

IF THEY ONLY HAD KNOWN!

In 1798, a man went to the front desk of the finest hotel in Baltimore and asked if he could have a room for the evening. He was dirty and disheveled; he looked like a farmer who had just come in from working in his fields. The manager instantly decided that this was not the type of person that should be staying in his elegant establishment. He lied to the man, telling him there were no rooms available. Imagine the manager's shock when a co-worker told him that "peasant" was Thomas Jefferson, the Vice President of the United States at the time — a man whose first love was farming. It is said that the hotel manager never quite got over his great blunder, and that he would constantly lament: "If only I had known it was the Vice President. I would have given him our finest room."

As we celebrate the Birth of Jesus Christ, one of the intriguing aspects of the Christmas Story is that somehow,

no one had room for Joseph and Mary as the time for her delivery drew near. After the fact, the innkeepers who rejected them probably echoed the words of the Baltimore hotel manager: "If we only knew that the Baby about to be born was the Messiah. We would have found room for Him."

As Christ went about doing His chosen work, many others joined the ranks of the Bethlehem innkeepers and failed to find room for Him in their lives and failed to recognize Who He was. Christ's ministry wasn't terribly successful. The world had no use for Him until it was crystal-clear that He was the Son of God.

We certainly should know Him, and we certainly should find room for Him in our lives. Our lives must be centered on Him, for He came into the world for our sake, and for the sake of our salvation. This is His gift to us. Our gift to Him must be our unending love.

The Orthodox Weekly Bulletin

Vestal, Cliffwood, New Jersey



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**THE NATIVITY
OF OUR LORD**

Church Calendar: Check the Link. <http://www.stgeorgevicksburg.org/service.html>

SAINT GEORGE ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH

The Very Rev. Father Gabriel Karam, Pastor

Saturday Great Vespers 5:30 p.m. - Sunday Orthros 9:15 a.m.

Divine Liturgy 10:30 a.m. - Confessions: By Appointment

DIVINE LITURGY VARIABLES TONE 3/ EOTHINON 6

SUNDAY DECEMBER 21, 2025

SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST GENEALOGY)

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE THREE

Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad, for the Lord hath done a mighty act with His own arm. He hath trampled down death by death, and become the first-born from the dead. He hath delivered us from the depths of Hades, granting the world the Great Mercy.

APOLYTIKION OF THE FOREFEAST OF THE NATIVITY IN TONE FOUR

Be thou ready, Bethlehem, Eden hath opened unto all. * Ephratha, prepare thyself, for now, behold, the Tree of Life * hath blossomed forth in the cave from the holy Virgin. * Her womb hath proved a true spiritual Paradise, * wherein the divine and saving Tree is found, * and as we eat thereof we shall all live, * and shall not die as did Adam. * For Christ is born now to raise the image that had fallen aforetime.

APOLYTIKION OF SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY IN TONE TWO

Great are the accomplishments of faith; for the three holy youths rejoiced in the fountain of flames as though at waters of rest. And the Prophet Daniel appeared a shepherd to the lions as though they were sheep. Wherefore, by their prayers, O Christ God, save our souls.

APOLYTIKION OF ST. GEORGE IN TONE FOUR

As deliver of Captives: And defender of the Poor, Healer of the Infirm, champion of Kings, Victorious Great Martyr George, Intercede with Christ our God for our souls' salvation.

KONTAKION OF PREPARATION OF CHRIST'S NATIVITY IN TONE THREE

On this day the Virgin cometh to the cave to give birth to * God the Word ineffably. * Who was before all the ages. * Dance for joy, O earth, on hearing * the gladsome tidings; * with the Angels and the shepherds now glorify Him * Who is willing to be gazed on * as a young Child Who * before the ages is God.

We Celebrate Today

On December 21 in the Holy Orthodox Church, we commemorate the **Virgin-martyr Juliana of Nicomedia; and Martyr Themistokles of Myra in Lycia**.

On this day, the Sunday before the Nativity of Christ, we have been enjoined by our holy and God-bearing Fathers to make commemoration of all them that from the beginning of time have been well-pleasing unto God, from Adam even unto Joseph the Betrothed of the Most Holy Theotokos, according to genealogy, as Luke the Evangelist hath recounted historically; and likewise for the Prophets and Prophetesses, especially of Daniel the Prophet and the three holy youths.

