

A Reflection on the Nativity of the Lord

A High, Holy Secret

In Isaiah's promise of the messiah, God speaks to all the ends of the earth. Zion, the old and new, shall be a sign of the holy and redeemed of God. Our psalms are filled with prodigious claims. This king is the joy of the earth, of all the islands. His justice, proclaimed by the very heavens, is for all generations to witness.

St. Paul reminds us quite directly how central Christ is to us and our salvation. (He says) "When the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy." The spirit of God is lavished on us through Jesus Christ who saves and justifies us. We all become heirs in hope of eternal life.

That the eternal Word of God became flesh is a message as much for the entire world as it is for Jew or Christian. "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!" What was the event that the angels announced? What was the mystery that God made known to shepherds? What was it that they saw and understood? What was revealed in the baby resting in the manger? What could be astonishing about it? What was there worth treasuring, worth pondering, and praising?

What, indeed, so inspires the human heart here and now on Christmas day, whether it be celebrated in Anchorage or Cape Town? Does it not reach far beyond Europe, far deeper than the thoughts of theologians? Is it not far more wondrous than projections of human consciousness?

Christmas means that God not only created space and time: God entered them, became our flesh and blood, our kin, our child.

There is something here of more than mere sectarian import, more than a cultural fable competing with the other stories of our start and finish. Christmas is a high and holy secret about every mother's child for all time.

*Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!*

