



'Legio Sanctae Familiae'

The Legion of the Holy Family

Under the Patronage of
The Sacred Heart of Jesus
The Immaculate Heart of Mary
The Most Chaste Heart of St Joseph



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The people
That walked in darkness
Have seen a great light

Isaiah 9:2



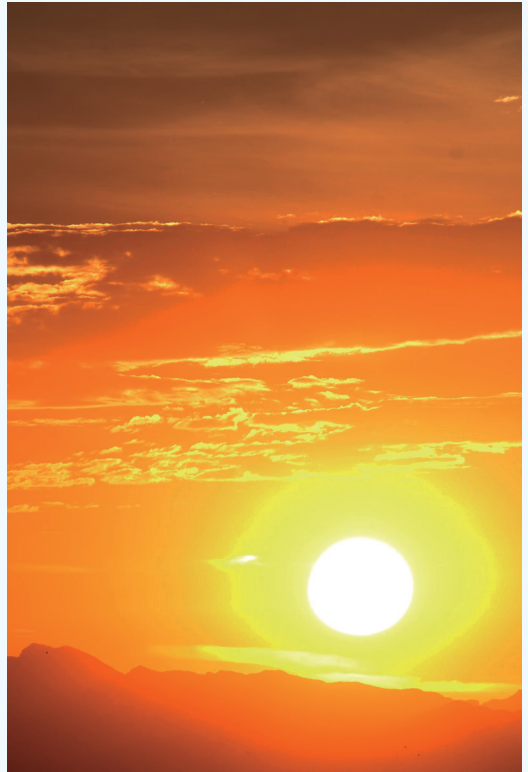
The People That Walked In Darkness, Have Seen A Great Light

The Bible opens the book of Genesis speaking about the beginning of creation where we are introduced to the concepts of darkness and light.

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters. And God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.” (Genesis 1:1-5)

St John’s Gospel also begins with creation and the concepts of darkness and light.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” (John 1:1-5)



St John introduces us to Jesus Christ as the Word which is the light of men. Darkness is attributed to the evil one and is unable to overcome God. St John then introduces us to John the Baptist, the great precursor of Jesus Christ and the one who bears witness to the light.

“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came for testimony, to bear witness to the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness to the light.

The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, yet the world knew Him not. He came to His own home, and His own people received Him not. But to all who received Him, who believed in His Name, He gave power to become children of God; who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.” (John 1:6-13)

Advent is a time for us to prepare ourselves physically and spiritually for the coming of Jesus Christ into the world. In the past, Catholics were required to fast during Advent to better prepare themselves for Christmas. It is a good discipline to practice along with repentance and alms giving.

Darkness is not a thing in itself. It is the absence of light. We are living in a very dark period of history. The best way to dispel that darkness is to bring the light of our Catholic faith into the world. Every light has its light source. The source of light for the Catholic is Jesus Christ, true God and true man.

The better we prepare for Christmas during Advent, the better we will be able to celebrate Christmas. Catholics should celebrate Christmas in a super abundant way. The birth of Jesus Christ is the pivotal point of history and marks the beginning of a new order of grace in the world.

Yet Christmas is not without troubles. That first Christmastide saw the slaughter of all the male children in Bethlehem aged two and under. We live in a time where innocent children are being slaughtered on a scale unknown in history. The World Health Organisation proudly puts the figure at around seventy three million abortions per year. They list abortion as “a safe health care intervention.”

Jesus Christ came into the world to save mankind from his sins. But He warned us that the world would hate us for following Him.

“But beware of men. For they will deliver you up in councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues. And you shall be brought before governors, and before kings for my sake, for a testimony to them and to the Gentiles: But when they shall deliver you up, take no thought how or what to speak: for it shall be given you in that hour what to speak. For it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaks in you.

The brother also shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the son: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and shall put them to death. And you shall be hated by all men for my name's sake: but he that shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved.” (Matthew 10:17-22)



St John uses this as another moment to proclaim Jesus Christ as the light of the world.

“For God so loved the world that he gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not condemned; he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does what is true comes to the light, that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been wrought in God.” (John 3:16-20)

Christmas should be a time for great celebration. As Dom Prosper Gueranger tells us in ‘The Liturgical Year’.

“We apply the name of Christmas to the forty days which begin with the Nativity of our Lord, December 25th, and end with the Purification of the Blessed Virgin, on February 2nd. It is a period which forms a distinct portion of the Liturgical Year; as distinct, by its own special spirit, from every other; as are Advent, Lent, Easter; or Pentecost.

