Jesu Juva

**The Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord – Christmas Eve**

Text: Multiple Texts

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”*

Tonight, the season of Advent has ended and Christians around the world *“new songs of celebration render.”* Our expectant waiting has been rewarded and the angels of Heaven have announced the first Advent, in the birth of our Lord and Savior, the Infant, Jesus Christ. Therefore, rejoice, you who are highly favored. Jesus, who is God in human flesh, has come. He is Immanuel, *“God with us,”* who has come to save His people from their sins and make one house of God, of angels, and men! Come, then, and adore this mighty One veiled in this tiny Infant who is Christ, the Lord. Come and adore this mighty One. For there is salvation in no other.

The story of this night of nights began a new chapter in salvation history. Yet, the story of this night does not stand alone. The story of our Savior’s birth, and therefore the story of our salvation, did not begin in a stable in Bethlehem. The story of our salvation began before the foundations of the earth, and thus, before all creation. God’s plan of salvation in His Son, Jesus, is not plan B. It is not as though God was somehow surprised by Adam’s sin in the Garden of Eden and in a panic, scrambled about looking for some sort of emergency plan to undo the evil man had done. Absolutely not! The birth of this Divine Infant and His subsequent sacrifice on the altar of the Cross for the sins of all mankind was God’s plan from the very beginning.

It is for this reason, that Saint John writes: *“the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”* You see, John records these words in such a way because, from the perspective of Heaven and the Church, the crucifixion is not just a momentary event in the history of creation. In terms of His victory over sin, Satan, and the grave, the Lamb, who is Jesus, the Babe of the manger, always was, always is, and ever shall be the Lamb who was slain and yet lives.

Indeed, it is for this very purpose that Christ Jesus condescended to leave the heavenly realms of Glory and take on the flesh of His creation—to be born fully human and yet remain also, fully God, literally the Creator of all things living among the created—to save those with no power to save themselves; to reconcile all humankind to God through His innocent suffering, death, and resurrection.

Therefore, Christ came down from heaven and was *“incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made Man.”* Having humbled Himself to be born of a virgin, God left the Holy of Holies in a temple of stone and took on a Temple of human flesh wrapped in the womb of a young virgin Jewish maiden who was descended from the line of King David; and the angels rejoice.

The angels rejoice, not simply for the birth of Jesus, but for the purpose for which He has come, for what His birth means to mankind and all the earth. So it is, that the angels sing, *“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”* In Jesus, the Christ has come to bring glory to God and manifest peace on earth among men upon whom His favor rests.

The angels rejoice because this Babe is born to die, that you and I may have life, full and eternal life. The angels rejoice because Jesus is born a spotless Sacrifice to propitiate, that is, to satisfy, the wrath of His Father and join together God and man, heaven and earth, in the bonds and unity of peace.

*Beginning from His home on high,*

*In human flesh He came to die;*

*Creation by His death restored,*

*And shed new joys of life abroad*.

It is for this reason the angels rejoice!

So, God is born of human flesh and laid in a manger. In Bethlehem, the City of Bread, a lowly animal stall becomes the House of Eternal Bread, and the very Bread of Life which comes down from heaven sleeps in silent repose, who, even as an Infant establishes the New Eden, the New Paradise, on the earth.

Thus, *“It is high time to wake out of sleep…. The night is far spent, the day is at hand.”* The Sun of Righteousness has arisen with healing in His wings and all darkness is dispersed by He who is the Light of the World; a Light no darkness can overcome. Paradise is opened to us, and the serpent has been laid low. The grave has lost its power, death has lost its sting, and can no longer bind us with fear. *“Jesus has come! He the King of all glory!”*

This means that now is the time that room for Jesus is made in the inn of your heart. Now is the time to cast off the works of darkness and to be clothed with Christ’s righteousness, the Armor of Light. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Now our salvation is nearer to us than when we first believed. It comes in a Babe, wrapped in swaddling cloths; cloths which foreshadow the burial cloths which will enfold Him in His tomb.

Our Salvation comes in a Babe laid in a manger, the feeding trough of beasts, He comes as our Savior laid in a tomb, the repose of the dead. He comes to rise again, leaving death dead in the grave. He comes that He would become for us the Food of Immortality, in which the Church on earth finds its life and the Church Triumphant celebrates its victory in Christ, the Lamb who was slain from the foundations of the earth and yet lives.

This is the truth of the Babe unto to whom the angels sing, lifting their voices in an eternal glorias in excelsis to God on high. This is the truth of the Babe found lying in an animal stall by the shepherds at His birth, the same Babe who would be spat upon by the venomous crowds at His crucifixion, and worshiped with awe by His Apostles at His resurrection and ascension. This is the truth of Immanuel—God with us, the Infant Jesus who has come to save His people from their sins. This is the truth of the Infant Jesus,

*Mild He lays His glory by,*

*Born that man no more may die,*

*Born to raise the sons of earth,*

*Born to give them second birth.*

Yes, this is our Immanuel who comes to announce to the world, *“I forgive you all your sins.”*

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

 Soli Deo Gloria

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