

*Sunday within the Octave of Christmas*

December 31, 2017

*“While all things were in quiet silence and the night was in the midst of her course, Thy almighty Word, O Lord, came down from heaven from Thy royal throne.” (Wisdom 18:14-15)*

This passage used in the context of the octave Mass of Christmas applies to our Lord’s incarnation and creates the scene in our imagination of the quiet that was at the moment our Lord was born. However, if we look at the whole context of this passage in the book of Wisdom, we get a vastly different picture. This passage literally refers to the slaughter of the first born in Egypt when the avenging angel carries out the terrible sentence on all the first born in Egypt where the door posts had not been marked by the blood of the lamb. This greater context can be applied to our Lord in a twofold manner. First, it is He who came in the silence of the night into a world darkened by sin and hatred at the time of His birth in Bethlehem, to take on the ancient curse and die for all so all might live. Second, He will come again at the end of time to judge all and carry out the just sentences of all looking for those who have been washed in the Blood of the Lamb. Thus this passage brings to mind a beautiful image of the divine birth, but at the same time reminds us of why He came. It is His Blood on the door posts of our hearts that is going to save us on the last day when He comes again. The passage is a strong reminder of why our Lord came and the importance of our being faithful, for He will come again in power and might, wielding a sword of justice.

The Son of God became man for all men so He could bring salvation to all, but many will not receive it. Objectively He died for all, but subjectively, not everyone will accept His sacrifice and take part in His saving action. This is a great mystery of human freedom. How we can be presented with a treasure of infinite value and refuse it? Yet we do so every time we commit a mortal sin. The Christmas Masses place before us each year the scene where the little Divine Child lays in a manger so we can contemplate the great mystery of the Incarnation and the love that Jesus has for us. We must let this love penetrate our hearts so we can freely accept and conform our lives to His saving action. This is how we are truly free, when we do what is best for our souls, by serving God with all we have.

*Rev. Charles Van Vliet, FSSP*

*Pastor, Regina Caeli Parish*