One same Mystery is celebrated and kept in view during the whole forty days. Neither the Feasts of the Saints, which so abound during this Season; nor the time of Septuagesima, with its mournful Purple, which often begins before Christmastide is over; seem able to distract our Holy Mother the Church from the immense joy of which she received the good tidings from the Angels on that glorious night for which the world had been longing four thousand years. The Faithful will remember that the Liturgy commemorates this long expectation by the four penitential weeks of Advent.” (Dom Prosper Gueranger - The Liturgical Year - The History Of Christmas)

Dom Prosper Gueranger also tells us of the Mystery of Christmas.

“Everything is Mystery in this holy season. The Word of God, whose generation is before the day-star; is born in time — a Child is God — a Virgin becomes a Mother; and remains a Virgin — things divine are commingled with those that are human — and the sublime, the ineffable antithesis, expressed by the Beloved Disciple in those words of His Gospel, THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH, is repeated in a thousand different ways in all the prayers of the Church; — and rightly, for it admirably embodies the whole of the great portent which unites in one Person the nature of Man and the nature of God.

The splendour of this Mystery dazzles the understanding, but it inundates the heart with joy. It is the consummation of the designs of God in time. It is the endless subject of admiration and wonder to the Angels and Saints; nay, is the source



Angels Announcing the Birth of Christ to the Shepherds - Govert Flinck (1615–1660)

and cause of their beatitude. Let us see how the Church offers this Mystery to her children, veiled under the symbolism of her Liturgy.

The four weeks of our preparation are over — they were the image of the four thousand years which preceded the great coming — and we have reached the twenty-fifth day of the month of December, as a long desired place of sweetest rest.”
(Dom Prosper Gueranger - The Liturgical Year - The Mystery Of Christmas)

Let us stay with Dom Prosper Gueranger a little longer as he writes so beautifully about Christmas. Let his words fill our hearts with that great Hope that comes from knowing the love of Jesus Christ, the light of the world.

“The time has now come for the faithful soul to reap the fruit of the efforts she made during the penitential weeks of Advent to prepare a dwelling-place for the Son of God, who desires to be born within her. The Nuptials of the Lamb are come, and His Spouse has prepared herself. Now the Spouse is the Church; the Spouse is also every faithful soul. Our Lord gives His whole self to the whole flock, and to each sheep of the flock with as much love as though he loved but that one.

What garments shall we put on, to go and meet the Bridegroom? Where shall we find the pearls and jewels wherewith to deck our soul for this happy meeting? Our holy Mother the Church will tell us all this in her Liturgy. Our best plan for spending Christmas is, undoubtedly, to keep close to her, and do what she does; for she is most dear to God, and being our Mother, we ought to obey all her injunctions.”

Adoration - Joy - Gratitude - Love

Adoration: *“The Church offers to the Infant-God, during this holy season, the tribute of her profound adoration, the enthusiasm of her exceeding joy, the return of her unbounded gratitude, and the fondness of her intense love. These four offerings, adoration, joy, gratitude, and love, must be also those of every Christian to His Jesus, His Emmanuel, the Babe of Bethlehem.”*

“The first of our duties at our Saviour’s Crib is Adoration. Adoration is Religion’s first act; but there is something in the Mystery of our Lord’s Birth which seems to make this duty doubly necessary. In heaven the Angels veil their faces, and prostrate themselves before the throne of Jehovah; the Four-and-Twenty Elders are for ever casting their crowns before the throne



of the Lamb; what, then, shall we do — we who are sinners, and unworthy members of the Tribe of the Redeemer — now that this same great God shows Himself to us, humbled for our sakes, and stripped of all His glory? Now that the duties of the creature to His Creator are fulfilled by the Creator Himself? Now that the eternal God bows down not only before the Sovereign Majesty of the Godhead, but even before sinful man, His creature?

Let us endeavour to make, by our profound adorations, some return to the God who thus humbles Himself for us; let us thus give Him back some little of that whereof He has deprived Himself out of love for us, and in obedience to the Will of His Father. It is incumbent on us to emulate, as far as possible, the sentiments of the Angels in heaven, and never to approach the Divine Infant without bringing with us the incense of our soul’s adoration, the protestation of our own extreme unworthiness, and lastly, the homage of our whole being...”

“The example of His Blessed Mother will teach us to be thus humble. Mary was humble in the presence of her God, even before she became His Mother; but, once His Mother, she comported herself before Him who was her God and her Child with greater humility than ever. We too, poor sinners, sinners so long and so often, we must adore with all the power of our soul Him who has come down so low: we must study to find out how by our self-humiliation to make Him amend for this Crib, these swathing-bands, this eclipse of His glory. And yet all our humiliations will never bring us so low as that we shall be on a level with His lowliness...”

