

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke:

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. So, all went to be enrolled, each to his own town. And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, because Joseph was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there, the time came for Mary to have her child, and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over their flock. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were struck with great fear. The angel said to the shepherds, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Christ and Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

The Gospel of the Lord.

A cheery, bouncy elevator operator greeted all the workers with a big smile and an energetic “Good morning”. One of the grumpy office workers on his way to the 14-floor said to the bubbly operator, “Why makes you so happy today? The jolly man said, “What makes me so happy is that I’ve never lived this day before.”

My friend, each day is God’s gift to us and how we live it, is our gift to God. On the day Christ was born; God became one of us. That’s why we are so happy today, for this is the day the Lord has made; we rejoice and are glad in it.

To celebrate the joy of Christmas, the Richards family from Australia and the Gay from New York have been competing over who will put up the most Christmas lights. In 2001, the Richards family from Australia, set the Guinness World Record for the most Christmas lights ever on someone’s personal residence, over 300,000 bulbs. Eleven years later, Tim Gay and his family from LaGrangeville, New York out did the Richards family by breaking their record. The next year the Australian family outdid themselves by putting up enough lights that equated to more than 29 miles of wire. Of course, there is always room for more lights. So, the following year Tim Gay and his family spent two months to putting up lights all over their property and took back the world’s record. Tim Gay said, “My family and I are thrilled to bring the World Record back to the United States.” This year in 2020, the Gay family put on over 650,000 Christmas lights.

Most of us are attracted to Holiday lights but on this Christmas day, the day which makes us so happy, we focus on the one light, Jesus, the Light of the World, for a Savior has been born to us, Christ the Lord.

I like to share a story of an eight-year-old girl named Mary who had been adopted but that family found it too difficult to integrate her with their biological family. A year later, Mary was adopted by another family who had two biological daughters. Soon after the adoption, the parents found out that for some reason, when her previous family vacationed at Disney World, they took their biological children, but they left Mary with a family friend. Eight-year-old Mary believed she was excluded because she had done something wrong. Once Mary's new parents found out about this history, they made plans to take her and their family to Disney World. In the month leading up to their trip, the parents caught Mary stealing, lying, and whispering insults toward her older sister. A couple of days before they headed to Florida, the father sat down with his daughter Mary to talk about her behavior. Mary responded, "I know what you are going to do, you not going to take me to Disney World? The father realized that Mary believed she had been excluded because of her bad behavior. The dad asked Mary, "Is this trip something we are doing as a family and are you part of our family? Mary nodded yes. So the father said, "then we are all going together."

Mary's behavior did not change but the family headed to Disney World. On the first day everyone had great fun, there was a lot of magic and excitement. In the hotel room that evening, a very different child emerged. Mary was exhausted, a little weepy, but her month-long rebellion had faded. When bedtime rolled around, the father asked, "So Mary, how was your first day here?" She opened her eyes and said, "Daddy, daddy, I finally got to go to Disney World! But it wasn't because I was good; it was because I'm yours." The father showed Mary that there was nothing that she was going to do which was going to exclude her from their family.

Like the Father, God does not exclude us when we mess things up, His love for us is unconditional. The Bible states, "Nothing can separate us from the love of God found in Christ Jesus." On Christmas day, God showed us His unconditional love when He sent His only Son, Jesus, the Christ, The Light of the World. It's no wonder that the Gospel tells us "And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

Let us pray: please pray after me: "Lord Jesus, on the day of your birth, there was great rejoicing for through you God became one of us, may I find joy today knowing I am loved and called by name." Amen and Amen.

May Almighty God bless you, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. May God bless you and keep you, may God's face shine upon you and be gracious to you. May Mary our loving Mother, hold you in her tender arms. Amen and Amen.