

Homily of Christmas, 2025

Isaiah 52:7-10; Psalm 98:1-6; Hebrews 1-6; John 1:1-14

The word 'Christmas' originates from the Latin phrase *Cristes Maesse*, meaning Christ's Mass.

Christmas celebration is the most festive time in the world. Andy Williams' Christmas song, refers to the Christmas season as "the Most Wonderful Time of the Year." One of the lines of the lyrics says, "It's the hap-happiest season of all." While Christians celebrate the commemoration of the birth of Jesus, the effects of the celebration are felt all over the world. The fact that the word 'Christmas' is on the lips of believers and non-believers is the reason Pope St. Leo the Great says, "No body is an outsider to this happiness. The same joy is common to all ..." Indeed, Jesus is the reason for the season!

In 2004, Alan Gurney wrote a book entitled, *The Compass, a Story of Exploration and Innovation*. It is a story of a boat with the latest high-tech. In the morning, the boat set sail, guided by a sophisticated computer program. Everything progressed as programmed. On the first night, the open sea was moonless and starless, a night of total darkness. Then, the unexpected happened. Without warning, all the electronics on board failed. The screen went blank. It was a night with no moon or stars to serve as beacons, and no lighthouses in sight to guide the boat to a safe harbor. Another complication was that no one on board had thought to bring a simple compass that could have guided the boat to safety. The boat sailed blindly and tempest-tossed the whole night without any directional guides. However, there was a great sigh of relief when, in the early hours of the pitch-dark morning, the dense clouds parted, and the North Star appeared in the heavens. The North Star guided the crew out of harm's way until the sun appeared. Then, the highly humbled crew returned the latest high-tech boat to the safe harbor. (From Archbishop George Leo Thomas' homily).

Revelations 22:16 refers to Jesus as "the Bight Morning Star" and Malachi 4:2 refers to him as "the Sun of Righteousness." The morning star is the brightest star in the night sky, which heralds the dawn and the end of darkness. The Bright Morning Star, Jesus, is our hope and our salvation. As the Sun of Righteousness, he is the light that dispels every darkness. Jesus says, "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12).

The first reading of the midnight Mass says, "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone" (Isaiah 9:2). We read in today's gospel, "What came to be through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race; the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. ...The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world" (John 1:4-9).

While our high-tech world is wonderful, it is not our hope and salvation. Our high-tech world without Jesus becomes high-tech lies, high-tech stealing, high-tech corruption, high-tech injustice, high-tech immoral life, high-tech wars and violence, and all kinds of high-tech evils. These are the darkness of this world which only the light of Christ dispels. To those who accept him, he gives power to become children of God who darkness cannot overcome (John 1:11-12). Jesus is the

light in our darkness. He is our “Wonderful-Counselor” (Isaiah 9:6). Without him, we lose the way. With him, we are back on track. He is our restorer.

Jesus was born in an animals’ shed because human beings could not provide an inn for Mary and Joseph. The commemoration of the birth of Jesus is our opportunity to provide an inn for Jesus to be born again in our lives.

Christmas brings great beauty. Homes, churches, shops, offices, and streets are beautifully decorated with Christmas trees, wreaths, flowers, lights, and gifts. Christmas will have the best positive impact if we undergo a spiritual rebirth and we are spiritually decorated with hope, peace, joy, and love, which we prayed for during the four Sundays of Advent. Christmas will have the best positive impact if we give to others and receive from others hope, peace, joy, and love. Give someone hope! Give someone peace! Give someone joy! Give someone love! Receive hope! Receive peace! Receive joy! Receive love! If this exchange happens, Christmas is properly celebrated.

Merry Christmas to you all.

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