Joy: *“But our Mother, the Church, does not only offer to the Infant God the tribute of her profound adoration. The mystery of Emmanuel, that is, of God with us, is to her a source of singular joy. Look at her sublime Canticles for this holy Season, and you will find the two sentiments admirably blended — her deep reverence for her God, and her glad joy at His Birth. Joy! Did not the very Angels come down and urge her to it? She therefore studies to imitate the blithe Shepherds, who ran for joy to Bethlehem, and the glad Magi, who were well-nigh out of themselves with delight when, on quitting Jerusalem, the star again appeared and led them to the Cave where the Child was...”*

“Come, then, faithful Children of the Church, let us take our share in her joy! This is not the season for sighing or for weeping. For unto us a Child is born. He for whom we have been so long waiting is come; and He is come to dwell among us. Great, indeed, and long was our suspense; so much the more let us love our possessing Him. The day will too soon come when this Child, now born to us, will be the Man of Sorrows, and then we will compassionate Him; but at present we must rejoice and be glad at His coming and sing round His Crib with the Angels...”

Gratitude: *“Gratitude is indeed due to Him who, neither deterred by our unworthiness nor restrained by the infinite respect which becomes His sovereign Majesty, deigned to be born of His own creature, and have a stable for His birth-place. Oh! How vehemently must He not have desired to advance the work of our salvation, to remove everything which could make us afraid of approaching Him, and to encourage us, by His own example, to return, by the path of humility, to the Heaven we had strayed from by pride. Gratefully, therefore, let us receive the precious gift — this Divine Babe, our Deliverer. He is the Only Begotten Son of the Father, that Father Who has so loved the world as to give His only Son...”*

Love: *“O gift inestimable! How shall we be able to repay it by suitable gratitude, we who are so poor as not to know how to appreciate it? God alone, and the Divine Infant in His Crib, know the value of the mystery of Bethlehem, which is given to us. Shall our debt, then, never be paid? Not so: we can pay it by love, which, though finite, gives itself without measure, and may grow for ever in intensity.*

For this reason, the Church, after she has offered her adorations and hymns and gratitude, to her Infant Saviour, gives Him also her tenderest Love. She says to Him: How beautiful art Thou, my Beloved One, and how comely! How sweet to me is Thy rising, O Divine Sun of Justice! How my heart glows in the warmth of Thy beams! Nay, dearest Jesus, the means Thou uses for gaining me over to Thyself are irresistible — the feebleness and humility of a Child!’ Thus do all her words end in Love: and her adoration, praise, and thanksgiving, when she expresses them in her Canticles, are transformed into love.

Christians! Let us imitate our Mother, and give our hearts to our Emmanuel. The Shepherds offer Him their simple gifts, the Magi bring Him their rich presents, and no one must appear before the Divine Infant without something worthy of His acceptance. Know, then, that nothing will please Him, but that which He came to seek — our love. It was for this that He came down from heaven. Hard indeed is that heart which can say, He shall not have my love!” (Dom Prosper Gueranger - The Liturgical Year - Practice During Christmas)

Wishing You All The Blessings of Advent & Christmas

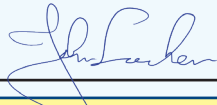
I really love Christmas and I have so many happy childhood memories of this great Liturgical Season which I have tried to pass on to my own children. The devil tries to snuff out our joy at the birth of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Let us resist him, strong in faith.

“Be sober and watch: because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goes about seeking whom he may devour. Whom resist ye, strong in faith: knowing that the same affliction befalls your brethren who are in the world. But the God of all grace, who has called us into his eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a little, will himself perfect you, and confirm you, and establish you. To him be glory and empire for ever and ever. Amen.” (1 Peter 5:8-11)

Once again we celebrate the fact that Jesus Christ has come into our world as a helpless child. He will live a seemingly ordinary life until He reaches the age of thirty and then, at a wedding feast where the wine is about to run out, His mother will ask Him to begin His earthly mission to save souls which will lead to His crucifixion. When questioned by Pontius Pilate about His Kingdom, Christ replied - *“You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Every one who is of the truth hears my voice.”*

We cannot escape the mystery of suffering but we can offer our sufferings in union with Our Blessed Mother, Mary. At this time of the year, I am making my annual appeal for financial support to help to grow and develop the apostolate of ‘*Legio Sanctae Familiae* - The Legion of the Holy Family’. For every donation received, I will send two copies of my latest booklet ‘The Seven Sorrows of Our Lady - For Family Intentions. Please keep one for yourself and pass on the other to someone who needs to know the comfort of our loving Mother Mary.

May God bless you this Christmas and May I thank you in advance for your generosity at this time of the year.



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