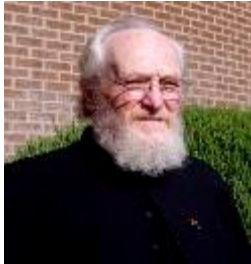


*Fr. Robert's Remarks*

FR ROBERT MANSFIELD, SSC  
VICAR GENERAL

Greetings, The Lord be with you!

*Behold, He Comes: Meditations on the Incarnation.* (ISBN 0-56955-315-7) is a book by the late Fr. Benedict J. Groeschel, CFR—one of my favourite authors and conference speakers. It is a series of meditations designed as “Daily Readings From Advent to Epiphany”. The author notes that while they are that, they “can also be used as meditations on the Incarnation, the mystery of the eternal Word of God taking to himself a human body and a human soul.” Fr. Groeschel hopes that the reader “will find these short meditations helpful in two

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(Continued on page 14)

*Merry Christmas!*

*Fr. David Marriott, SSC: A Sermon for Advent III*

FR. DAVID  
MARRIOTT, SSC

What is a steward?

Because we are asked to be stewards, we need to know what this means.

I suppose most of us think of those people who work as ‘stewards’ today: on the ferry, ‘Please come to the steward’s office’ is a regular announcement: when you have lost a child, left a camera or some such in the cafeteria, or suchlike. So from this we might get the idea that the ‘steward’ is a sort of lost property manager, as well as being the people who keep the place tidy: sort of glorified sea-going janitors. For those of us who have been on a cruise ship, this role is a bit elevated: and the ‘steward’ is now the person who has been allocated to make sure that you have all that you need in your accommodation to have a good holiday: but once again, we are trapped in this idea of some sort of servanthood.

## *Fr. David Marriott, SSC: A Sermon for Advent II*

When I was younger, in the UK, the idea of steward was a bit different: for those who were in the know, the local 'Working Men's Clubs' all had a bar, where the beer was often a bit less expensive than the same beer served in a public house: and this was due to the diligence of the steward of that club: as he was the manager, working for the club committee. And now we see that steward is perhaps rather more than we might have understood: now we have the title 'steward' being allocated to what we might consider a sort of supervisory role.

And the reason we would be right in so thinking is that the steward of the working men's club was so called as a reflection on the person in charge of that other club, the 'gentlemen's club, or perhaps the 'Golf and Country Club' who was also named 'steward'.

And to go one step, just one step further, we see that this title for the job was drawn from the person who was entrusted with all the management, all the general administration of an estate: no longer a janitor, no more low or middle manager, but in reality, the general manager of a large and significant enterprise in agriculture and forestry.

So this is the steward that we are called on to emulate, that we may be diligent and careful of our charge, which is as St. Paul declares: 'Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.' (1 Cor. 4.1) We are given this major responsibility, and it behoves us to do our very best, because the One who has given us this task is none other than Our Lord and Saviour: it is He Who will judge us in this task, it is to Him that we shall needs must answer. 'But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord.' (1 Cor. 4.3-4)

But we might ask, as in any 'job interview' for a clear job description: what do you mean, 'steward of the mysteries of God?' And it is to the collect for today that we can look for some clarity: simply, we are to do this: 'prepare and make ready thy way, by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that at thy second coming to judge the world we may be found an acceptable people in thy sight.' No problem, don't you think?

We are to look at what St. John the Baptist did, and do likewise. No not to wear camel hair shirts and eat honey and wild locusts, not that: but we are to proclaim the coming of God's Kingdom here in earth; we are to encourage the faint hearted; we are to bring erring souls back to the fold, we are to correct the wrong headed; we are to clear the heads of the muddle headed: we are to do all of this; and at the same time, do our very best to follow all the teaching of Christ, to grow ourselves in true Holiness, and to help all those whom we love and treasure to do likewise so that we might all come to the gates of His Heavenly Kingdom in joy and tranquillity, knowing that we have accomplished all that we could, and that at the time of His coming to be with us again, then the role of the one who prepares the way is to gradually lessen as the true leader comes into our presence: where His light grows and strengthens, then we are to accept with joy the gradual dimming of our light, and that we can share in His glory under His care and strong defence. 'But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet. This is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.' (Luke 7.26-27)

## *Fr. David Marriott, SSC: A Sermon for Advent II*

May we heed the lesson we are hearing, may we gain strength from the sure knowledge that God works with us, that God works through us, and that if we are doing the work God has commanded we will prove to others His wonderful gift for all mankind, as we prepare for the coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and in time, to come to that heavenly paradise above.



