And he was too honest to pretend that he did. “I am truly sorry to distress you,” he told his wife, who was a faithful churchgoer. “But I simply cannot understand this claim that God becomes man. It doesn’t make any sense to me.” On Christmas Eve, his wife and children went to church for the midnight service. He declined to accompany them. “I’d feel like a hypocrite,” he explained. “I’d rather stay at home. But I’ll wait up for you.” Shortly after his family drove away in the car, snow began to fall. He went to the window and watched the flurries getting heavier and heavier. “If we must have Christmas,” he thought, “it’s nice to have a white one.” He went back to his chair by the fireside and began to read his newspaper. A few minutes later he was startled by a banging sound. It was quickly followed by another, then another. He thought that someone must be throwing snowballs at his living room window. When he went to the front door to investigate, he found a flock of birds huddled miserably in the storm. They had been caught in the storm and in a desperate search for shelter had tried to fly through his window. “I can’t let these poor creatures lie there and freeze,” he thought. “But how can I help them?” Then he remembered the barn where the children’s pony was stabled. It would provide a warm shelter. He put on his coat and galoshes and tramped through the deepening snow to the barn. He opened the door wide and turned on a light. But the birds didn’t come in. “Food will lure them in,” he thought. So, he hurried back to the house for breadcrumbs, which he sprinkled on the snow to make a trail into the barn. To

his dismay, the birds ignored the breadcrumbs and continued to flop around helplessly in the snow. He tried shoing them into the barn by walking around and waving his arms. They scattered in every direction - except into the warm lighted barn. "They find me a strange and terrifying creature," he said to himself, "and I can't seem to think of any way to let them know they can trust me. If only I could be a bird myself for a few minutes, perhaps I could lead them to safety." Just at that moment the church bells began to ring. He stood silent for a while, listening to the bells ringing the glad tidings of Christmas. Then he sank to his knees in the snow. "Now I do understand," he whispered. "Now I see why You had to do it."¹

My brothers and sisters, God became man to be with us, an Emmanuel, God is with us. There were many ways God would like to communicate with us, reached out to us, and be with us since the first fall of Adam and Eve. He used many prophets, holy men and women to have a relationship with us. He even formed a covenant with us. In the Old Testament, God is like a lover pursuing the people Israel, but Israel was like a wife committing adultery by going after many false gods. They always broke the covenant God gave to Moses at Mount Sinai.

In the New Testament, God gave us His Only Begotten Son, flesh and bones for us to convince and accept altogether His invitation to be His own People whom He loved so much. The birth of Jesus was the highpoint, the climax, and the culmination of God stretching out His hands to each one of us.

¹ frtommylane.com

In the gospel of John, we heard this great manifestation 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 Son, full of grace and truth.”²

My brothers and sisters, the story that I told you in the beginning, *A Christmas Parable* written by Louis Cassels many years ago is telling us that God had to become man for us to understand His love, His care, His mercy. Despite God’s efforts throughout the salvation history, people still don’t understand Him, so He gave His only Son. This is magnificently express in the Letter to the Hebrews: “Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. He is the reflection of God’s glory and the exact imprint of God’s very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word.”³

So, my brothers and sisters, may the birth of Jesus give us strength to continue pursuing God’s merciful love, faithfulness and indisputable forgiveness. Let us welcome the Lord, accept Him, love Him, serve Him all the days of our lives.

Let this be our prayer: “May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give us a spirit of wisdom and revelation as we come to know him. May we proclaim the message of Christmas: to give more, love more, and serve more, our Lord Jesus Christ, the baby in the manger, through our brothers and sisters today and every day. Amen.”

² John 1:14 NRSV Catholic Bible Press USA

³ Hebrew 1:1-3 NRSV Catholic Bible Press USA