

## *Reflections on Christmas*

December 24 and 25, 2017

*“Rorate, caeli, desuper, et nubes pluant justum ....”*

“Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the just.” This is the Introit of the Mass of Our Lady during Advent and of the Fourth Sunday of Advent. It presents the beautiful image of the gentle dew and light rain that descends slowly to refresh the parched grass and the flower that germinates on the root of Jesse.

These tender images point to the gentle, loving and providential character of the First Coming of the Word of God in the manger. It is not sudden like the strike of a sword or an earthquake, as is foretold for the Second Coming; rather, our Saviour’s coming is clearly foretold in beautiful terms, like that of a tender plant that is nourished by the celestial dew and despite all obstacles, grows under the Sun of Justice. From these tender images, we quickly move to Christmas night, where the prophecies of the Divine birth unfold in a manger in a stable near Bethlehem.

Christmas is a feast of inner peace and joy. We must strive to be as the men of good will who surrounded the improvised crib; we should have the trust and simplicity of the shepherds who believed the angels and adored their God in the manger. We should be as St. Joseph, full of faith and reverence before Jesus and the Blessed Virgin Mary. We should be as Mary, keeping all these things in our hearts and pondering on them. We should be close to Jesus, studying His life in Sacred Scripture and the liturgy, and meditating on the lessons He is teaching us throughout His life. He came so we could imitate Him and thus grow close to Him. Like Him, let us accept poverty, lack of comfort, and humble surroundings, being content with what is necessary. Let us not get caught up in the commercialization of Christmas, which ends up leading to emptiness, greed and sadness. Rather, let us humbly adore the Infant God and be thankful for all He has given us, and show this gratitude by our charity for others.

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