## *Bonnie's Reflections: I Am Gabriel*



BONNIE IVEY (& LAD)

At the season of Christmas we are exposed to images of angels: on greeting cards, wrapping paper, tree toppers; little kids wearing tinsel halos around a doll in a manger; and possibly an electrified angel sparkling at the top of a Christmas tree. They are cute but nothing to think twice about.

To people of faith however, angels are “the bodiless powers of heaven.” The Old Testament mentions angels, as does the New Testament. In the Book of Daniel, chapter 8, we read that the prophet Daniel experienced a frightening and bewildering vision, of conflict between symbolic beasts. “Suddenly there stood before me one *having the appearance* of a man...He came near where I stood, and when he came, I was afraid and fell on my face...”

Daniel writes that the angel touched him and raised him to his feet. “I am Gabriel,” he said. This strange being then explained the content of Daniel’s vision, saying it referred to the future of the people of Israel, the people of God.

In Israel, in the days when the area was under the control of Rome, there was a priest who served at the temple in Jerusalem, named Zacharias. He was not employed there full-time. As the custom was, men would be called up on a rotating basis to fulfill appointed duties. He and his wife were aged and childless. Lack of children was seen by many Jews as a sign of God’s disapproval, perhaps indicating some secret sin.

Zacharias had been chosen to serve as High priest, by the drawing of lots, to make an offering of incense. The Altar of Incense, made of gold, stood in a separate room, walled off from the area where other priests were offering an animal sacrifice at the large main altar. (Luke 1:5 – 20.)

Paul writes in the Epistle to the Hebrews, 9:17, “...but only the High Priest entered the Inner Room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance.”

As Zacharias placed a spoonful of incense on the fire, and the smoke rose, he saw a figure standing beside the altar. It was not a man. “And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.”

The angel said, “Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John...and he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah... to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

Zachariah questioned the angel. “How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years?”

### *Bonnie's Reflections: Eavesdropping on the Devil*

“I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you, and bring you these glad tidings. But behold, you shall be mute and not able to speak until these things take place...”

When Zacharias emerged from the Inner Room, he tried to express himself with gestures because he could not speak. People concluded he had experienced a vision. He finished his week of Temple service, then returned home to his wife Elizabeth.

Nine months later, as Zacharias and Elizabeth showed their newborn son to family members and neighbours, people argued over names for the child. Still mute, Zacharias took paper and wrote, “His name is **John**.” Right away he regained his power of speech. This news spread throughout the whole of Judea. (Luke 1 vs. 59 – 66.)

Artists have portrayed Elizabeth with Mary the mother of Jesus, with their two little boys, six months apart in age, playing near them. In adulthood, they stood together in the waters of the Jordan river as John baptized Jesus, and the Holy Spirit descended like a dove.



### *Fr. David Marriott, SSC: The Africa Appeal —December 2024*



*Republic of  
Cameroon*



*République  
Démocratique  
du Congo*



*Republic of  
South Sudan*



*Republic  
of Kenya*



*Rwanda*

## Congo.



On December 1<sup>st</sup>, Bishop Steven Ayule Milenge writes: ‘Greetings in Christ our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I would like to send you the photos of the Saint Agathe Ikoma Walungu Mission from the funding you sent. The construction is still in progress because in the photos we see the sheets on the ground. The first classroom of Birindwa Primary School, which until then had been used as a church on Sundays and from Mondays, became a classroom.’

One can see from the landscape that with heavy rains and steep slopes, the risk of landslides which had affected the school, is high.





## *Fr. David Marriott, SSC: The Africa Appeal*

On November 25<sup>th</sup>, Bishop Steven wrote about the Mission Saint Matthias in Goma, Nord Kivu, advising us that the son of the leader of the Mission had been shot whilst he was working in his kiosk, selling telephone units (Vouchers) as a small business to earn a living.' He added, 'The city of Goma, the capital of the Province of North Kivu, is still a scandal of insecurity caused by the presence of armed bandits following the presence of camps for internally displaced persons who have fled their villages to settle in the city,

whose assistance from the Government is insignificant and international non-governmental organizations do not intervene properly. The boy will undergo surgery to remove the bullet in his thigh.'

On December 2<sup>nd</sup>, he wrote: 'I am still in contact with the family of our leader of the Saint Mathias Goma Mission he only said that his son could be released at the end of this week, and they have not yet received a bill, but they suspect it is going up to \$300. We will inform you as soon as the exit invoice is ready.' Please note 'Wetamwami' on your cheque for these costs...



