5 Homily for the Nativity of Our Lord Year A

Vigil, Midnight, Dawn or Day Masses

25 December 2016

*Vigil:* Is 62:1-5; Acts 13:16-17, 22-25; Mt 1:1-25

*Midnight:* Is 9:1-7; Titus 2:11-14; Lk 2:1-14

*Dawn:* Is 62:11-12; Titus 3:4-7; Lk 2:15-20

*Day:* Is 52:7-10; Heb 1:1-6; Jn 1:1-18

I want all the parents here in the congregation to bring into their minds (recollect) a very special moment, a unique memory in their lives as parents. Recall the moment that you held your first child in your arms, the moment that you carried and cuddled that child close to your chest. As you were gazing at your child, I am sure, you would have been rapt with awe, you were captivated with wonder. Mary and Joseph would have felt the same way that you would have felt.

Therefore we need to ask an important question during this Christmas: “Why God came to us as a baby?” Surely, he could have come to us as Supreme King or any other powerful person standing off in the shadows. But God chose to be born as a baby. Why?

We all know babies are adorable, innocent, gentle and pure. He wanted our first tangible impression of God to be that of one who does not judge, one of tenderness and innocence. He wanted us to know that he came here to show how merciful and how gentle God is. This is the first impression that God wants us to have about him. Never doubt his mercy and love.

Second reason: Babies are little and so tiny. They are also dependent, reliant on and they are vulnerable. This Incarnate littleness, this tiny God baby invites us to love my own littleness, my own vulnerability, and my own imperfections. It doesn’t stop there with me. It beckons us to embrace the littleness of your husband or wife, the littleness of your children, the littleness of your friends. Today there is a culture that only embraces the talented, the powerful, and the perfect ones. What is weak and imperfect is being pushed to the margins, to the periphery. But this vulnerable child reminds us that greatness comes from smallness and therefore never give up hope and trust always.

Finally, this newly born baby reminds us of our humanity. Incarnation teaches us how to be human. St Athanasius put this beautifully: “God became man so that man might become God.” Most of the problems in the world could have been solved if people knew how to be human. Being human means simply making your life a total gift of self to others. We often like to shop and buy gifts for another. In fact this year Australians have spent $8.8 billion on Christmas presents. But have you ever thought of making your life a gift? That is what that baby in the manger did. He reminded us that our humanity lies in our willingness to make our lives a gift for others. The best place to start is in the family. When you make your life a gift of self to others, naturally you are saying no to self-absorption, self-indulgence, self-righteousness, self-assertion, and self-exaltation. May the Infant Jesus this Christmas change your lives and through you, may he change the lives of your families and friends and the world.

What good is it for us if the Eternal Birth of the Divine Son takes place unceasingly but does not take place in us. Meister Eckhart (German Dominican Monk)