

Sermon for Christmas Mass

fr tim

The WORD of God - eternal One - wisdom - cosmic reality - The One that Is - all of this is wrapped up in the idea of *Logos* - translated here *Word* - all this and more. More than language can ever describe! The *beautiful feet* of Isaiah's messenger bringing the Gospel - the Good News - and in this Christ Mass we are somehow part of it, caught up in the Holy Mystery, partakers of the very body and life force of God, the true reality...what I'm trying to say in words isn't possible - words can't say it. And yet the Gospel is clear. All that Is - God, if you want a name - made each one of us, loves each one of us and knows everything that each one of us is going through, the good and the bad, the easy and the hard, the happy and the sad, the mended and the broken, and God leaps and weeps with us every step of the way. God is one of us. God is you. God is me: "*The Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.*"

Page | 1

God, Truth, Light, Life came to us in the form of a little baby, born in the dust one sweaty night in a small, insignificant village, ruled nonchalantly from Rome, tightly and oppressively by the Empire's army and the local government under its control. Born a fugitive, forced to flee to a foreign land, small, poor, yet somehow Prince of Peace. John says the *World* did not know him. But the shepherds did. The poor, the marginalized, the rejected, the weak, the small ones, they did know him. And they came to kneel before him in the straw and the dirt.

There has been much pain in the world this year and in some of our lives too. The Paris bombings and the promise of M. Hollande of a "Merciless response", being meted out in Syria right now, the politicization of *refugee crisis, global warming, euthanasia, religious extremism* and so much more have power to plunge the world into chaos and darkness.

Sermon for Christmas Mass

fr tim

But John's Gospel, the message from the one with beautiful feet, the whole meaning of the Bible, the witness of Christ Mass, know and presage such. It is into the melee of worldly squall that the Christ Child comes. The Light of Light. *And the Light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not put it out.* This is the true Light, that enlightens everyone, and the Light is coming afresh into the world, this holy night and all the time, all ways, all time.

Page | 2

The Light *enlightens everyone.* Hatred, violence, jealousy, oppression...need to control... are driven by one thing. *Fear.* Nothing more, nothing less. But all humans share deep within them a desire for peace. This is deeper, more primal even than the fear.

A group of Kenyan Muslims travelling on a bus a few days ago were ambushed by Somali based al-Shabab gunmen. They were told to separate from the Christians on the bus. But these Muslim passengers protected Christian passengers by refusing to be split into groups. They told the militants to kill them together or leave them alone. Two people were killed but another mass execution of Christians was averted...this time.

The amazing response of Antoine Leiris after his wife had been killed in the Paris bombings - although the bombers had stolen the young life of his beautiful wife H el ene, he refused to hate them - *"On Friday night you stole the life of an exceptional being, the love of my life, the mother of my son, but you won't have my hatred. I don't know who you are and I don't want to know - you are dead souls. If this God for which you kill indiscriminately made us in his own image, every bullet in the body of my wife will have been a wound in his heart. So no, I don't give you the gift of hating you. You are asking for it but responding to hatred with anger would be giving in to the same ignorance that made you what you are."*

The Kenyan Muslims, Antoine Leiris are small moments in the scheme of things. The bombs of terrorists and powerful jets shout more

Sermon for Christmas Mass

fr tim

loudly. But in the noise of fear which screams like screams through the darkness in this world tonight, small, brave acts of peace yet bring the light of hope.

Christ comes to reconcile all to himself, not through a mighty power to overpower and condemn all other powers but he comes into the world *full of grace and truth*. Christ has faith in us yet. Human kind, made in the image of the One Who Loves, has the capacity even now to see, through the fear, the other, the different, and, in seeing, to love.

Page | 3

We live in a society where people don't often enough look into the eyes of even those who are close to us. Perhaps that's because we need first to look more deeply within ourselves. The deeper we look, the closer we get to what is, the closer we get to uncovering God in us. Only then may we look out at the world and at the other and be able to see that, when the surface of otherness is allowed to fade, the other is just like me, calling out to be loved, able and ready to love in return.

So we enter the Christmas feast. As we do, let us remember the words Jesus gave us about such a feast. He said, "*When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your sisters or your relatives or rich neighbours, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed...*"

You will be blessed.

Not, *they* will be blessed because of the great kindness you've given them but in holding out this kindness it is *you* who will be blessed.

Such a thing changes lives...changes the world.

As you feast this Christmas, I hope that you will feast with your loved ones, but I pray, also be conscious for a moment as you feast, know the One who feasts with you. See his glory, the glory as of a

Sermon for Christmas Mass

fr tím

father's only son, full of grace and truth. And after Christmas, sometime soon perhaps, if you would like to ask a refugee to eat with you in your home, I will be happy to put you in touch. We might not be able to do the big things in this dark world but small acts of peace bring a little more light and the darkness will not put out the light.

Page | 4

Nadolig llawen. Tangnefedd. God bless you.