Christmas 2020

MDP of God

Merry Christmas everyone---in our 1st reading today we heard the Prophet Isaiah say, For a child is born to us, a son is given us; upon his shoulder dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero,
Father-Forever, Prince of Peace. His dominion is vast and forever peaceful….

Isaiah prophesized these words hundreds of years before the birth of Jesus

*God for centuries* was preparing the world for the coming of the Savior—the Prince of Peace—the Lord of Lords and the King of kings

And then in our gospel we hear of the birth of that long awaited Savior----*and what I want you to notice* **is the glory that surrounded it—**the joy that was proclaimed---*just the deep sense of wonder at what God was doing in the world*

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And we want to allow that joy to penetrate our hearts---we want that sense of wonder and awe to fill our lives with wonder and awe

We want to allow the glory that Jesus brought into the world to brighten our lives and our hearts

We need to remember my friends that the world Jesus was born into was filled with darkness---oppression and a lot of misery

The chosen people were living under a tyrannical dictatorship—the Roman Empire

The local governor in Bethlehem was wicked King Herod—a tyrant who didn’t care who he hurt---who cared only about himself—he was kind of like Hitler, Stalin, Osama Bin Ladin, Saddam Hussein---all rolled into one

So the people of that day felt oppressed—there was fear---there was confusion—*how could God allow His chosen people to come to this?*

Even for Mary and Joseph---things hadn’t gone easily

Joseph had just taken his pregnant wife on a 90 trip by donkey when she was nine months pregnant—*that couldn’t have been easy*

When they arrived in Bethlehem—there was no room at the Inn—that couldn’t have been easy

Mary gave birth to Jesus in a stable---surrounded by animals---that couldn’t have been easy

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And it was in that land filled with so much darkness---to those people, many of whom had begun to lose hope were fearful and confused

 That Jesus came

And despite all darkness and the difficulties the people of that age ---*notice the joy-*--notice the glory---notice the wonder and awe

 **Jesus changed everything**

The shepherds we heard of in today’s gospel---in Israeli culture –they were seen as the lowest of the low---the bottom of the barrel when it came to social standing---*and yet it was to them that the good news of the coming of the Savior was announced*

God sent angels to simple shepherds to proclaim the good news

 He didn’t send them to the elite in the culture

He didn’t send them to King Herod or to the High Priest in Jerusalem—or to Caesar ---**why not to the high and mighty?** Because Jesus changes everything

Jesus wants us to know the dignity of every person—no matter what their social standing—not matter what their background--- *Jesus came first to the lowly and the oppressed*

To transform sadness into joy—to transform darkness into light—to transform a fallen world—into a saved world

And my friends—I think this is so important for us to reflect on---because right now we live in a world filled with darkness –there’s a lot of fear –there’s so much confusion

The Covid pandemic has brought a lot of fear into the world—*and it’s also fostered so much division*

Many people today feel that the elites of our culture-- and many of those who our rule over us---don’t really care about us—don’t really care about the little guy---don’t really who their policies hurt

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So as we come together on Christmas Day at the end of the year 2020--- *one of the most bizarre years in our nation’s history*--we need to know **that God wants you and me to have the joy of the Lord**

God wants you and me to rejoice at the great things Jesus has accomplished and that He will continue to accomplish in our world

God wants you and me to be filled with wonder and awe---that the all-powerful Creator of heaven and earth---could love you and me so much that He’d become one of us

And of course the incredibleness of what God has done---doesn’t stop there

This same Jesus that the angels sang of would one day face rejection—would one day embrace the cross to pay for our sins—would one day suffer an agonizing death---*so that you and I could be delivered from our sins*

And even now---the wonders of His love for us continues---He continues to humble Himself by coming in the form of bread and wine---in order to share His very life with us

**And that’s a mystery---the Holy Eucharist-- He was pointing us to from the day of His birth---***how did He do that?*

Well---He was born in Bethlehem---and Bethlehem means “house of bread”---and then He was placed in a feeding trough----Why?

Because He wanted to show us from day one—that He is the Bread of life who comes down from heaven and that we must eat this Bread if we are to have eternal life

You know my friends---many of us have heard the good news of Christmas so many times---*that the message can become old to us-*--we could develop the attitude of “the same old same old”

Today my friends---hear the message of Christmas with fresh ears---see the wonders of God’s love with new eyes

Allow the wonder and awe of the shepherds---to fill you with wonder and awe

Allow the glory of the angels--- to lead you to want to bask in the glory of God

Today we celebrate that Heaven united to earth---the Creator came to His beloved creatures---that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us

For a child is born to us, a son is given us; upon his shoulder dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero,
Father-Forever, Prince of Peace. His dominion is vast
and forever peaceful,

And all that happened so you can be saved---you can be set free from your sins—so that you could become a son or daughter of God--- so that heaven could become your true home

Rejoice in this great news—Rejoice in God’s love for you---- Rejoice that God became one of us so that you could become a child of God

 Merry Christmas and God bless you everyone