

San Fernando Cathedral – December 24, 2020

RDGS (Night) 14: Is 9:1-6 Ps 96:1-3, 11-13 Ti 2:11-14 Lk 2:1-14

My dear sisters and brothers, this is the night in which we gather to celebrate with great joy the birth of our Savior. We marvel at God's intervention in history to redeem our world; we acknowledge how God has come to dwell among us and to offer us the gift of grace and eternal life. We rejoice as we remember that the Lord humbled Himself in ways our mind cannot even grasp, by entering the world of creatures, simply as one of us.

The first reading from the prophet Isaiah speaks to us about the Christ as the light entering the world to dispel all darkness. The prophet knows that the terrifying darkness that humanity experiences is not the mere absence of physical light, it is rather the consequence of carrying a heavy burden which makes our souls weary. He is able to visualize the gift of redemption as God intervening to destroy that which has become our enemy, that which makes our life miserable and prompt to fall into despair.

His prophecy of the Lord who saves cannot be grasped by a single image or title, and he then needs to give us a list of the attributes that the Savior will show. He describes him as: "Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace." These attributes are universal and somehow eternal. Every generation of our human family needs to recognize how much we need God to do all these things for us. This year of 2020 is coming to an end. And it is a year that has challenged all of us in different ways. Many of us have experienced doubt and fear, isolation and turmoil. Probably this

year more than others before, we recognize our own limitations and our need of being saved.

We need to recognize in Jesus Christ the wonder-counselor, who can impart wisdom to our hearts when so many difficult decisions need to be made. We recognize our need to meet God as a Hero who can overcome the enemies that have made this pandemic a problem for so many good human hearts. We need to experience God as an ever ending Father, who provides care and sustenance for all of His Children. And we need to experience that peace, that only the Great Prince of Peace can give us. This is a peace that the world does not understand, that dwells in the human heart as calmness in the midst of the storm.

To celebrate Christmas after all we have experience will open our life to hope, recognizing that Christ offers once again to all of us the opportunity of experiencing all the gifts that only He can bring to us. Referring to this reading, Pope Francis said: “This prophecy of Isaiah never ceases to touch us, especially when we hear it proclaimed in the liturgy of Christmas Night. This is not simply an emotional or sentimental matter. It moves us because it states the deep reality of what we are: a people who walk, and all around us – and within us as well – there is darkness and light.”

My dear sisters and brothers, may we find in Christ, first of all, the strength to continue our walk. And then may we also be open to receive the light that once again has been offered to us. May our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of the saving God, inspire us to be docile to God’s willingness to show his strength, power, and joy. With this in our hearts, we will truly and boldly say: Merry Christmas!