**SATURDAY DECEMBER 25 – NATIVITY OF THE LORD**

**"Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger."**

**From Palestine, now the scene passes to Rome, capital of the Empire. The Empire of Rome, Caesar Augustus, emanates a decree that orders the enrolment of the whole earth. Here we enter the mystery of history, whose only Lord is God. The whole earth is ruled by the invisible Providence of God. This is the mystery that surround us and that often leaves us wordless. The obedience to history is the great teaching Jesus has left us. Jesus made himself obedient to Caesar at the moment of his birth. He has made himself obedient to his Governor at the moment of the crucifixion. He made himself obedient at the moment of his burial. The obedience to history is the true annihilation of Christ Jesus.**

**It is specified when this first enrollment went out: when Quirinius was governor of Syria. Our faith is a history. History is the picture containing our faith. Jesus’s birth is history. This history is inserted in the great picture of the universal history. Part of this universal history is Quirinius, the governor of Syria at that time. Everyone has to be enrolled in his own town. Everyone obey Caesar and everyone go there to be enrolled. Obedience is general, universal.**

**Joseph is of the offspring of David. The town of David is Bethlehem. He, too, obeys the emperor of Rome and of Galilee, from the town of Nazareth he goes to the town of David that is Bethlehem. He cannot be enrolled, but as a member of the house and of the family of David. This is history. Joseph is faithful obedient of history. Mary is with child and She is betrothed to Joseph. Mary, too, has to obey history. She, too, who is with child, must go to Bethlehem to be enrolled. Mystery of God and of his invisible providence, but also of mystery of man and of his obedience to history, in which the Lord acts.**

**Mary and Joseph are in Bethlehem when the time come for Mary to have her child. They are not on their way. They are in Bethlehem. The event that has torn history apart is now proclaimed in the simplest way: in one passage. The bare fact, the bare event is described, with nothing added and with nothing removed: “She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger.” Why does She lay him in a manger? “Because there was no room for them in the inn.” Since the first moment of his earthly existence, Jesus reveals that he is a host, pilgrim, wanderer among us. Since the first moment of his earthly existence, Jesus really has no place where to lay his head. We should think that in Bethlehem, Mary and Joseph were offered, in view of their poorness, a shelter where they could repair themselves from the cold of the night. Very poor people were offered a shelter for poor people, among animals, as one used to do once. Some straw served as a bed and a cloak was used as a cover. Mary and Joseph make themselves obedient to the law of hospitality. They accept what was offered to them, simply, thanking the Lord and blessing Him, with no demands, without complaining, with no request. Thus they teach each man that the little is always richness for the heart filled with God.**

**Let us read the text of Lk 2,1-14**

**In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. So all went to be enrolled, each to his own town. And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there, the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over their flock. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were struck with great fear. The angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."**

**There are shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over their flock. While they are watching over, an Angel of the Lord appears to them. They are surrounded by the Lord’s glory, namely by his most intense light. It is as if a light haze had embraced them in it. This is a true theophany, or manifestation of God. God really shows his glory, his light to shepherds. The great fear striking the shepherds attests that it is a true theophany. It is as for a moment they were immersed in the divine. They pass from darkness to a most great light, not far from them, or out of them, but immersed in them. Before the Lord showing himself, man is always struck by a great thrill of fear. Who might that be? What might the Lord want? Why has He come? What is He asking me?**

**Here is the great joy the angel has come to proclaim to them: “Today in the city of David a Saviour has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord.” The Saviour who was born for “you”, for the people, for each man is the Messiah and Lord. A Saviour was born. The Saviour who was born is the Messiah. The Messiah who is the Saviour is the Lord, he is God. God was born to be the Saviour of shepherds, of the people, of the entire world. He is the Saviour and the Messiah. He will save his people and each man by fulfilling all the prophecies about the Messiah of God uttered in the Old Testament. In these three words: Saviour, Christ, Lord the entire mystery of Jesus who was born is contained. The Saviour is the Messiah, the Messiah is the Lord, the Lord is Mary’s Son who was born. The Lord, God, was born in the flesh, He was born for He has made himself man. The Saviour was not born for himself as every other man; he was born to bring the salvation to each man. He is the only one who was born for us. The mission of the Saviour, of the Messiah, of the Son of God who was born has already written in his birth: He was born for us, for our salvation, for our redemption. He was born to die for us, in our place. This is his mystery and his vocation. He was born to live for us, to walk, to preach, to suffer hunger and heat, tiredness and every other sufferance for us. How will the shepherd know the Saviour who was born for us? The Angel gives them a sign: “You will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger." If all the children of the world are wrapped in swaddling clothes as soon as they are born, surely they are few, or even no one is laid in a manger. The manger is an unmistakable, easily recognizable sign. They can go. They shall not fail. They will find and recognize Him. Their Saviour, their Messiah, their Lord is the infant laid in a manger.**

**God is given every glory in the highest. All heavens, the highest heavens, must acknowledge the great work fulfilled by the Lord. The Incarnation is the greatest work of the creation itself. It is the deed of the deeds of God. The greatness of this work is the true glory of God. One needs to tribute, give, proclaim and sing it. From this work of God, the peace of earth arises. Peace is not for everyone, though. It is only for those who are loved by God. Who is loved by God? All those who let themselves be regenerated in the water of baptism and become his children of adoption. For those ones, the peace of earth, that is the fruit of the grace and of the truth of Christ Jesus, of the Messiah who was born tonight and that the shepherds will find laid in a manger, arises. May the Angel of the Lord come today, as well, and reveal each of his disciple of Jesus that his Saviour has come to the world. We will recognize Him in the face of the Crucified.**