It is also known as the Sunday of the Holy Genealogy. We remember the aforementioned names, those in the Old Testament who were related to Christ by blood, and those who spoke of His Birth as a man. In the Divine Liturgy, we shall read of Jesus Christ's lineage from the Gospel

of Saint Matthew. In this way, the Church shows us that Christ truly became a man, taking on human nature. He was not a ghost, an apparition, a myth, a distant imagined god, or the abstract god of philosophers; such a god does not have a family tree. Our God is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He has flesh and blood, human ancestors—many of whom sinned greatly, but like David, also repented greatly. Yet, all of these righteous ones in every age had been well-pleasing to God because they loved Him. By taking on human nature, the Son of God became like us in all ways, in flesh and blood, in mind and soul, and in heart and will. He differed from us in only one way: He could not sin. Since we know that Christ's human nature remained sinless, He is also fully divine, and He shows us the way in which we can avoid sin, and so improve and transform our human nature. By their intercessions, O Christ God, have mercy upon us and save us. Amen. |

ANNOUNCEMENTS

+Healing & Recovery Fr. Paul Yerger. Fr. Leo. Deacon Terry. Kh. Janet Henderson. Joy Logue. Sue Thomas. Dolores Nesser. Rick Collins. George Michael Nasif. Lynne Abraham. Pam Smith. Irene Tzotzolas. Maha Habeeb. Michael Farris. Athena. Georgia. Andrea Simon. Chuck Abraham. Timmie Fedell. Alan Evans.

+Birthdays & Anniversaries Dec Charlene Davis, Kira Maida (21). Cynthia And Andy Freeny (28), Greg Angelo (31). Jan. Fr. Gabriel Karam, Tiffany Leese (1), Pat Thomas (5).

+The Nativity Lent: The period of the forefeast, Dec.20-25. When the traditional strict fasting is observed all days of the week.

+The Nativity Services Wednesday Dec.24th Royal Hours (Paramon) @ 9:30 am. Nativity Eve (Orthros & Divine Liturgy) starting @ 6:00 pm. Followed by Coffee, Refreshments and snacks.

+Keep in your prayers Our Catechumens, Cole Gary, Jacob Milliken & John Morgan Mcright. Who are preparing themselves for the Holy Sacrament of Baptism & Chrismation.

+Fulfill Your Donation Online or by check before the end of the year 2025, please. And fill your membership form for 2026.

+Giving back to the Community The Antiochian Men (A.MEN) will be hosting the Fourth appreciation dinner for first responders on Thursday, January 8th, 2026.

+General Assembly Meeting Sunday January 11, 2026 following the Liturgy. Potluck.

+The Annual Lebanese Dinner will be on Monday February 02 2026. Work and preparation will Start on January 8. Tickets will be available very soon.

The Fathers Teach

Wake up, O human being! For it was for you that God was made man. Rise up and realize it was all for you. Eternal death would have awaited you had He not been born in time. Never would you be freed from your sinful flesh had He not taken to Himself the likeness of sinful flesh. Everlasting would be your misery had He not performed this act of mercy. You would not have come to life again had He not come to die your death. You would have perished had He not come. St. Augustine of Hippo

DIVINE LITURGY DECEMBER 21, 2025

“DIVINE LITURGY OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM”

SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST (THE GENEALOGY)

THE EPISTLE

Blessed are Thou, O Lord, the God of our fathers.

For Thou art justified in all that Thou hast done for us.

The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews. (11:9-10, 32-40)

Brethren, by faith Abraham sojourned in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets—who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, received promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, and put foreign armies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated—of whom the world was not worthy—wandering over deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

THE GOSPEL

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew. (1:1-25)

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Aram, and Aram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asa, and Asa the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amon, and Amon the father of Josiah, and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon. And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, Who is called

Christ. So, all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ were fourteen generations. Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call His Name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: “Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and His Name shall be called Emmanuel” (which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him; he took his wife, but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called His Name Jesus.

اليدان الصامتتان
بقلم المتروبوليت ساها (اسبر)

يذهلنني الصمت، الذي دخلت فيه إلى عالمنا الشقيّ، يا يسوعي الحلو.

أتينتا، يا سيدِي، بخفرٍ مهيب. لم تظهر بمجدٍ وعظمة. انعطفت علينا بجلالٍ خفِّ وسكون. ولدتَ، بالجسد، في ليلة هادئة، وفي مكان مفتر، لا يقيم البشر فيه. وما حضر ولا دتك رهط كبير من البشر.

شئتَ أن تخبر بضعة رعاة كانوا، في هدأة الليل، قد بدأوا يستريحون من عناء النهار. أرسلت ملائكتك لتبشرُهم "بفرح عظيم: ولد لكم مخلص هو المسيح ربّنا". وشجّعتهم بجمع ملائكةٍ يسبّحون قائلين: "المجد لله في الأعلى، وعلى الأرض السلام، وفي الناس المسرّة".

هل اخترتهم وحدهم، دون غيرهم، لأنّك تعرف أنّ بساطة حياتهم، تمنحهم القدرة على تمييز ألوهيتكم، وبالتالي قبول رسالتكم الخلاصية؟

قلتَ بصمتك، يا مسيحي، إنّ الصخب لا يُنتج حياةً، وإنّ الاكتفاء بالمظاهر، يزيد من المشاكل، ولا يحلّها.

