

FR. MARAIAH'S HOMILY

Christmas, December 25, 2020

Why do we celebrate Christmas with great rejoicing?

1: First, Christmas is the Feast of God's sending us a Savior: God undertook the Incarnation of Jesus as True God and true man to save us from the bondage of sin. Scriptures teach only one Incarnation, and its purpose is given in John 3:16: *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.* We call "Good News" our celebration of the Incarnation of God in a Baby today because our Divine Savior has been born. As our Savior, Jesus liberated us from slavery to sin and atoned for our sins by his suffering, death and Resurrection. So, every Christmas reminds us that we need a Savior every day, to free us from our evil addictions and unjust, impure and uncharitable tendencies. Christmas 2020 also challenges us to accept Jesus in the manger as our saving God and personal Savior and to surrender our lives to him, allowing him to rule our hearts and lives every day in the New Year.

2: Second, Christmas is the Feast of God's sharing His love with us: Jesus, as our Savior, brought the "Good News" that our God is a loving, forgiving, merciful, rewarding God and not a judgmental, cruel, punishing God. He demonstrated by his life and teaching how God our Heavenly Father loves us, forgives us, provides for us, and rewards us. All his miracles were signs of this Divine Love. Jesus' final demonstration of God's love for us was his death on the cross to atone for our sins and to make us children of God. Each Christmas reminds us that sharing love with others is our Christian privilege and duty, and every time we do that, Jesus is reborn in our lives. Let us face this question, *"What does it profit me if Jesus is born in thousands of cribs all over the world and He is not born in my heart?"* (Poet, Alexander Pope). Hence, let us allow Jesus to be reborn in our hearts and lives, not only during Christmas, but every day, so that he may radiate the Light of his presence from within us as sharing and selfless love, expressed in compassionate words and deeds, unconditional forgiveness, the spirit of humble service and, overflowing generosity.

3: Third, Christmas is the Feast of the Emmanuel (God living with us and within

us): Christmas is the feast of the Emmanuel because God in the New Testament is a God Who continues to live with us in all the events of our lives as the “Emmanuel” announced by the angel to Mary. As Emmanuel, Jesus lives in the Sacraments (especially in the Holy Eucharist), in the Bible, in the praying community, and in each believer as the Holy Spirit, residing in us, makes us His “Temples.” Christmas reminds us that we are bearers of God with the missionary privilege and duty of conveying Jesus to those around us by loving them as Jesus did, through sacrificial, humble, committed service. Sharing with others Jesus, the Emmanuel living within us, is the best Christmas gift we can give, or receive, today.