THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD - MASS DURING THE DAY
DECEMBER 25, 2025

Some of the most heartwarming videos on the internet are of people who were supposed to be away for the holidays but who suddenly show up and surprise everyone. Many times they are service men and women who have been deployed and who go to their children's school unannounced. When their children realize that it's them, they run into their arms and burst into tears. You really get a sense of how much they missed their mom and dad and how glad they are that they're finally home. We cannot help but shed some tears ourselves watching the outpouring of love and joy.

The reason that these videos touch us so deeply is that we all have a profound desire for home. We cannot help relating to the feelings of loneliness and loss that come with being separated from our loved ones. Deep inside, we want to be reunited with those who love and accept us unconditionally. We want to go back home where we belong.

This nostalgia for home and longing for reconnection with family is one of the reasons behind all the sentimentality that surrounds the Christmas season. There is no other time of the year that we associate so strongly with home and family. There is no other time of the year when we feel so deeply the grief of lost loves. At Christmas, we yearn for home.

That yearning is not only a part of the secular celebration of Christmas. It also speaks to the religious and spiritual meaning of this holiday. On that first Christmas Day, Jesus came to make His home with us. As Saint John tells us in today's gospel, "And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us..." He came to gather us to be part of our true family - the family of God. With the birth of Jesus Christ, we have a home again.

To those who welcomed Him, the joy was even greater than the joy of a serviceman coming back from war. The hosts of Heaven appear to the shepherds singing, "Glory to God in the highest." Those same shepherds run out to the stable to see the miracle for themselves. God has come to make His home with us! The wise men leave their homes in the East to find the child who points them to a new home. Out of sheer joy and wonder they shower Him with extravagant and lavish gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh . But most importantly they give Him their hearts.

Unfortunately, there were many who didn't welcome Him. The city of Bethlehem had no room for Him. Mary had to deliver Him in a stable with barnyard animals. King Herod became infuriated when he heard the news and tried to kill him. He had to flee to Egypt where he lived away from His home as a refugee.

That would be the story of His life. He came to make His home with us, but so few welcomed Him. He came to make a home for us and to give us a family. Still so many preferred to be homeless and alone. As Saint John tells us in today's gospel, "He came to His own, but his own people did not accept him."

Many of us here today are blessed to be in our own homes surrounded by family. It is something we should never take for granted. It is a gift of God which we should always cherish. The fact is that we don't know how long we will have our loved ones around us. So, we must make the most of the time we have together.

However, there are so many people here who are feeling the loss of a loved one or who are away from home. There are many others who are caught up in anxiety and depression. Seeing everyone else celebrating around them makes the pain of loss and isolation that much harder to bear.

The message of Christmas is a bright light that pierces the darkness. With the birth of Jesus Christ, no one is ever alone. God is with us! He desires to make His home with us. That is why He did more than send prophets and angels. On this day, He sent His Son. Jesus Christ. The child born this day, is God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God. When we look into the face of this baby, we look into the face of God. When we hear His helpless cries, we hear the cries of a God who longs for our love. When we see this baby lying in a cradle of hay, we see a God who makes Himself small enough so that we can pick Him up and hold Him in our arms.

Because Jesus Christ was born, there is love for everyone. It is a love that we can never lose. This God will never leave or abandon us. There is nowhere we can go without God already being there. It is a love that is constant and unconditional. No matter what a mess we have made of our lives and no matter what traumas we have suffered, God is close to everyone who calls on Him.

Jesus' birth also means that we will always have a home and a family. That home and family are the Church that He built on the rock of Peter. It is a home and a family that we can never lose. Just about anywhere we go on the face of the earth, we can find a church to walk into. We can sit with the child who was born on this day. He is there in the tabernacle just as surely as He was in the stable. We can always run to Him, like the shepherds did, and find Him there waiting for us.

If this is your first time back to Church in a while, then welcome home. You belong here. It is no accident that you came today. Jesus Himself is calling you. It is for you that He came to earth - to show you the Father's love and welcome you into His family. Let this be the Christmas that you - and all of us - welcome Him into your heart and realize the joy of finally coming home.