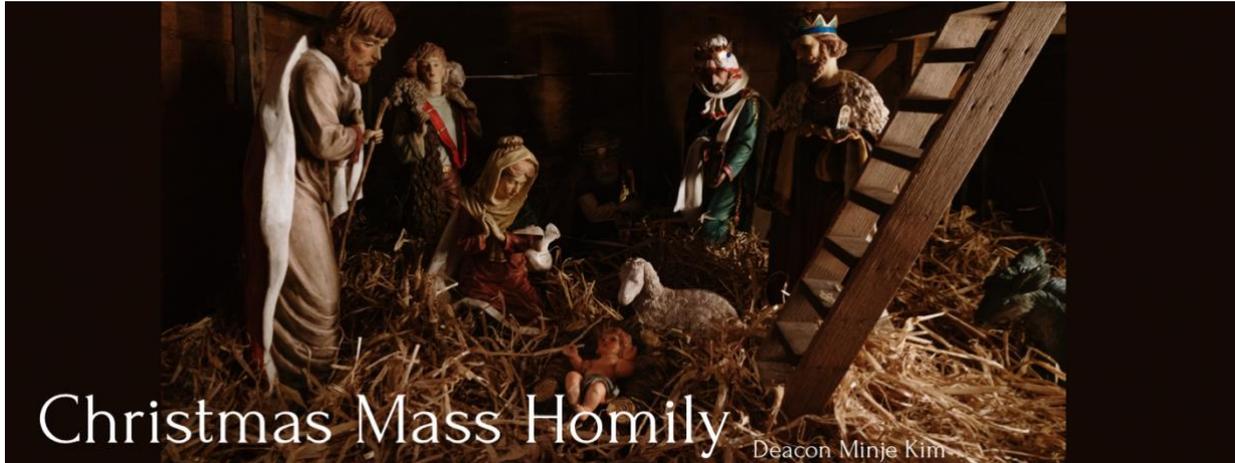


CHRISTMAS MASS HOMILY

24 and 25 December 2022



In my childhood, Christmas was one of the memorable moments when I felt thrilled because I received Christmas gifts from my parents and friends. At the same time, I could sometimes have the White Christmas with snow and make a snowman as my home country Korea is in winter this season. Personally, one of my favourite things to do on Christmas day in the past was watching movies of the Christmas celebration, especially 'Home Alone' series. It was one child's story of having the Christmas celebration with not his biological family but different people whom he met. I like 'Home Alone 2' as its plot was so fascinating.

You may remember the scene that Kevin McCallister (the child) met the pigeon lady, with whom he had a great dialogue at Central Park in New York. The pigeon lady said she had been afraid of her heart being broken again by people who had forgotten about her. Afterwards, Kevin emphasised her by telling this story: He had kept his new rollerblades because he feared it being wrecked. Kevin asked the lady with this question: If we do not use our new rollerblades and hearts, who cares if both are broken? Do not be afraid of our hearts being broken, more important thing is that our heart is opened and used for ourselves. Consequently, the pigeon lady and Kevin both became joyful and enjoyed the real Christmas atmosphere.

In today's gospel, the angel talks with the shepherds who are feeling afraid much. The shepherds may be worried about their sheep being possibly hurt or even killed. That is why they stayed awake at dawn. A few days ago, we witnessed our parish patron saint, Joseph was also fairly worried about his future. However, the angel makes a similar comment to both Joseph and the shepherds on why we do not need to be afraid. The angel consoled them in proclaiming that the Lord was with him. If you look at this story in the gospel from Joseph, the shepherd even King Herod's point of view, this was the day that changed the world.

Today, we are on another day that is going to change the world again. This year, we have discovered that the world has changed rapidly. At the same time, we have got uncertainties, worries and other negative emotions by multiple causes, including War in Ukraine, the ongoing Covid crisis. In those crises, the angel reached out to us with

the Good News that the Lord is with us. Our Lord's presence with us will change our world in better ways.

We all are naturally afraid. But we are called not to be afraid as the Lord is present. In other words, the Lord is here to open our hearts. Yes, we sometimes used to close our hearts over our own challenges. But how can our worries be higher than the truth that our God never abandons us. As you know, I was on a pilgrimage with the QLD seminarians in Italy. What I learnt was that many martyrs/saints like Peter, Paul, Lucy and Stephen were extremely worried about themselves and the uncertainty of their lives. Even they felt threatened. Eventually, those four saints were sacrificed. The four martyrs were bleeding and were killed. The red blood was a symbol of brutality. However, the blood became a symbol of trusting in the Lord, as the persecutors could never get rid of the martyrs' blood. Yet, all saints channelled their worries into glorifying the Lord, believing that the Lord was with them.

Today, our Lord is born here in the midst of us and invites us to put down all our worries and to enjoy this celebration in joy and peace. And Luke is saying to the whole world that Jesus has come, and he has come for you, and you must open, not your mind, to understand this wonderful celebration, but you must open your hearts and allow him to come to the safety and security of your own heart.

Bethlehem was a no place of a little city because the Saviour was born and began to give us hope. Right here in Bracken ridge, we are witnessing that our community is not a little place as our Lord is born here again. At the same time, each one of you is not a little person as Jesus is reborn in our hearts and fills our hearts with hope. As Kevin in the movie (Home Alone) asked the pigeon lady use and open her heart, let us use and open our hearts for Christ to stay in. As Caesar Augustus issued a decree for a census to be registered, our Lord Jesus issues a decree for a census that we are always sons and daughters of God.

Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to people of good will. And may that peace be in our hearts always. Amen.

Deacon Minje Kim

Readings: <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/122522-night.cfm>