

Jesus will be born from Mary, the wife of Joseph

Homily, 18th December, 2015

Mat 1,18-24

father G. Paparone o.p.

My dearest,

We have listened to a Reading from Matthew's Gospel that helps us to live this period in which we await the celebration of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Today's liturgy presents to us the extraordinary event that was the angel of God's revelation to Joseph that Mary had conceived by the Power of the Holy Spirit, and that he should not be afraid to take her as his wife.

I would like to draw your attention on the verses through which the angel tells to Joseph **Jesus' mission and nature**. "*and you are to give him the name **Jesus**, because he will save His people from their sins*".

Well, we don't reflect enough upon the immense gift that our Father has donated to us: that of setting us free from sins.

Our Lord Jesus Christ came on earth not only to liberate us from our fault in a judicial sense, or as payment of a debt or simply as forgiveness just as Luther thought.

Jesus wants to set us free from the very **capability of sinning**, in other words **he wants to eradicate from our hearts the source of sin**, eliminate from us the possibility of sinning, **by giving us a new heart**, a new life, building hope within us, along with a desire for God's kingdom, truth, beauty and justice.

The power of Jesus lies in forgiveness, in the sense of not taking into account our evilness, our miseries, our limitations, whilst **transforming our nature for the better; this is the greatest of mysteries**.

We struggle enormously in trying to accept this precious gift, as we precisely do not want to **struggle** to liberate ourselves from everything that might give us instant gratification.

My dearest, I have told you time and time again, **we sin because we love sin and are seduced by the illusion of its immediate pleasure**.

If we think about it, each sin brings about a pleasure that gratifies the ego:

- When we talk bitterly it is because we find pleasure in denigrating others.
- When we get mad it is because we find pleasure in unloading our anger.
- When we sin in the sexual sense, it is easy to understand where the immediate pleasure lies.
- When we sin of gluttony it is easy to understand what we are craving for.
- And so on....

We should therefore renounce instant gratification that sin sets forth and **associate our pleasure to a different scope which is the *Kingdom of God***.

His great gift is that of introducing us to a different dimension where pleasure is full, wholesome, complete, durable and stable, as sin's pleasures last a moment whilst unity with God, Joy, are given for eternity.

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The second verse on which to reflect upon refers to the name given to Jesus: *the Emmanuel*.

In this reading you heard the two different names: **Jesus**, which means “*Jahweh saves*” and *Emmanuel*, which means “*God is with us*”.

On our road towards conversion of the heart, liberation from sin we are therefore not alone as **Jesus is with us, our Saviour is walking by our side as the Emmanuel**.

Jesus is thus both our Saviour and our Redeemer.

This man, born of Mary is **God’s salvation reaching out to us through His sharing with us our existence**, through unity, we could say.

Like the pilgrims of Emmaus, Jesus becomes the neighbour to us, the Emmanuel; “God with us”, wishes to accompany us along our existence, where we are liberated from sin.

So let us accept His company and trust Him. Let us be saved by his love.

Praised be Jesus Christ.