

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE OF HIS EXCELLENCY ARCHBISHOP CHRISTOPHE PIERRE
APOSTOLIC NUNCIO TO THE UNITED STATES
ETERNAL WORD TELEVISION NETWORK, CHRISTMAS 2021

My Dear Friends in Christ,

As the Apostolic Nuncio, in the name of the Holy Father, I wish you and your families a blessed and peace-filled Christmas. I express the personal closeness and spiritual affection of Pope Francis, assuring you of his prayers during this holy and joyful season. Christmas is not just one day; it is a whole season, which begins with the Birth of Jesus and concludes with His Baptism.

This year, I would like to start with Jesus' Baptism. In Saint John's Gospel, John the Baptist witnesses to the coming of the Messiah, testifying that he saw the Spirit descend upon Jesus. He pointed out Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. This is why God sent His Son: to be our Redeemer. John's disciples, Andrew and John, began to follow Jesus. At some point, Jesus turned to them and asked: *What are you looking for?*

What were they looking for? Perhaps, they were in search of the Messiah. If they were already followers of John, perhaps they were seeking God, the one who alone satisfies the human heart. They were searching for God. Now God manifested Himself in the flesh. *The Word became Flesh and made His dwelling among us.* He did not merely appear human. He was human, true God and true man. After one day with Jesus, Andrew told his brother Simon, *"We have found the Messiah!"* He had found what he was looking for. Rewinding from the Lord's Baptism is the Epiphany, which means manifestation. While the Lord's Baptism manifests that He is the Beloved Son of the Father, the journey of the Magi from the East also represents a search or quest. Hearing the prophecy - *"A star shall come forth out of Jacob and a scepter shall rise out of Israel"* - they decided to explore this promise. Their restless hearts were not satisfied with the merely natural; they longed for the fulfillment of their hearts' desires. They were in search of God.

Attentive to God's signs, they were also courageous in setting off, with uncertainty, to find this newborn King. The magi were on a quest for truth itself. Following the star, they were captivated with wonder at discovering the Child and recognizing Him as the One they were searching for on both their outward and their inward journey. They followed the star but encountered, *the true Light which enlightens every man.*

Going back still further, we consider the shepherds. Although viewed with suspicion due to their poverty, the shepherds had real hopes and desires when the angel appeared to them with a great announcement - *"Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will come to all people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."*

The Prophet Isaiah had foretold: *"For a child is born to us, a son is given us; upon his shoulder dominion rests."* God did not come in power and majesty, but He came as a Child. What were the shepherds looking for? They were seeking the Child. When they eventually found Him, they felt valued and could carry on in hope and joy. This was the Presence of God in the Flesh. This Child, whom Isaiah had called *"Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace"*, was the fulfillment of their dreams. They had found the Messiah.

They were filled with joy. The burdens of their lives dissipated. They went home rejoicing. That the shepherds saw Mary indicates that God did not merely pretend to be a man; rather, the Child had a human mother. He was truly one of us and redeemed us in the flesh. *The Word was made Flesh and made His dwelling among us.* His Presence remains with us in the Church.

This Christmas I propose a question to you and your families: *What are you looking for?* True joy, hope, the fulfillment of our desires is not found in a box, nicely wrapped. It is found in the Divine Majesty, enrobed in flesh, in the face of a Child. It is my prayer that you and your families may discover and love this Child, *born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.*" May He bring you the gift of His Peace. Merry Christmas!