

The Reading is From the Holy Gospel According to St. Matthew (2:1-12; Gal. 4:4-7)

+ In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit+

CHRIST IS BORN!

Who is it that is born today in the cave and lies in the manger? Is it simply a man, or prophet, a social activist, a revolutionary, or perhaps just an enlightened teacher? Or is the child who lays in the cave the Word of God who has taken on flesh, who has humbly taken the form of a servant for our salvation?

Today we stand in wonder, and like St. Paul, whom Christ encountered on the road to Damascus, we ask “Who are you Lord?” And like the Apostle St. Peter we are confronted with the question from Christ, “Who do you say that I Am?” The answer to these questions, and what we do about it, will determine our salvation. For as the scripture says of Christ, “This Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against...that the thoughts of many hearts many be revealed.” Do not think that the Child who is born today has come to “give peace on earth, not all, but rather division...” This Child divides father against son, mother against daughter, daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.

So it is we answer the questions before us concerning the Child born today, and what He means for our lives. For the Child that is born today is the stone which the builders refused, but which has become the head corner stone. It is the cross of this Child that is foolishness to those who are perishing, but those who are being saved is the power and wisdom of God.

The Child whose Nativity we celebrate is the stumbling stone, as it is written, “Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.” Born today is our freedom and redemption from the curse of the Law; the fulfillment of the Law. Born today is our righteousness, and sanctification, the seed of Abraham through whom all the nations are blessed.

Today is born the martyrs boast, the vine who makes us his branches in as much as we abide in Him. Today is born the wonderful counselor, the Mighty God, the prince of peace. Today is born “He Himself who took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses;” the healer of our souls and bodies, the Good Shepherd who seeks the lost sheep and lays down His very life.

Today is given to us the Lamb of God, the one who desires not the death of a sinner, but who welcomes the prodigal, the hope of all the nations, the consolation of the ages, and the joy of all who labor. Today is born the glory of the poor and the comfort of them that mourn.

The Word of God has taken on flesh and united things that differ: Virginity and motherhood, corruption with incorruption, eternity and temporality, Divinity and humanity. Today, He who assumed our corrupted humanity makes us fit to assume His divinity; whose death and resurrection we are united to in baptism that being made anew it is given to us to receive the Holy Spirit. Hence we have forgiveness of sins and share in the very life of the Holy Trinity. Today is born the King whose kingship we share in, the High priest whose priesthood we participate in, and the Prophet mighty in deed in Word whose gifts we receive. Today is born He through whom we have the adoption of sonship.

Therefore, today is born our re-creation, the one who suffers for all and represents all to the Father. Today is born the one who unites and calls all men to Himself, in Himself. In the manger lays the Devil's defeat, the embitterment of Hades. Today is born our death, for He is the one who through whom and in whom the reality of sin is put to death; trampling down death by death. The child wrapped in saddling bands is He whom the noble Joseph took down from the cross and wrapped in fine linen. Yes, the one who fills the manger with divinity is the one who empties the tombs of humanity.

Born today is the bread of life, the medicine of immortality, Who welcomes all to the heavenly banquet. Today is born infinite wisdom, incomprehensible power, inconceivable wisdom, boundless dominion, power eternal. He who is born in the cave and lays in the manger for our salvation is the light that illumines all, through whom worship of the Trinity was made manifest, and who gives life to the world.

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