

The Nativity of the Lord. December 24 2021.

GOSPEL-ECO

Ecosocial Catechesis from Sunday's Gospel



CONTEXT



Español, Gallego, Inglés,
Francés, Italiano, Portugués.



What do we celebrate at Christmas?

We usually wish saying Merry Christmas. But it has been changed to "Happy Holidays" or "Season's greetings". What does this change manifest?

The change in the meaning that we give to the Christmas celebration is becoming more and more perceptible. For example, the greeting that we exchange "happy holidays" Season's greetings in some way expresses the little importance that we give of this Christian solemnity: the birth of Jesus Christ. At the same time, it also manifests our festive, excessive and consumer reality, in contrast to the sobriety with which Jesus was born.

GOSPEL

Lc 2, 1-14 The Birth of Jesus

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole world should be enrolled. This was the first enrolment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. So all went to be enrolled, each to his own town. And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there, the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to her firstborn son.* She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over their flock.

The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were struck with great fear. The angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a saviour has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests.

"RESPECTING AND CARING FOR THE COMMON HOME IS A NEW WAY OF LOVING GOD"



REFLECTION

With the words "Christmas" or "Nativity" we name the birth of our Savior. With this unprecedented event, God has manifested the greatness and dedication of his love for all that he has created. That is why we say that Christmas is closely related to the Eucharist, in fact, Christmas is the "Christ's Mass", as it is written "Christmas" (and not Xmas). At each Mass we remember that "there is no greater love than to lay down one's life for friends" (Jn 15:13). Thus, Christmas is the solemn giving and manifestation of God's love for the created world, and at the same time it is thanksgiving, because "united to the incarnate Son, present in the Eucharist, the whole cosmos gives thanks to God" (Laudato Si' 236).

On the other hand, the Gospel highlights the austerity and poverty with which the Savior came into the world. A manger with animals, a weak child, humble and simple parents and some poor witnesses: the shepherds stand out in the scene. And in this context peace is announced. We can remember that, in the Creation account, the garden of Eden was the place of true divine and integral communion (koininia), of peace (shalom) and of the covenant. Thus, in our understanding, the birth of Jesus happened in a place of universal communion.

The sobriety of manger collides with the surplus and excesses of our Christmas celebrations. These immunize us from shared joy and solidarity with those most in need. Laudato Si' points to universal communion when it says that everything is connected and related, pointing out that "when the heart is authentically open to universal communion, nothing and no one is excluded from this fraternity [...] All human beings are together as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, intertwined by the love that God has for each of his creatures and that also unites us, with tender affection, to brother sun, sister moon, brother river and to mother earth" (LS 92). When these days we come to contemplate a Bethlehem, or a Bethlehem portal, let us remember the universal communion to which we are called.

COMMITMENT

- This Christmas, what personal changes do we need to make to authentically celebrate this celebration?
- Encourage yourself to take two or three actions that will help you live the feast of the birth of our Savior with depth and inner joy.

PRAYER

We thank you, Father, for each Christmas (Christ's Mass), that the great love that you show us with the birth of Jesus is our reason for living universal brotherhood among us and with all the creatures of this world. "Flood us with peace, so that we live as brothers and sisters without harming anyone" (final prayer from LS).

MERRY CHRISTMAS! HAPPY SOLEMNITY OF THE NATIVITY OF JESUS!