

# The Christmas Message

Easter Day is the dogmatic festival of all Christianity, as it is of historic Christianity, that is Catholicism. On that day the truth shines out that the Catholic Church is divine, for Jesus is God. This appeals to the mind, hence we may call Easter the intellectual or spiritual feast day of the Church. The foundation of the Christian religion is love. Even when the absurdities which Christian Science, Theosophy, Buddhism, and Spiritualism have wrapped around phases of Christianity are torn aside, we can see passing glimpses of the universal love, even in them. Love of God, love of God's image that shines in the veriest tramp or scoundrel or blackguard, is not that the religion of the Master, while the whole Church's ministrations are but the golden means to this golden end?

Like other Marthas, we forget in the unceasing turmoil of worldly care and changing thought that one thing is as necessary to-day as it was in the days when Magdala was consecrated by the footsteps of the Master. Love! Without this, Faith and hope are as nothing. Did not the great preacher of dogmatic Faith himself say, though inspired by the spirit of love, that "there remain faith, hope, and charity, these three, but of these the greatest is charity"? On this are built the Law and Prophets of the Sion of old, and in this is built, too, the new Jerusalem, which is the Church of the Saints.

Love in all its great and comprehensive plenitude is the sermon that is preached to us by the Infant Babe of Bethlehem. To love the little children, the poor, maimed and disfigured atoms of humanity that throng the streets and slums of the city for His sake—is not this the first echo of Bethlehem's canticle?

God rest ye, little children; let nothing you affright.

For Jesus Christ, your Saviour, was born this happy night.

Along the hills of Galilee the white flocks sleeping lay,

When Christ, the Child of Nazareth, was born on Christmas Day!

### The Basic Creed.

The Divine Child has indeed given us the example of love, a grander, a more beautiful, than which has never appeared in

all the epics of human mortality. From the straw-covered manger, clothed with the swaddling clothes of infancy, and the still meaner vesture of our poor humanity, the Divine Child speaks to us to-day, if we can only listen. Old sores to be forgotten, old quarrels to be buried in oblivion, old friendships to be renewed and confirmed, charity to be bestowed on the poor and the halt and the children, good measure and heaping over, kindness and good-will to be shown to all men, irrespective of language, race, and creed, and to hold peace with God and ourselves.

This is the basic creed of Catholicism, the mystic song that first resounded on Christmas night, and which impregnates with its divine harmony the soul of the Catholic Church to-day:

And so the Word had breath, and wrought  
With human hands the creed of creeds,  
In loveliness of perfect deeds

More strong that all poetic thought,  
Which he may read that binds the sheaf,  
Or builds the house, or digs the grave,  
And those wild eyes that watch the waves  
In roarings round the coral reef.

### The Birthday of God the Son.

Christmas Day was, and is, for the Catholic Church, the birthday of Jesus Christ, the Son of Mary, Virgin of Nazareth, the Son of God, as also the Son of man, the Supernal Word, proceeding from the Father and the Holy Ghost, Who with the Father and the Spirit is consubstantial and conglorified. To Whom be praise and glory in all ages forever. Amen.

Christmas for the Catholic Church does not mean the birth of a mere prophet like Moses or Elijah, who labored for the glory of God and the deliverance of His people from an earthly exile, or some temporary human tyranny; neither does it mean the birth of a hero who, in spite of divine attributes such as are ascribed to the poets of old, or to the wise law-givers like Confucius or Buddha, or the mysterious Hermes, who was but a mortal after all. Neither does it mean the memorial of a religious Founder Who may have recapitulated in his person or morality the concentrated wisdom of the ages of the past and who called himself, and was called by his followers, the Son of God because He did God's work among

the children of men! No! Christmas Day means that the Eternal God Who is the Principle of Life immutable in Heaven, condescended to be born of Mary of Nazareth by the mysterious over-shadowing of the Holy Ghost, and to appear and to be in reality a child among the children of men.

Supernal Word proceeding from  
The Eternal Father breast,  
And in the end of ages come  
To aid the world distressed.

So sings Holy Mother Church in her Advent Matins. The Blessed Trinity by which we mean the Three Persons in one God, is the apex of all mysteries in Revelation, but next to this wondrous manifestation of God within the God-head is the external revelation of God in the mystery of the Incarnation, which, beginning on March 25, was completed on that first Christmas night when Mary held her first-born in her virgin arms.

In the Humble Stable of Bethlehem.

In the humble Stable of Bethlehem, the glory of the undivided Godhead was revealed by that mysterious union of the two natures in the Babe that reclined in Mary's arms.

Blow bugles of Battle and marches of Peace,  
East, West, North, and South let the long warfare cease;

Sing the song of great joy that angels began,  
Sing the glory of God and of good-will to man.

Christmas, then, is a time of solemn religious joy to all mankind. We sing in union with the angels' voices which echoed around

the stable of Bethlehem:

Ring out, ye crystal spheres,

Once bless our human ears,

If ye have power to touch our senses so,

And let your silver chime

Move in melodious time

And let the bass of Heaven's deep organ blow.

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