

CHRISTMAS HOMILY 2016

1. Be not afraid, the angel says to Mary
 - a. This phrase occurs quite often in the Scriptures
2. There is a lot to fear
 - a. Illness, crime, predators, finances and ultimately death
3. Fear is a primitive emotion
 - a. Usually do not think, simply react
 - b. Demagogues and dictators have exploited this over history
 - c. Promise to be our savior,
 - i. If we put our trust in them, then we will feel safe
 - ii. Result usually has been, these so-called saviors more dangerous than things we originally feared
4. Christianity proclaims that God has sent us a Savior
 - a. Many who may be skeptical
 - b. Is the Church simply presenting another demagogue, is it trying to establish a dictatorship?
 - c. We know in history, the Church, having a human side, produced leaders who thought they could save the world
 - d. In the name of the Church they committed crimes to protect the Church
 - i. In process hurt the Church
 - ii. Our Popes recently have issued formal apologies for these evil acts done in the name of the Church
5. But there is a divine side to the Church
 - a. It announces to us that there is a true Savior sent by God
 - b. When God sends a Savior, He does not send someone who throws lightning bolts or leads great armies
 - c. God gives Himself to us as a tiny child
 - d. Not just a child, one so vulnerable that his crib is a manger
6. A manger is a feeding trough, a place where animals come to eat
 - a. Symbolizes the Last Supper and the Crucifixion
 - b. Jesus gives us bread and wine, saying this is my Body given up for you, this is my Blood poured out for you
 - c. He tells us to keep doing this,
 - d. to keep experiencing His death for us as a gift of life
 - e. Christmas manger represents the Eucharist,
 - f. Jesus gives Himself to us as food
 - g. Feeding us with His Body and Blood, He offers us a life that can never be destroyed
7. Jesus, our Savior, does not make false promises to protect us from the dangers of life

- a. being an open follower of Jesus can even add to the dangers
 - b. Many have been persecuted or even martyred for following Christ
- 8. Salvation of Jesus is when we meet Him in the sacraments, God embraces us as His children
 - a. United with God, nothing can really harm us
 - b. Things may hurt a bit for a while but God will always be with us
 - c. He will console our pains, wipe away our tears and feed us with His own life
- 9. Joy of Christmas is paying attention to the words of the angel to Mary,
 - a. be not afraid, for God is with us in Jesus
 - b. nothing can really hurt us where it counts
 - c. we have life eternal