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ما رافق الصمت ولا دتك فقط، بل أردته ملازماً لك، طوال السنوات التي قضيتها بيننا. أما أخفيت سرّك الماسبيانيّ، ولم تشا أن تكشفه إلا على الصليب؟!

وفي اجتراحك العجائب، أما اعتدت أن تطلب، ممّن تشفّفهم، عدم إذاعة خبر الشفاء، والاكتفاء بشكر الله؟!

ما طلبت شكرًا من أحد. ولا سعيت إلى مدح أو تمجيد.

حتّى قيامتك العظيمة، يا ربّ، تمتَ بصمت. ولم تترافق بالضجّة والضوضاء. حدثت زلزلةٌ ولم يشعر بها أحد. عرفنا بها من حاملات الطيب، اللواتي وجدن الحجر مدحرجاً عن باب القبر.

ولم تعرفك المجدلية، إلا عندما ناديتها باسمها، لأنها ظنّتك البستانى!

الصمت، يا سيدِي، لغةٌ لا يُعرفُها إلّا المتحرّرون من ضجيج أهواهم. إنّها لغة الدهر الآتي،
بحسب قول قدّيسك أصحّ السوري.

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تتنازل، وأنت الربُّ العليّ. تتّضع، وأنت الإله القدير. تتوارى في لحم ودم، وأنت قدّوس
القديسين !!

تفتقّر لتعزيزنا. تُخلّي ذاتك لتملأنا. تموت لتحيّزنا. توزّع ذاتك علينا لتغذّينا.

ولأنّك وحدك الحنان، خلّصتنا دونما جَبَّة. نعم، يا مسيحي، فالحنان وليد القلب الممتليء؛
والمليء لا يحتاج إلى الأضواء.

لو فُتنا بك كفاية، لما عدنا نطلب الحياة من عند غيرك، وكانت ذواتنا امتلأت من حضرتك،
وما شربنا بعدَ ماءً لا يروي.

لو أنّنا نرتّمي عند قدميك، في هذا العيد، لنرى إلى جمالك الفريد، لصار "النصيب الصالح"
حصّتنا.

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رأيتنا نرتع في الألم والشقاء، فنصبت خيمتك في حيننا، ولا تزال، لفتح لنا باب الحياة الحقة.
أتيتنا بالبساطة المطلقة، لتقول لنا، فعلاً لا قولاً فقط، إنّك أنت من وما نحتاجه.

فعلّمتنا، بمذودك الوضيع، أنّنا لا نجدك، إلّا إذا أقررت نفوتنا من كلّ مجد دنيويّ. كيف نعرف
قيمتك، ما لم نختبر أنّ "المال يخجل قرب فقرك أن يُلمّ؟!"

شدّدنا لكي لا نهرب من مواجهة أنفسنا، ولكي نقدمها لك، بما هي عليه، فيطهّرها صمتك،
ونشارك ملائكتك التسبيح.

قوّنا، لكي لا نهرب إلى ما ينسينا واقعنا، بل لنواجهه متسلّحين بقوّتك الناعمة، فجد الأمان
الذي نفتقدّه، ونتوق إلىه في الوقت ذاته.

كن معنا، يا يسوعي القدير والرقيق، لكي لا نلقي بأنفسنا في ضجيج الجسد، أو المال أو التعظّم، أو أيّ شيء من ضوضاء الدنيا الخّداعة

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ما جادلتَ ولا خاصمتَ ولا دخلتَ في مساجلات، لتبثتَ أنّك الحقّ. قلتَ فقط: "أنا الحقّ، أنا الطريق، أنا الحياة...". ومن صدقك اكتشف صدق ما قلته. أمّا نحن، أتباعك، فلنا أن نتوارى في ظلّ تواضعك، واثقين من قدرتك الفاعلة فينا!

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علّمنا، ربّي، في ميلادك هذا، أن نجثو ونصمت، لكي نمتّئ منك.

علّمنا، ربّي، أن نحدّق في فرقك الظاهر، فنخلع عنّا شهواتنا القاتلة، ونذوق فرح التحرّر من استعبادها لنا.

ربّي، امنح قلوبنا هدوءاً يغنيها عن بهرجات الدنيا، لتنعم بالأمان الحقيقى.

نفتقد في هذا العيد السلام. ألا سدّدت خطانا، ربّي، إلى طريقك الحقّ، حتى إذا اختبرنا سلامك، نستطيع، بنعمتك، أن نقله فعلاً لا كلاماً.

سجد الرعاة لك، وما بيدهم شيء، إلا فقرهم إليك. ألا ساعدتنا، ربّي، على أن نرمي ما تتمسّك أيدينا به، حينما نأتي إليك.

