

New Brighton, Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> December 2022

## Christmas – Mass at Dawn

“Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.”<sup>1</sup>

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Last night in the mystery of darkness, Our Lady gave birth to the Infant Jesus, who we know being the second person of the Holy Trinity. Like 2000 years ago, yesterday, late evening, the baby Jesus was placed in the manger, in the crib of our church, filling the empty space left since the beginning of Advent, and marking a new era in the history of the world, in our history.

Dear [REDACTED], this morning, on the day of Christmas, you will receive the first time Jesus in Holy Communion. You prepared for that all along these last months, making, I’ve no doubt about it, a longer and more fervent Advent than probably many others. This year, Advent truly meant expectation for you.

Jesus is coming today to make himself at home in your soul, in your heart. He wants to lay upon the special place you prepared, as in is doing in the crib. Look at his hands: they are extended to welcome you as His child, to offer you all the treasures of His Sacred Heart.

This Holy Bread, the true body, blood, soul and divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ will be given to you, His little child, to feed your soul, to strengthen your actions, to help you to follow Him by practising the good and avoiding the evil.

St Gregory the Great, whom we heard last night during Matins<sup>2</sup>, told us that Bethlehem was in Hebrew word meaning House of the bread. 2000 years ago, Bethlehem was the place where the law chose to be born. The same Lord who later said: “I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever. And the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world.”<sup>3</sup>

This morning, dear [REDACTED], your soul is going to become a new House of the Bread, a new Bethlehem, this place Jesus chose to come into this world. As he did a long time ago, Jesus is coming down from heaven today for you, and chooses your soul particularly today to be visited for the first time, through the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.

Who better than Our Lady could teach you how to receive Jesus in your life, how this coming should transform in transfigure you, as Jesus will be from now, a living presence in your soul? We read in the gospel that “she was keeping in mind all these things, pondering them in her heart.”<sup>4</sup> I wish you to do the same thing with these treasures entrusted to you this morning during that mass at dawn.

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<sup>1</sup> Luke, II, 15

<sup>2</sup> St Gregory the Great, 8<sup>th</sup> Homily upon the Gospels, quoted in Roman Breviary, Office of Matin for Christmas, 7<sup>th</sup> Lesson

<sup>3</sup> John, V, 51-52

<sup>4</sup> Luke, II, 19

This mass is the mass of the adoration of the shepherds, when we contemplate the first men who came to visit and adore Our Lord when He came into this world. They believed the word of the Angel, they visited and felt in adoration in front of God. Dear [REDACTED], this morning, they are your model, your example. Look at them and follow their example of obedience and humility to come immediately when Jesus asked them, but on their way back, “glorified and praise God for all that they had heard and seen, even as it was spoken to them.”<sup>5</sup>

“A light shall shine upon this day: for the Lord is born to us: and He shall be called Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace: of Whose reign there shall be no end.”<sup>6</sup> This light is the Holy Bread given to us, given to you this morning for the first time.

Receive Jesus, as the shepherds visited Him for the first time, coming full of hope to see the promise being fulfilled and going home full of joy, because the Lord has visited you and made your soul his home.

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.

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<sup>5</sup> Luke, II, 20

<sup>6</sup> Isa., IX, 2; IX, 6 (Mass at Dawn, Introit)