## **Rwanda.**

On October 30<sup>th</sup>, Father Chadrack wrote, 'For the last one week I have been in bed not moving much due to my back pain; but I am seeking medical attention. I need at least \$500 to see that I can visit Doctors in Kigali.' The 'back pain' has been a long-standing problem, originating in his childhood, and the Rwandan genocide, which you can review here: (<https://www.un.org/africarenewal/web-features/rwanda-genocide-survivors-struggle-rebuild-their-lives>)

The Appeal was able to send funds for the medical intervention, and on November 15<sup>th</sup>, Fr. Chadrack wrote, 'Thank you very much for the support the medication. I am continuing to receive the medication, and I have started to sit-up. My wife and children are very happy. The closed church buildings are still closed down; we are praying. Continue to keep us in your prayers. I will continue to keep you updated.'

## **Cameroon.**

In November, the Appeal was able to send funds for hospital costs for Maria Ndutiye, the Bishop's daughter, although another problem arose when the state electricity company required payment from him and his

### *Fr. David Marriott, SSC: The Africa Appeal —October 2024*

neighbours for repairs to their electricity service. For the last weeks, his family and their neighbours had to depend on candlelight. On December 5<sup>th</sup>, Bishop Alphonse has confirmed that the lights are back working, following the Appeal sending an extra CDN \$100.00.

## Kenya.

Last month, I wrote that Bishop John's wife, Esther, had been diagnosed with Sepsis. The Appeal had been prepared to send funds for a project, but diverted the funds for the more urgent health care and hospitalisation for



Mrs. Ndegwa. Bishop John has now written to say, 'We are glad that **Esther** is doing fine, she is in her final stage of recovery, and she is able to do some simple tasks.' (*A photo of her in the kitchen garden upstairs is attached*) May we give thanks for her recovery from this dangerous affliction, and that Esther will soon regain full health.



CLERGY CHAPTER PRIESTS AT KOROGOCHO

ownership and authenticity of documents and then they shall come with a meter and light us up. We expect to be connected in the next 3 weeks. We were also able to supply chicken manure from our Nairobi chicken farm and bought a pump for spraying the potatoes which are doing fine.

Bishop John also sent an email with his 'November reports which come late because I had to rest from the fatigue of hosting the clergy chapter meeting, ordinations and baptisms which this time although the delegates were residing with us in Resurrection Church, Kayole, the meetings and ordination were held at Good Shepherd, Korogocho.' It is no wonder that he needed to take rest, as you can see in these photographs!

On 18<sup>th</sup> November, we travelled to Kinangop to jumpstart the electricity process installation project, which was successful. As we speak Kinangop has professionally installed and tested electricity awaiting the KPLC to verify land



KINANGOP ARCHDEACON, FR. GEOFFREY & POTATO FIELD.



## *Fr. David Marriott, SSC: The Africa Appeal —October 2024*

Our **clergy chapter** went on successfully from 29<sup>th</sup> November and the consequent ordination of a priest and baptism on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2024. The meetings reflected on our mission work, we shared progress and challenges from missions and plans were made in preparation for our forthcoming Synod next year from 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> April 2025.



As we pray for the blessings of God during this advent, we have a matter that we bring to your attention for prayers and where possible support.'

By God's grace we were able to pay rent for one of our rural missions (*Saint Patrick's Gatwe*). We were

also able to lease land for Saint John's Kathaka mission in Kirinyaga. The land lease for Saint John's Kathaka commences on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025, which means they ought to vacate the current small premises or continue paying rent. During the clergy chapter, we were able to come up with a practical and revised **budget and a plan to construct a semi-permanent church and vestry** whose budget and prayer request is hereby attached. If we manage the side poles and roof, they can move in without fear of rain and sun and continue completing the sides and interior as God provides. This will mitigate the possibility of continuing to pay rent and increase the chances of evangelism and mission since we shall have a place to bring people into. However, they will still have a challenge of carrying to and fro chairs, tables and books every Sunday or when they have an activity. If we manage to construct both roof and walls, praise be to God. (*Please contact the Appeal for copy of the plans for St. John's Kathaka if you can help.*)

I continue wishing you all blessings during this Advent

In Christ

John Ndegwa

Nairobi, Kenya

## **Congo East.**

Given the work on the Church roof in last month's Newsletter, the Appeal hopes to send funds for 'Tôles', metal roofing sheets, to allow this work to be completed, in the next weeks. We will gladly share the plans for the Health Centre in Sebele for any who can assist. The Appeal still hopes to assist the purchase of land for the centre, although the construction of this much needed Health Centre is beyond our means at present.

