**Homily** **for Christmas**

*Rev. Francis D. Kim*

   Glory to God and peace to people on earth! Merry Christmas! God entered into the world and took on human flesh becoming one of us and ushering in a New Covenant, a covenant of love and mercy.

        Now, He is with us in our midst. What a wonderful news! Sadness should have no place in the birthday of life. Life brings us joy with the promise of eternal happiness. This is a day to celebrate! On Christmas, the Lord offers us a deeper joy which comes with knowing that we are loved in a special way by God.

        Imagine the scene in Bethlehem two thousand years ago. It was the night of nights, yet it had begun as every other night before it. But, it was to become the greatest, most significant night of human history. This was the night when the light would conquer darkness. This was the night when those who lived in darkness would see a great light.

        Ironically, this good news came first to shepherds. They didn’t live in town, but slept side by side with their sheep, carrying the smell of the animals with them always. They would have been less than welcomed in the market stalls in town with their dirt and smell and matted hair.

        Yet, it is these people, living on the margins, who first hear of the birth of the Savior. Not only were the terrified shepherds reassured, “Do not be afraid,” but they were invited to seek out the Baby and to be the first to meet this Savior face to face. The shepherds, and all of Israel, had been waiting for centuries for the Messiah who would save them from this very hard life.

         Prophet Isaiah mentions a “people who walk in darkness” and a “land of gloom.” The people in Isaiah’s time, in Jesus’ time, and in our own, faced wars, constant battles and a wondering if they would ever be safe. Yet, Isaiah promises them and us hope. Into that darkness, a light has shown. Our burdens will be lifted, and rejoicing will be ours.

        Today, this great news come to us. You and I can know the Christ of Christmas, who alone can wipe away our tears, lift our burdens, solve our problems, forgive our sins, and make us new. He brought peace and love to us.

        During the Second World War, on Christmas Eve, the battlefield was strangely quiet. As the soft snow fell, the young soldiers were thinking of home and their families.

        Softly one young man began to hum ‘Silent Night.’ Others took up the chorus until the trenches resounded with that Christmas song. When they finished, they were astonished to hear the song echoing from the trenches across no man’s land: in their own tongue, the other soldiers also sang ‘Silent Night.’ There were no enemies, no fights. That night, they were thinking of the Prince of Peace.

        For a few hours or few days from now, many in the world will stop talking of conflicts and wars. People will exchange gifts and talk about the peace and happiness. How different this world would be if we could unite together around that “Holy Infant so tender and mild.”

        Let us look at the Child in the manger. Babies usually wrap in swaddling clothes, but only One Baby was lying in a manger. A baby was born into a broken world.

        The manger is a feeding box. This manger is the sign of what this baby would do for us. It tells the destiny of the Baby to feed His people with the Bread of Life. To save His people, He is lying in the feeding box.

        That baby in the manger grew up to become our crucified and risen Savior, and the world has never been the same. His Birth is so humble, so small, so poor, so meek. The Son of God was born with human weakness. But, His weakness became our strength, and became our hope and love.

        When Jesus walked this Earth, He made the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, and the oppressed to free. He was a man of compassion and love. He gave great hope to people, especially, those who lived in trouble.

        Your Christmas will be joyful indeed as you discover these truths! Now, God came to us and is lying in the manger.

        Jesus Christ came into the world to save us, to be with us. This is the promise of the first Christmas, of every Christmas, and of this Christmas. So, Christmas is not just an annual holiday celebration. It is about wonderful things: the depths of God’s love for us, promises being fulfilled, salvation, joy, and peace.

        God’s love continues to surround us today and every day. The Child has been born for us. There is no reason. Christ came for us. His eternal Kingdom will not be complete unless we are part of it. God accomplished all of His plan for us by sending His only Son into the world.

        Amid the distractions of the season, it is important that we, as Christians, keep the message of Christmas intact. Sing the carols. Light the lights. Eat the festive meals with family and friends. Through it all, let the bold proclamation ring out: Christ, our Savior and our Lord, is born! God is with us! What a wonderful day! What a beautiful gift it is!

        On this Christmas Day, when everything glitters, we can take a moment to imagine ourselves in the midst of the smell and noise of the stable and the shepherds. Like them, we are being called to meet our Savior and to rejoice.

        Merry Christmas, everyone!