

“Incarnation: God’s passion for Relationship: His Humility in self-giving love”

As we celebrate the Birth of Our Lord Jesus, I want share with you a reflection coming from St. Bonaventure. We learn that the Christmas crèche tradition originated with St. Francis, who staged the first nativity scene on Christmas Eve in 1223. After visiting the birthplace of Jesus in Bethlehem, Francis was attracted by the poverty and humility of the crib. St. Francis came to an amazing intuition about the ‘Humility of God’ from his contemplation of the crib.

St. Bonaventure, who was a witness to the first crib, inspired by the intuition of St. Francis, elaborated on the humility of God, as the *turning of the Father toward the Son in total self-giving love*. He wrote, Humility is not a quality of God, but “is the essence of God as love”. Humility, therefore, defines the very essence of the Father – eternally turned toward the **Son in Self-Giving Love**. As the ‘Word of the Father received the flesh of our human frailty’,- what we celebrate today- the Incarnation, is nothing but the Trinitarian Relationship within God reaching beyond divinity to embrace us in mercy and love.

Therefore, Bonaventure affirms that Humility, as the defining characteristic of God, describes the *relational nature of God*. In God, humility is a passion for *relationship*. God’s unity is God’s relationality Therefore, also ‘*the defining characteristic of the Incarnation*’. As a result, to be Christian is to be drawn into a new relationship –sisterhood/brotherhood- of redeemed relationships, that makes our communion in Christ real, alive.

Selfless love that we find in the event of **incarnation, opens up us all to 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-trying to be light in the world*.

Today we are touched so deeply because *God, who decided to take the human form-the Emmanuel* -is with us and loves us. As we live in this mystery, our life in God is so boundless, always open to a 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. And Christmas invites us again to share God's love with all the world.

At this Christmas, let us have the *humility and passion for relationship*, desire for communion through self-giving love, so that Jesus can incarnate into our lives once again. Let this passion for self-giving relationship enter into each of us, and through us to the entire People of God, making all of us instruments of his love, and communion for the Church and the world.

B&S, today we are all called to 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: Let us live it today and proclaim it with Joy to the World. Amen. “O Come, let us adore Him”

“To all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God ... born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.” (Jn 1: 12-13).

Christmas= (the feast of sanctity of the manger): its openness/simplicity

From the “security of Inn” -to the limitedness of manger - no closed doors / its open, exposed to cold, danger, but welcoming!

While the Inn represent power, protection, strength, richness and security, *Manger* is =sign of simplicity, humility, openness, sharing and welcoming’, which becomes abode of peace, for the king of peace.

Today, we are invited:

To say goodbye to the works of darkness, as Jesus the Light wants to enter into our lives.

-To allow ourselves to become more and more human, in our words and deeds

-To become men and women of good will, to make space in our heart for the other and to become ‘instruments of peace’.

When we embrace the simplicity, the openness and sharing spirit of the manger, *it is truly Christmas for us; Our celebration become meaningful. God starts to dwell within us, because he is Emmanuel, God with us.*

The Lord of manger fill your heart with the joy and peace!