



SAINT LOUIS ABBEY



The Solemnity of Christmas – The Mass at Night

Saint Louis Abbey

December 25, 2010

The Mass at Midnight

Homily

“Today is born for you in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.” The words of the angel proclaiming for the first time, as we have just heard, the birth of the Savior of the world.

The angel’s words refer, of course, to the temporal birth of the Lord, in Bethlehem, over two thousand years ago. They refer also to the eternal birth of the Lord as the Son of God in the splendors of divinity. But the angel’s words refer also to yet a third birth of the Lord, here, at this very moment. “*Today*”, that is, on this day, at this moment, just a few moments after December 25, 2010 has begun; “today *in the city of David*”, that is, in the city reigned over by the Son of David, Our Lord Jesus Christ, who will sit on David’s throne forever, that is, then, in the Church; “today in the Church a Savior, who is Christ the Lord, *is born*”, that is, born in the Church by that birth that comes to be in the Church as the Church contemplates him, by faith and love, as the new-born Divine Babe; “today in the Church a Savior, who is Christ the Lord, is born *for you*”, that is, for you, for me, for every human being, born for each of us to receive him, born for each of us to allow him, by the exercise of the virtues of faith and love which have been given to us, to be born in us. It is this spiritual birth of the Lord in the Church, in us, at this very moment, which the Church celebrates on this night even as she celebrates his temporal birth in Bethlehem long ago, and his eternal birth in the bosom of the Father.

Let the Lord, then, dear friends, let the Lord be born in you, on this holy night, now, at this moment. Make an act of wholehearted faith and love in him now, and he will be born in you. If you are aware of some hindrance of sin which prevents him being born in you, and you did not receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation to remove it during the Season of Advent, then receive this sacrament sometime during the Feast of Christmas itself, for the Feast lasts eight days, and the Christmas Season two weeks, so there is time, there is still time, and then the Lord will be born in you. If you are a seeker after the Catholic faith, but have not yet been received into the full communion of the Church, if you are a seeker after the Christian faith, whose fullness is the Catholic faith, but have not yet received the Sacraments of Initiation, then come, come, dear friends, be received into the full communion of the Church, come, dear friends, be baptized, confirmed, receive the Most Holy Eucharist, and the Lord will be born in you.

Christ born in you, born in me. This, dear friends, and this alone, is the beginning of salvation, and indeed the essence of salvation, for us human beings. He, the Son of God, who took from us, at his conception, our human nature, now gives us in return, by his birth in us, a share in his divine nature. The Son of God became man in order that,



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the Fathers did not hesitate to say, in order that we might become God. This is the great mystery of Christmas. If we give ourselves to it, then the Lord will more and more conform us to himself, more and more cause to grow in us our true identity as the unique image of him we are destined to be, more and more bring us by his Passion and Cross to the glory of his Resurrection. This great journey to God, along which the Lord carries us, is already in this world the glorious manifestation of the Father's unspeakable mercy and love, is already in this world joy and peace for us which the world cannot overcome. No wonder, then, that as we go out from the holy mysteries on this holy night, we hear with the ear of our heart the song of the angels:

Glory to God in the highest
and peace to his people on earth.