## *Fr. David Marriott, SSC: The Africa Appeal?*

### South Sudan



As we work our way through Advent, looking forward to the Nativity of Christ, please give thought to those living where there is little hope for relief, very little joy in life, in a society where even the very basics of life, food and water are in short supply, food, or, either lacking, drought, or in excess, flooding. It is the situation where very survival is threatened in the Diocese of Aweil, where the needs are so overwhelming to comprehend, but where Bishop Garang and his Clergy strive to bring the 'Good News' of the Light of Christ to those attempting to survive. Pray for them, for relief of their pain. DRM+



#### **How to support these churches:**

There are no deductions from money received by the Appeal; the full dollar amount is sent to Cameroon, Congo, South Sudan, Rwanda or Kenya. Administrative costs, eg, money transfer fees, are paid from gifts received for this purpose.

##### **In Canada**

The Parish of St. Bride

By cheque payable to the Parish of St. Bride and sent to The Parish of St. Bride, 10125 - 276 St., Maple Ridge, V2W 1R5

*Please make a note that the funds are for the Africa Appeal on the front of the cheque. Tax receipts will be issued by the parish.*

##### **In the USA**

The St. Paul Missionary Society, The Anglican Catholic Church, PO Box 5223, Athens, GA 30604

##### **In Australia and New Zealand**

**Anglican Catholic Church Missionary Diocese of Australia and New Zealand Appeal Fund**

By cheque made out to: ACC (OP) DAT and sent to

Missionary Diocese of Australia and New Zealand  
C/- 5 Fallow St  
Chermside West, Qld. 4032 Australia

*If you intend the donation for a special ACC (OP) project, please let us know, so we can designate it accordingly.*

By Direct Deposit to:

Anglican Catholic Church (OP) Diocesan Administrative Trust  
or ACC (OP) DAT (for short)  
BSB 034-064  
A/c 335868

*Please note the intentions for the donation on the direct deposit details.*

*Please be aware that given the current Australian Law situation, we are unable to offer any tax deductible receipts.*

##### **In the UK**

Cheques should be made payable to Anglican Catholic Church - Diocese of the United Kingdom and marked on the back "Mission". If you would like to designate a particular county please indicate which one. Mail to: Diocesan Treasurer, ACC Diocesan Office, St Nicholas House, 42-48 High Street, Lydd, Kent TN29 9AN.





## *Leo the Great : On the Feast of the Nativity*

### ***I. Christmas morning is the most appropriate time for thoughts on the Nativity.***

On all days and at all times, dearly beloved, does the birth of our LORD and Saviour from the Virgin-mother occur to the thoughts of the faithful, who meditate on divine things, that the mind may be aroused to the acknowledgment of its Maker, and whether it be occupied in the groans of supplication, or in the shouting of praise, or in the offering of sacrifice, may employ its spiritual insight on nothing more frequently and more trustingly than on the fact that GOD the Son of GOD, begotten of the co-eternal Father, was also born by a human birth. But this Nativity which is to be adored in heaven and on earth is suggested to us by no day more than this when, with the early light still shedding its rays on nature<sup>787</sup>, there is borne in upon our senses the brightness of this wondrous mystery. For the angel Gabriel's converse with the astonished Mary and her conception by the Holy Ghost as wondrously promised as believed, seem to recur not only to the memory but to the very eyes. For to-day the Maker of the world was born of a Virgin's womb, and He, who made all natures, became Son of her, whom He created. To-day the Word of GOD appeared clothed in flesh, and That which had never been visible to human eyes began to be tangible to our hands as well. Today the shepherds learnt from angels' voices that the Saviour was born in the substance of our flesh and soul; and to-day the form of the Gospel message was pre-arranged by the leaders of the LORD's flocks<sup>788</sup>, so that we too may say with the army of the heavenly host: "Glory in the highest to GOD, and on earth peace to men of good will."

