

Christmas Homily: “Glory to God in the highest”

Merry Christmas Everyone! Don't we just love Christmas Eve? The Stories, the Carols, decorations, time to celebrate family and friends, because Christmas is all about love. *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life”* (Jn 3:16)

But the best thing of all on Christmas is that we all get gifts. How great it is, when you can give the perfect gift to someone! Tonight, we all receive that perfect gift. The greatest gift of all time, *God born into our lives in the Christ Child*. This event that changed the world, invites us to participate in the mystery of God's plan for all of humanity. We are shares in the mystery. God giving us, eternal life and love now.

So, as we receive this great gift from God, wrapped in the image of the newborn Babe, we are touched so deeply because *God, the Emmanuel* is with us and loves us. And Christmas invites us again to share God's love with all the world.

As we live in this mystery, our life in God is so boundless, always open to deeper and deeper understanding. Always open to God's love, God's fidelity, God's desire for each of us, to be God's love in the world, to love others as God loves us.

Selfless love opens up all the possibilities of transformation, of Godliness in our weak human experience, and gives us hope. And we surely need hope today. Christ's selfless love offers us healing, offers us community and belonging. As we reach out to all those who are looking for *ways to belong somewhere*, to have a life. We already know that all the challenges of life can

be remedied by love, Christ's love in us. It's the only way forward, really the foundation of everything we do: *seeking to be Christ in the world.*

And we are all called to this vocation, this way of life. Tonight, Christmas Eve, tells us this truth – Angels passed on to the Shepherds and to us- *Be Not Afraid* – God is now with you, born into your life; He is part of you. The wonder of tonight is, we, the people of Jesus. We are so blessed, we are Church, we are the Body of Christ on earth. Our lives are holy and sacred to the Lord. God himself has called us and appointed us Disciples of Christ to share this Good News.

Christmas brings us to this moment of recognition of who we really are, and all that is part of our life, our faith and our future. And when we look at our life, we give thanks for all those who are special to us. We think of all those we love and how blessed we are to belong to them. We thank God for all that we have, and we touch again the gift of God's faithfulness and love to each of us in giving us Jesus.

Friends, we need Christmas. We need to celebrate Christ in our midst, because He gives us a way forward. If only we can change our hearts, and then the hearts of others by our *selfless love*. That's the gift we give and the gift we receive. But we have to live it and share it with all, this selfless love, that is: be for others first. Therefore, with humble hearts, joining the shepherds adoring the newborn King, let's sing together: *O come let us adore Him!*

Merry Christmas to you! Fr. James