



HOMILY by Father Robbie Low

The Nativity of the Lord-Vigil Mass-December 24th 2020

***Readings: Isaiah 62: 1-5, Psalm 88, Acts 13: 16-17. 22-25,
Matthew 1: 18-25***

A couple of weeks ago I was sitting in the Granary café at Wadebridge, the site of many patronal feasts at Michaelmas. The chirpy chef had served me up a stonking full English breakfast and I was chuffing my way through the gastronomic gloop of egg yolk and beans on a finger of split sausage and bacon.

In the background was the gentle rhythm of favourite musical offerings of Christmas past, Chas & Dave, Slade, Band Aid, Harry Belafonte etc etc.

As I was on my own there seemed no harm in singing along between mouthfuls and unencumbered by the otherwise compulsory oral diaper.

And then a line hit me like a train.....

As Harry's dulcet tones soothed the calypso over the airwaves I heard anew,

***Hark, now hear the angels sing, a new king born today
And man will live for evermore, because of Christmas Day.***

Wrap it up how you will, that is the astonishing message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, Lord of all worlds and Saviour of Mankind.

What we proclaim here, on the Feast of the Nativity, is shattering in its implications. The birth of a small child in a, humanly speaking, small town, in apparently inauspicious circumstances, to an oddly unmatched couple, in a cave or a shed is the game changer for human mortality.

We proclaim nothing less than the ultimate intervention of God in the fate of his creatures, you and me.

In this tiny scrap of humanity is infused ultimate divinity. In this passing fragment of time eternity comes to dwell and translates now into forever. In this frail mortal is suddenly realised the transfiguring energy of immortality.

What the Gospel declares is that the road to freedom, the highway to eternity passes through this portal of Our Lady and is realised in the person of Christ.

If we want to be inheritors of this transforming power, beneficiaries of the loving rescue of our Creator, children of the Eternal Father, then we have to be in Christ. St. Paul writes that ‘Christ in us is the hope of glory’. We have to be part of His Body, that is the Church. We have to be fed by His Body in the Blessed Sacraments. We have to love Him, long for Him, follow Him.

The Christmas season makes all that strangely accessible to both our minds and our hearts. In the domestic familiarity of the Holy Family, we can understand and associate with the child in the arms of Mary. God has become Man so that Man may become God – the apotheosis of Man.

The Mass of Christ is the glorious celebration of that intervention, that rescue from sin and death, that night, surrounded by angelic messengers, visited by the ordinary in the Shepherds, acknowledged by the wisdom and authority of the Magi, when the doom laden destiny of Man was overturned and the eternal future beckons.

On board or too busy? Come to the manger. Kneel. Open your heart.

With the angels proclaim the glory.

With the shepherds, tell of the good news of Christ in your hometown.

With the Magi present your gifts to Jesus and return home changed and by a different way.