

Homily for Christmas Day 2020

The Homily comes to us from Fr Klaus Kuhne, Rector of St Andrew's Parish, Mondeor, Johannesburg

THE MESSAGE OF THE ANGELS



Luke 2:1-20

- Charlemagne and William the Conqueror, who both probably woke up on Christmas Day and wished themselves happy birthday, were crowned on Christmas Day.
- Closer to our time, as part of 1968's Apollo 8 mission, astronauts Frank Borman, Jim Lovell and William Anders spent the night before Christmas orbiting the moon. The three astronauts sent out a broadcast when they entered the moon's orbit on Christmas Eve. As viewers were shown pictures of the moon and Earth, Borman, Lovell and Anders read the opening lines from Genesis and ended with "Merry Christmas, and God bless all of you, all of you on the good Earth."
- Khrushchev, in a speech at the plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU about the state's anti-religion campaign, saying "Gagarin flew into space, but didn't see any god there." Shame, as they say.

On that first Christmas Day, God incarnate, was first seen by some very ordinary people: no royalty, no media, but by his parents and the shepherds (King David, Jesus' illustrious ancestor, started his working life as a shepherd) and a large contingent of singing angels. The Wise Men, the scientists of their day, would come later to worship him and bring gifts. Wise men and women still seek and find him today.

Nothing has changed. The message of that first

Christmas Day remains fresh and compelling and the message of the angels still holds true:

*"Fear not, for behold, I bring you **good news of great joy that will be for all the people.** 11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David **a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.** 12 And this will be a **sign** for you: you will find **a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.**" And "**Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!**"*

The First Letter of John teaches that "Perfect love, casts out fear." Jesus is that perfect love who does just that, very welcome good news for us in these challenging times! With the good news, comes great joy, not just for Christians but for everyone. For Jesus comes to seek and to save humanity: I am so proud my faith is not a sort of exclusive club for theological experts belonging to a self-righteous little sect. Jesus makes himself available to all who are willing to accept him.

Jesus, the angels remind us, is Lord: he is so much bigger than kings like Charlemagne or William or Caesar Augustus and Quirinius and so-called professors of theology who fancy their brains and thoughts are far, far superior to silly old believers like St Francis, Pope John Paul 11 or CS Lewis.

The sign is not like one of those boastful North Korean military parades, but a baby in his nappy. Reminding us how God conquers our hearts and minds not by force or with cunning argument, but in great humility and is willing to be vulnerable before us as an act of love.

I trust our lives can bring glory to God who didn't refuse to budge from heaven but came down to our level and invites us to be part of his kingdom and his family.

May our lives give glory to God as we share the Good News that God loved us enough to become one of us and share his divinity and his humanity with us.

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



Archbishop Michael and Dalene, Bishop Wellington and Benita, Bishop Andrew Mukuyamba (Lusaka), Archbishop Jacob Welbourne (Ghana) and all the Priests and Deacons of the Traditional Anglican Church in Africa, wish you a holy and blessed Christmas, and a safe and prosperous New Year! God bless you for your faithfulness!



The Advent Wreath on the Christmas Day



The Advent Wreath has four candles around the border and one white candle for Christmas.

The first candle symbolises HOPE, the second FATH, the third candle symbolises JOY (it is the pink candle) and the fourth candle symbolises PEACE. All these have already been lit.

Today we light the main candle, the CHRIST CANDLE. It is the white candle in the centre of the Wreath. Here is the prayer that is said as we light the candle:

Lord Jesus, you came to be light in our darkness.

Lord Jesus, you came to be peace in our conflicts.

Lord Jesus, you came to be joy in our sadness, and to bring your love in our fears.

Today we celebrate your birth, O Prince of Peace.

Thank you for your saving grace. Amen.

