

Christmas Message 2010: Being proud of Jesus Christ!

And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth".

We celebrate Christmas! Let us cast our minds on the very First Christmas. Something unknown before in heaven has happened. Something unknown before on earth has happened. The Word has just become flesh and dwells among us and we now see His glory. Incarnation has taken place for the first time. Incarnation has taken place for the last time. Something has changed in heaven. Something has changed on earth. God-man now exists. Yes, the Father's only Son is born!

What a great mystery! "The grace of God has appeared for the Salvation of everyone". It is common knowledge that God made us in his own image and likeness. Now, God has fashioned Himself in our likeness. What a great act of love! What a great act of humility. Let us therefore worship, celebrate and adore this mystery.

Christmas is about the mission. 'Mass' from Latin *Missa* means "Mission". The mission of Christ is to be the "the light of revelation to the gentiles and the glory of God's people Israel". Jesus says, "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." By sending Christ, the Father allowed His Light to shine in our world. The apostles and the early Christians allowed themselves to be God's instruments for the Light to shine. They proclaimed Christ and his Mission; yes, they proclaimed CHRIST-MAS. See how St. John puts it: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life... we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ (1John 1:1-3). Observe the emphasis, we have heard, seen, looked, and touched. We too have heard in the Word; and have seen and touched him through the Sacraments we celebrate. Christmas provides a golden opportunity to acknowledge him to the world. Do not light your lamp and put it under the bushel. Put it where all can see it (cf. Matt 5:15).

Every year we celebrate this mystery. Christ the light, the only true light, has come. Are you going to let his light shine through you? Just as the moon reflects the light of the sun, we too are to reflect his light into every part of our world. No part needs to remain in darkness. Surely, as the song goes, "This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine (x3). Let it shine (x3)" [*Harry Dixon Loes (1895-1965) in about 1920*]. Beloved, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (Matt 5:16).

Our world is so confused and misguided. Political correctness makes many unknowingly take a stand against Jesus. The voice of the crowd before Pontius Pilate continues to reverberate in our

secular choices: “Not this man but Barabbas!” “Not Merry Christ-mas, but Happy Holidays!” A friend recently forwarded me an email which originated from Barbara Brooks-Shirley, entitled, “This is a Christmas Tree”. It is truly an exciting witness. She displayed pictures of different Christmas Trees in different locations: churches, public buildings, private homes, grocery stores, malls, hospitals, and schools and each time identified the tree in these words, “This is a Christmas Tree”. Concluding, she declared, “These are NOT Holiday Trees; they are NOT Winter Festival trees; they are NOT Hanukkah bushes; they are NOT Allah plants; they are Christmas trees.” She then enjoined us, “Say it... Christmas, Christmas, CHRISTmas. Yes CHRISTmas – not Holiday. We are not celebrating the birth of a Holiday!!! We are Celebrating the Birth of Jesus Christ!!!” Beloved, we must also take a stand and stand up for Jesus.

Behold Jesus in the manger! Behold the Word made flesh as a little child! People generally love little infants. They yearn to carry them, to kiss them tenderly and to nurture them. Jesus accepts to become an infant. Be proud of Jesus! Be proud of your faith! Please, let your light shine! Therefore, “Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere. Go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!” Merry Christmas!