### ***II. Christians are essentially participators in the nativity of Christ.***

Although, therefore, that infancy, which the majesty of GOD's Son did not disdain, reached mature manhood by the growth of years and, when the triumph of His passion and resurrection was completed, all the actions of humility which were undertaken for us ceased, yet to-day's festival renews for us the holy childhood of Jesus born of the Virgin Mary: and in adoring the birth of our Saviour, we find we are celebrating the commencement of our own life. For the birth of Christ is the source of life for Christian folk, and the birthday of the Head is the birthday of the body. Although every individual that is called has his own order, and all the sons of the Church are separated from one another by intervals of time, yet as the entire body of the faithful being born in the font of baptism is crucified with Christ in His passion, raised again in His resurrection, and placed at the Father's right hand in His ascension, so with Him are they born in this nativity. For any believer in whatever part of the world that is re-born in Christ, quits the old paths of his original nature<sup>789</sup> and passes into a new man by being re-born; and no longer is he

### *Leo the Great: Sermon 26—On the Feast of the Nativity*

reckoned of his earthly father's stock but among the seed of the Saviour, Who became the Son of man in order that we might have the power to be the sons of GOD. For unless He came down to us in this humiliation, no one would reach His presence by any merits of his own. Let not earthly wisdom shroud in darkness the hearts of the called on this point, and let not the frailty of earthly thoughts raise itself against the loftiness of GOD's grace, for it will soon return to the lowest dust. At the end of the ages is fulfilled that which was ordained from all eternity: and in the presence of realities, when signs and types have ceased, the Law and prophecy have become Truth: and so Abraham is found the father of all nations, and the promised blessing is given to the world in his seed: nor are they only Israelites whom blood and flesh<sup>790</sup> begot, but the whole body of the adopted enter into possession of the heritage prepared for the sons of Faith. Be not disturbed by the cavils of silly questionings, and let not the effects of the Divine word be dissipated by human calculation; we with Abraham believe in GOD and "waver not through unbelief<sup>791</sup>" but "know most assuredly that what the LORD promised, He is able to perform."

### **III. *Peace with GOD is His best gift to man.***

The Saviour then, dearly beloved, is born not of fleshly seed but of the Holy Spirit, in such wise that the condemnation of the first transgression did not touch Him. And hence the very greatness of the boon conferred demands of us reverence worthy of its splendour. For, as the blessed Apostle teaches, "we have received not the spirit of this world but the Spirit which is of GOD, that we may know the things which are given us by GOD<sup>792</sup>:" and that Spirit can in no other way be rightly worshipped, except by offering Him that which we received from Him. But in the [138](#)treasures of the LORD's bounty what can we find so suitable to the honour of the present feast as the peace, which at the LORD's nativity was first proclaimed by the angel-choir? For that it is which brings forth the sons of GOD, the nurse of love and the mother of unity: the rest of the blessed and our eternal home; whose proper work and special office it is to join to GOD those whom it removes from the world. Whence the Apostle incites us to this good end, in saying, "being justified therefore by faith let us have peace towards GOD<sup>793</sup>." In which brief sentence are summed up nearly all the commandments; for where true peace is, there can be no lack of virtue. But what is it, dearly beloved, to have peace towards GOD, except to wish what He bids, and not to wish what He forbids? For if human friendships seek out equality of soul and similarity of desires, and difference of habits can never attain to full harmony, how will he be partaker of divine peace, who is pleased with what displeases GOD and desires to get delight from what he knows to be offensive to GOD? That is not the spirit of the sons of GOD; such wisdom is not acceptable to the noble family of the adopted. That chosen and royal race must

### *Leo the Great : On the Feast of the Nativity*

live up to the dignity of its regeneration, must love what the Father loves, and in nought disagree with its Maker, lest the LORD should again say: “I have begotten and raised up sons, but they have scorned Me: the ox knoweth his owner and the ass his master’s crib: but Israel hath not known Me and My people hath not acknowledged Me<sup>794</sup>.”

