

## **HOMILY for CHRISTMAS – Year A**

There was a young Scottish boy named Angus who decided to try out his life in Australia. He found an apartment in a small block & settled in. After a week or two, his mother called from Aberdeen, Scotland to see how her son was doing in his new life. “I’m fine,” Angus said. “But, there are some really strange people living in these apartments. The woman next door cried all night long, & the guy upstairs bangs his foot on the floor all the time.”

“Well, my son,” says his mother, “I suggest you don’t associate with people like that.”

“Oh,” says Angus, “I don’t, mom. I stay inside my apartment all day & night, playing my bagpipes.”

The Scottish bagpipe boy did not realize what he did would cause all sorts of commotion in his neighborhood & bring out the worst in many of them. One neighbor banged his foot on the floor upstairs to stop him from playing the bagpipe while another one next door cried all night long because of his sad music. Imagine thousands of people like that bagpipe boy who might have stirred up all sorts of troubles & brought out the worst in others around the world every day; we would certainly have a violent & chaotic world in our hand. Consider hundreds of leaders like that bagpipe boy who might have mistreated people & done injustices to the lowly & the social outcast over the years; we would surely have an angry & resentful society. In fact, that is the kind of society we’ve seen now & the type of world we’ve currently experienced around us.

Thankfully, God has wanted to give us another choice & call us to build up an alternative world & society. Hence, God has sent us God’s Son Jesus, who is totally different from that bagpipe boy, to bring the best out of us & other human beings as well. That way we would be able to create a loving & peaceful world as we as a just & harmonious society. In fact, God would like to fulfill the dreams of prophet Isaiah that we have heard about in this past Advent by sending us God’s Son Jesus & make them come true. In case you have forgotten about prophet Isaiah’s the first dream, let me refresh your memory & repeat it for us, “...Come, let us climb the Lord’s mountain, to the house of the God of Jacob, that He may instruct us in His ways, & we may walk in His paths... They shall beat their swords into plowshares & their spears into pruning hooks; one nation shall not raise the sword against another, nor shall they train for war again... Let us walk in the light of the Lord.” So, Isaiah dreams of a world being free of wars & killing.

His second dream is the following, “...He [the Lord] shall judge the poor with justice, & decide aright for the Land’s afflicted. He shall strike the ruthless with the rod of His mouth, & with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. Justice shall be the band around His waist, & faithfulness a belt upon His hips... Then, the wolf shall be a guest of the lamb, & the leopard shall lie down with the kid; the calf & the young lion shall browse together, with a little child to guide them. The cow & the bear shall be neighbors, together their young shall rest; the lion shall eat hay like the ox. The baby shall play by the cobra’s den, & the child lay his hand on the adder’s lair. There shall be no harm or ruin on all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord.” So, Isaiah dreams of a world where every creature would get along & live in harmony with one another, including all the wild & dangerous animals.

Then, his final dream is this, “...Strengthen the hands of that are feeble, make firm the knees that are weak, say to those whose hearts are frightened: be strong, fear not! Here is your

God, He comes with vindication; with divine recompense, He comes to save you... Then, will the eyes of the blind be opened, the ears of the deaf be cleared; then will the lame leap like a stag, then the tongue of the dumb will sing." So, Isaiah dreams of a world being free from all the physical problems as well as the mental & emotional fear.

However, in order for us to achieve all the dreams of prophet Isaiah & build up a peaceful & loving world, God's Son Jesus first needs to bring out the best in each & every one of us. He calls us His disciples to imitate His example & be the light of His love & peace to our dark & broken world. He challenges us Christians to live up to His Commandments of love & practice a life of virtues every day. Otherwise, His trip down here to earth on Christmas would be a complete waste. None of us would want to let down Jesus like that.

In case we would like to see how Jesus has brought out the best in the whole Creation with His birth, let me give you a couple of examples. One of the best examples is the appearance of the angels & the Heavenly hosts on Christmas night. The whole world has not seen angels & the Heavenly hosts every day. But, we're told that, on the night of Jesus' birth, the shepherd witnessed angels appear & sing in the sky. Since the beginning, our Creation has been contaminated with all sorts of evil acts & dark desires, including the murder of Abel by his brother Cain. Many human beings, as you might have known, have done horrible things to their neighbors & caused our world to get more evil & violent. Many human leaders also have brought out the worst in their members & suppressed the growth of the potentials for goodness in them. Thankfully, Jesus has shown us a better example of good leadership & brought out the best in Creation with His new Commandments of love & inspiring teachings as we have seen the angels & Heavenly hosts caroling on this Christmas night.

But, angels & the Heavenly hosts were not the only wonderful thing that Jesus has brought out of the Creation with His birth. In a few more weeks, we'll hear how Jesus was able to gather the Gentiles from the East to Bethlehem with His special star in the sky & the appearance of the Magi/three Kings. Those kings were from different countries, ethnicities, languages, religions, & traditions. Like most human beings, they were distracted by the charm & temptations of evil King Herod & easily misled by his lies & empty promises. But, Jesus was able to guide them to Bethlehem & bring them home safely by a different way. His ability to bring the three kings together to adore Him & see the truth is quite amazing. But, that is what true leadership is all about. That is what Jesus would want us His disciples to imitate & practice every day. He calls on us Christians to gather peoples of various backgrounds to seek the truth & build up a loving & peaceful world like He preached about during His ministry.

My dear brothers & sisters, what does Christmas & the birth of our Lord Jesus mean to you? Is it another Holiday for everyone to come together & have a party, or a spiritual, life-changing experience? I have shown you why Christmas is such a spiritual, life-changing experience for us Christians & the whole Creation. For the birth of Jesus has not only brought out the best in Heaven with the caroling angels on Christmas night but also gathered the shepherds & the three Kings to Bethlehem to spend some prayerful time together at the manger. We Christians are called to do the same thing & bring out the best in others as well as unite everyone to build up a loving & peaceful world.