

Homily for Christmas 2012

Yesterday was Monday. Tomorrow is Wednesday. But today...today is not Tuesday. Today is Christmas. And Christmas is a very wonderful day.

But I wonder. What would it have been like, if we had been present at that first Christmas in Bethlehem? Would we have heard the choirs of angels or simply the sounds of barnyard animals shifting around? Would we have seen the star in the sky or simply two poor and very frightened teenagers? Would we have sensed the hushed silence of God's presence or simply the chill of a cold east wind? Would we have been able to grasp the message of Emmanuel, God with us, or would the implications of that evening simply have passed us by? God is so often present to us and we just fail to see it. Maybe it is because our failure to see God in the ordinary and even within ourselves.

Reminds me of a story from the TV Show: **All In The Family**...you remember that show. Edith and Archie are attending Edith's high school class reunion. Edith encounters an old classmate by the name of Buck who, unlike his earlier days, has now become excessively obese. Edith and Buck have a great conversation about old times and the things they did together. Edith doesn't seem to notice how

extremely heavy Buck has become. Later, when Edith and Archie are talking, she says in her whiny voice “Archie, ain’t Buck a beautiful person.” Archie looks at her with a disgusted expression and says: “You’re a pip, Edith. You know that you and I look at the same guy and you see a beautiful person and I see a blimp.” Edith gets a puzzled expression on her face and says profoundly, “Yeah, ain’t that too bad.”

Tell me...what do you see this Christmas? Do you see the love of God made present in the people who love you? Do you love them back? Do you grasp the generosity of God who kisses the earth and gives it the gift of His Son? Can you find that gift in your own life.

If you are grieving, do you grasp that God’s arms are wrapped around you in love...supporting you...lifting you in this moment of pain? If you are lonely and find everything simply emphasizing the emptiness in your heart, can you grasp that Christ came to make His home in your heart...if you would only let Him in. If you are unsure about the future, can you hear the child of Christmas saying to you: “Trust me...let me lead you...all will be well.”

I wish for all of us that we could grasp the profound truth that God revealed the birth of His Son not to the rich or the strong or the powerful...but to simple shepherds. And Christ would take their name and make it His own. For He called himself the Good Shepherd. And I

wish that we could accept that Good Shepherd whose care for us is total unconditional and with no strings attached. Then I would pray that we could take that love and extend it to each other...not just today but every day.

Yesterday was Monday. Tomorrow is Wednesday. But today...today is Christmas ...May God touch our hearts, renew our hope and flood our lives with a love so profound that no day that follows would ever be the same.

May the Christ whose birth we celebrate bless all of us this day and every day.