#### **IV. *We must be worthy of our calling as sons and friends of God.***

The mystery of this boon is great, dearly beloved, and this gift exceeds all gifts that GOD should call man son, and man should name GOD Father: for by these terms we perceive and learn the love which reached so great a height. For if in natural progeny and earthly families those who are born of noble parents are lowered by the faults of evil intercourse, and unworthy offspring are put to shame by the very brilliance of their ancestry; to what end will they come who through love of the world do not fear to be outcast from the family of Christ? But if it gains the praise of men that the father’s glory should shine again in their descendants, how much more glorious is it for those who are born of GOD to regain the brightness of their Maker’s likeness and display in themselves Him Who begat them, as saith the LORD: “Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven<sup>795</sup>?” We know indeed, as the Apostle John says that “the whole world lieth in the evil one<sup>796</sup>,” and that by the stratagems of the Devil and his angels numberless attempts are made either to frighten man in his struggle upwards by adversity or to spoil him by prosperity, but “greater is He that is in us, than he that is against us<sup>797</sup>,” and they who have peace with GOD and are always saying to the Father with their whole hearts “thy will be done<sup>798</sup>,” can be overcome in no battles, can be hurt by no assaults. For accusing ourselves in our confessions and refusing the spirit’s consent to our fleshly lusts, we stir up against us the enmity of him who is the author of sin, but secure a peace with GOD that nothing can destroy, by accepting His gracious service, in order that we may not only surrender ourselves in obedience to our King but also be united to Him by our free-will. For if we are like-minded, if we wish what He wishes, and disapprove what He disapproves, He will finish all our wars for us, He Who gave the will, will also give the power: so that we may be fellow-workers in His works, and with the exultation of Faith may utter that prophetic song: “the LORD is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear? the LORD is the defender of my life: of whom shall I be afraid<sup>799</sup>?”

#### **V. *The birth of Christ is the birth of peace to the Church.***

They then who “are born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man but of GOD<sup>800</sup>,” must offer to the Father the unanimity of peace-loving sons, and all the members of adoption must meet in the First-begotten of the new creation, Who came to do not His own Will



## *Leo the Great : On the Feast of the Nativity*

but His that sent Him; inasmuch as the Father in His gracious favour has adopted as His heirs not those that are discordant nor those that are unlike Him, but those that are in feeling and affection one. They that are re-modelled after one pattern must have a spirit like the model. The birthday of the LORD is the birthday of peace: for thus says the Apostle, “He is our peace, who made both one<sup>801</sup>,” since whether we be Jew or Gentile, “through Him we have access in one Spirit to the Father<sup>802</sup>.” And it was this in particular that He taught His disciples before the day of His passion which He had of His own free-will fore-ordained, saying, “My peace I give unto you, My peace I leave for you<sup>803</sup>,” and lest under the general term the character of His peace should escape notice, He added, “not as the world give I unto you<sup>804</sup>.” The world, He says, has its friendships, and brings many that are apart into loving harmony. There are also minds which are equal in vices., and similarity of desires produces equality of affection. And if any are perchance to be found who are not pleased with what is mean and dishonourable, and who exclude from the terms of their connexion unlawful compacts, yet even such if they be either Jews, heretics or heathens<sup>805</sup>, belong not to GOD’s friendship but to this world’s peace. But the peace of the spiritual and of catholics coming down from above and leading upwards refuses to hold communion with the lovers of the world, resists all obstacles and flies from pernicious pleasures to true joys, as the LORD says: “Where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also<sup>806</sup>.” that is, if what you love is below you will descend to the lowest depth: if what you love is above, you will reach the topmost height: thither may the Spirit of peace lead and bring us, whose wishes and feeling are at one, and who are of one mind in faith and hope and in charity: since “as many as are led by the Spirit of GOD these are sons of GOD<sup>807</sup>” Who reigneth with the Son and Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.



### Notes

<sup>787</sup> *Nova etiam in elementis luce radiante*, the phrase seems to point to an early service as the time of delivering this sermon (possibly the *missa in gallicantu*).

<sup>788</sup> *Apud Dominicorum præsules gregum hodie evangelizandi forma præcondita est*. This clause has been taken to be an allusion to the reciting of the angelic hymn *Gloria in Excelsis*, at the Holy Eucharist, but as Bright (note 20, all of which should be read) says, “the words do not necessarily mean more than that the original Angelic hymn (S. Luke ii. 14) was recited in the Christmas Day Service.”

<sup>789</sup> *Interciso originalis tramite vetustatis*.

<sup>790</sup> *Sanguis et caro*: it is noticeable that the same order is observed in Heb. ii. 14.

<sup>791</sup> Rom. iv. 20, 21.

<sup>792</sup> 1 Cor. ii. 12.

<sup>793</sup> Rom. v. 1.

<sup>794</sup> Is. i. 2, 3.

<sup>795</sup> S. Matt. v. 16.

<sup>796</sup> 1 John v. 19.

<sup>797</sup> Cf. 1 John iv. 4, and 2 Kings vi. 16.

<sup>798</sup> S. Matt. vi. 10.

<sup>799</sup> Ps. xxvii. 1.

<sup>800</sup> S. John i. 13.

<sup>801</sup> Eph. ii. 14, 18.

<sup>802</sup> Eph. ii. 14, 18.

<sup>803</sup> S. John xiv. 27.

