

HOMILY by Fr. Anthony Davis

“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”

CHRISTMAS DAY Dec 25, 2020 (Yr B)

Is 52:7-10; Heb 1:1-6; Jn 1:1-18 or 1:1-5, 9-14

I wish you all, dear people, a blessed Christmas. May it mean the birth of Jesus in the Stable of your heart, with all his healing and comfort and love for you and for those you hold dear. All of us have gathered here, both in Church and via livestream, despite our varying degrees of faith, and state of mind and heart. This means that Christmas is still important to us, whatever our motives are for being present. We may wonder if we are really present just to please the spouse, or the kids, or to keep tongues from wagging, because of family custom, sentiment, nostalgia, and the ghost of a dearly loved parent/grandma. Perhaps it doesn't matter all that much. Perhaps any one of these less-than-perfect motives is, nonetheless, the grace of that God uses to draw us here in worship, so that he may touch us once more with his love.

Why Christmas? You may have read items telling you that Christmas is just the Christian makeover of an old pagan feast—such as the birth of the Sun in ancient Egypt which was said to occur on our Christmas night. Or it's just the echo of an earlier human form of winter celebration practiced long ago, during which the family or tribe gathered around a roaring fire to affirm life at the lowest time of the year, in the face of the frosty god of winter.

John, in today's gospel, says that Christmas is much more. He says, Christmas is the celebration of the mystery of God's love for you and me, by taking human form in the baby born in the stable in Bethlehem. In this way, God made his invisible love for us visible, his intangible heart tangible! This means that, for John, the infant in the manger is the beginning human form of the “Word of God”, full of grace and truth—and the life and ministry of the adult life of Jesus proved that. Jesus turned out to be the forgiveness of God for poor sinners, and God's warmth and love and light, in the darkness of our winter world. Indeed, “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”

And so here lies the reason for the birth we celebrate today. The Word became flesh so God's love could penetrate our human experience. In short, God's love is more affecting when it comes through a human face. “...And the Word became flesh, and made his dwelling/pitched his tent, among us...”

Very likely, some treasured Christmases may have occurred during difficult years like what we are facing right now, whether the problems involved money or family or illness, whether the challenges were personal or societal. Yet all these, also echo the birth we celebrate today. In other words, Jesus' coming, admittedly, did not remove all our difficulties, and human weaknesses and faults. Indeed, the Romans still ruled Israel, sin and war and poverty and natural disasters prevailed. Nevertheless, the light of faith, hope, and love that emanates from

his earthly body, and his Mystical Body, perdures, even through difficulty. In fact, his light can be mysteriously more visible when it is present in the midst of darkness. For. "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

In Jesus-Emmanuel, God with us, we are able to live lives of purpose and fulfillment and inner joy, despite our suffering. Jesus is the pattern and power of what each one of us is called to be and can be: a graced human being, a child of God, a person with purpose, and someone with a future. You and I, dear friends, are worth the Christmas that God's love make possible for us. That's what the Jesus in the manger is telling each one of us this blessed Christmas day. Merry Christmas to you all!!!