<sup>804</sup> Ib.

<sup>805</sup> *Pagani* (lit. villagers or rustics): the later meaning arose from the fact that idolatry and superstition tend to linger longer in out-of-the-way rural districts, than in the more civilized towns: cf. “heath” and “heathen.” See Bright’s note 24, and the references quoted by him. Hooker, v. 80. 2 ; Trench, “on Study of Words,” p. 69, &c.

<sup>806</sup> S. Matt. vi. 21.

<sup>807</sup> Rom. vii



### *St. John Chrysostom, “Homily on Christmas Morning”*

BEHOLD a new and wondrous mystery. My ears resound to the Shepherd’s song, piping no soft melody, but chanting full forth a heavenly hymn. The Angels sing. The Archangels blend their voice in harmony. The Cherubim hymn their joyful praise. The Seraphim exalt His glory. All join to praise this holy feast, beholding the Godhead here on earth, and man in heaven. He Who is above, now for our redemption dwells here below; and he that was lowly is by divine mercy raised.

Bethlehem this day resembles heaven; hearing from the stars the singing of angelic voices; and in place of the sun, enfolds within itself on every side, the Sun of justice. And ask not how: for where God wills, the order of nature yields. For He willed; He had the power; He descended; He redeemed; all things yielded in obedience to God. This day He Who is, is Born; and He Who is, becomes what He was not. For when He was God, He became man; yet not departing from the Godhead that is His. Nor yet by any loss of divinity became He man, nor through increase became He God from man; but being the Word He became flesh, His nature, because of impassability, remaining unchanged.

And so the kings have come, and they have seen the heavenly King that has come upon the earth, not bringing with Him Angels, nor Archangels, nor Thrones, nor Dominations, nor Powers, nor Principalities, but, treading a new and solitary path, He has come forth from a spotless womb.

For with God we look not for the order of nature, but rest our faith in the power of Him who works.

What shall I say to you; what shall I tell you? I behold a Mother who has brought forth; I see a Child come to this light by birth. The manner of His conception I cannot comprehend.

Nature here rested, while the Will of God labored. O ineffable grace! The Only Begotten, Who is before all ages, Who cannot be touched or be perceived, Who is simple, without body, has now put on my body, that is visible and liable to corruption. For what reason? That coming amongst us he may teach us, and teaching, lead us by the hand to the things that men cannot see. For since men believe that the eyes are more trustworthy than the ears, they doubt of that which they do not see, and so He has deigned to show Himself in bodily presence, that He may remove all doubt.

Christ, finding the holy body and soul of the Virgin, builds for Himself a living temple, and as He had willed, formed there a man from the Virgin; and, putting Him on, this day came forth; unashamed of the lowliness of our nature.

For it was to Him no lowering to put on what He Himself had made. Let that handiwork be forever glorified, which became the cloak of its own Creator. For as in the first creation of flesh, man could not be made before the clay had come into His hand, so neither could this corruptible body be glorified, until it had first become the garment of its Maker.

What shall I say! And how shall I describe this Birth to you? For this wonder fills me with astonishment. The Ancient of days has become an infant. He Who sits upon the sublime and heavenly Throne, now lies in a manger. And He Who cannot be touched, Who is simple, without complexity, and incorporeal, now lies subject to the hands of men. He Who has broken the bonds of sinners, is now bound by an infants bands.

### *St. John Chrysostom, “Homily on Christmas Morning”*

But He has decreed that ignominy shall become honor, infamy be clothed with glory, and total humiliation the measure of His Goodness.

For this He assumed my body, that I may become capable of His Word; taking my flesh, He gives me His spirit; and so He bestowing and I receiving, He prepares for me the treasure of Life. He takes my flesh, to sanctify me; He gives me His Spirit, that He may save me.

Come, then, let us observe the Feast. Truly wondrous is the whole chronicle of the Nativity. For this day the ancient slavery is ended, the devil confounded, the demons take to flight, the power of death is broken, paradise is unlocked, the curse is taken away, sin is removed from us, error driven out, truth has been brought back, the speech of kindness diffused, and spreads on every side, a heavenly way of life has been planted on the earth, angels communicate with men without fear, and men now hold speech with angels.

Why is this? Because God is now on earth, and man in heaven; on every side all things commingle. He became Flesh. He did not become God. He was God. Wherefore He became flesh, so that He Whom heaven did not contain, a manger would this day receive. He was placed in a manger, so that He, by whom all things are nourished, may receive an infant's food from His Virgin Mother. So, the Father of all ages, as an infant at the breast, nestles in the virginal arms, that the Magi may more easily see Him. Since this day the Magi too have come, and made a beginning of withstanding tyranny; and the heavens give glory, as the Lord is revealed by a star.

To Him, then, Who out of confusion has wrought a clear path, to Christ, to the Father, and to the Holy Ghost, we offer all praise, now and for ever. Amen.



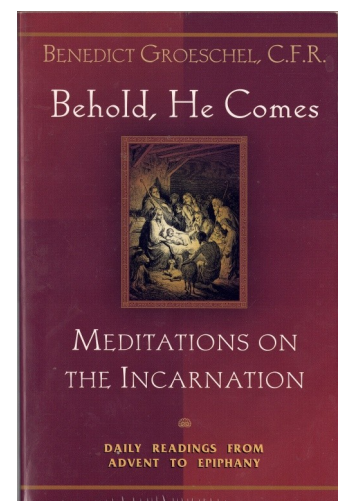
### *Fr. Robert's Remarks*

ways—to assist you to dwell on the Mysteries of the Messiah, and also to prepare you to read the Gospels more deeply in light of the original Christian interpretations”.

Printed on page 15 of this issue is one of the meditations—that for Christmas Day. (I share it with you both for its content and also as a promotion for the book.)

This year, I am particularly conscious of two bereaved families. In one family, the father/husband died earlier in the year; in the other, the mother/wife died just a few days ago. In both cases they were in their 40s and each leaves 4 children. This will be the first Christmas without that parent. Gratefully, in both cases, a strong Christian faith is present.

Some will celebrate Christmas with joy and happiness. Others will celebrate Christmas with joy because they do know and appreciate with Jesus did for them, but also with a bur-



*(Continued on page 16)*





## *Fr. Benedict Groeschel: A Meditation for Christmas Day*

### CHRISTMAS SEASON

December 25 — Christmas Day

*"A child is born to us, a Son is given to us" (Isaiah 9: 6).*

Jesus Christ was born to give Himself away because the life of the Trinity, the three divine Persons, is one of total self-giving, of love in the highest and purest meaning of that word. When we were children, the smiling, sweet image of the baby Jesus surely was meant to take away any unworthy fear of God. The little figure was to tell us that the God of the Gospels was not a fearful judge. And so Christmas should be a joyous, warm, and friendly day.

But the figure of the Christ Child is not the whole picture by any means. The Child was, in reality, among the poorest of the poor, laid in a manger. He was soon to be a political refugee fleeing a brutal tyrant. He was to live a life of essential misunderstanding. No one—not even His Mother—could entirely understand what it meant for Him to be "about [His] Father's business." He would live His public life almost completely surrounded by people, begging people, insistent people, demanding the help of heaven. Paradoxically, He was completely given to people and their needs and yet in the depths of His soul He was entirely apart. "I and the Father are one" (Jn 10:30).

In a few decades the Child of Bethlehem will stand at the absolute pinnacle of the conflict between good and evil. His shoulders will bear all that burden. He will be crushed by the weight of the world's sins. He is the only Person of whom it can be said that He was born to die. He knew that it was to be His calling.

How does one cope with the real mystery of Christmas? It can be the saddest of days for many people. Some are very alone; some feel deserted or neglected. Some are isolated but will go off among the poor who have much fun as they open the Christmas baskets given to them. Perhaps the loneliest person in the world is a man sitting in his own living room surrounded by his family and no one will really speak to him. And he knows it's his own fault.

The answer on Christmas Day is to give and forgive. Spend the day for others in good works and prayer. Give yourself away, and if there is no one to give yourself to, pray for those you care about even if they seem not to care about you. Christmas is a day for giving. We should think about it that way from the time we are young until we are very old. A smile and a prayer can be our gifts of the Magi to the Christ Child.

### Prayer

*Lord Jesus Christ, let me live for You today and give myself to all I meet, especially those in need. Whatever they need—a smile, a helping hand, a meal, forgiveness—help me to get out of the prison of myself and to follow You, who came from beyond the stars to give Your love away. Amen.*



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### *Fr. Robert's Remarks*

den of loss. Sadly, still others will have neither happiness nor joy even if they should happen to be at a celebration with others.

Perhaps, in the midst of our celebration of the Nativity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we might take some time and, at the least, offer some prayers for those less fortunate.

May God Bless you and keep you! May you have a blessed and holy Christmas!

More next month,

**R+**



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