امنحنا الشجاعة، يا يسوعي، لنقتنع بأنّنا لا نقدر أن نفتح قلوبنا لك حقّاً، ما لم نأتِ إليك بيدين فارغتين.

Silent Hands

By His Eminence Metropolitan Saba (Isper)

I am struck by the silence in which You entered our wretched world, my sweet Jesus.

You came to us, my Lord, with awe-filled humility. You did not appear in glory and splendor. You turned toward us with a veiled majesty and stillness. You were born in the flesh on a quiet night, in a desolate place where no people dwell. And a great multitude of men was not present at Your birth.

You wished to tell a few shepherds who, in the stillness of the night, were beginning to rest from the day's toil. You sent Your angels to announce to them, with great joy, "Unto you is born a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." And You encouraged them with a multitude of angels singing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Did You choose them alone, above all others, because You knew that the simplicity of their lives would grant them the ability to discern Your divinity, and consequently, to accept Your message of salvation?

You said with Your silence, O Christ, that noise does not produce life, and that being satisfied with appearances increases problems, and does not solve them.

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Silence was not only at Your birth, but You willed it to be Your constant companion throughout the years You spent among us. Did You not conceal your Messianic mystery, choosing to reveal it only on the Cross?

And in performing miracles, did you not ask those whom You healed not to spread the news of their healing, but to simply thank God?

You asked no thanks from anyone. You sought neither praise nor glorification.

Even Your glorious Resurrection, O Lord, was accomplished in silence. It was not accompanied by clamor or noise. There was an earthquake, yet no one felt it. We learned of Your Rising from the women who brought spices, who found the stone rolled away from the tomb.

And Mary Magdalene did not recognize you until you called her by name, for she mistook You for the gardener!

Silence, my Lord, is a language understood only by those freed from the noise of their passions. It is the language of the age to come, as your saint, Isaac the Syrian, said.

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You deign to lower Yourself, though You are the Most High Lord. You become humble, though You are the Almighty God. You take on flesh and blood, though You are the Holy of Holies!

You become poor so that we may become rich. You empty Yourself so that we may be filled. You die so that we may live. You distribute Yourself to us so that we may be nourished.

And because You alone are the Compassionate One, You saved us without fanfare. Yes, O Christ, for compassion is born of a full heart, and the full heart needs no adornment.

If we were truly captivated by You, we would no longer seek life from anyone else, our very beings would be filled with Your presence, and we would never again drink water that does not quench our thirst.

If we were to prostrate ourselves at Your feet this feast day to behold Your unique beauty, then the “good portion” would be ours.

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You saw us floundering in pain and misery, so You pitched Your tent in our neighborhood, and it remains there, to open for us the door to true life.

You came to us in absolute simplicity to tell us, through action and not just words, that You are all we need.

You taught us, from your humble manger, that we cannot find You unless our souls are emptied of all worldly glory. How can we know Your worth unless we experience that “money is ashamed to be gathered in the presence of your poverty?”

Strengthen us so that we do not run from confronting ourselves, but rather that we may present ourselves to You as we are, so that Your silence may purify us, and we may join Your angels in praise.

Strengthen us so that we do not flee to what makes us forget our reality, but rather face it armed with Your gentle strength, so that we may find the security we lack and yearn for at the same time.

Be with us, O Almighty and Compassionate Jesus, so that we may not throw ourselves into the noise of the flesh, or money, or pride, or any of the deceptive noises of this world.

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You neither argued nor disputed nor engaged in debates to prove that You are the truth. You simply said, "I am the truth, I am the way, I am the life." And those who believed You discovered the truth of what You said. As for us, Your followers, it is ours to take refuge in the shadow of Your humility, confident in Your power at work within us.

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Teach us, O Lord, on this day of Your birth, to kneel and be silent, so that we may be filled with You.

Teach us, O Lord, to gaze upon Your manifest poverty, so that we may cast off our deadly desires and taste the joy of liberation from enslavement to them.

Grant, O Lord, our hearts a tranquility that makes them independent of the allurements of this world, so that they may find true peace.

We yearn for peace on this feast day. O Lord, guide our steps to Your true path, so that when we experience Your peace, we may, by Your grace, share it in deed, not just in word.

The shepherds bowed down to You, possessing nothing but their need for You. O Lord, help us to cast aside to whatever we cling when we come to You.

Grant us the courage, O Jesus, to accept that we cannot truly open our hearts to You unless we come to You with empty hands.

Les mains silencieuses

Par Son Éminence Métropolite Saba (Isper)

Le silence par lequel le Christ est entré dans notre monde éprouvé suscite l'émerveillement.

Il est venu sans éclat ni ostentation, dans une majesté discrète et retenue. Il ne s'est pas manifesté dans la gloire et la grandeur, mais s'est tourné vers l'humanité dans une dignité humble et un profond recueillement. Il est né selon la chair, en une nuit paisible, dans un lieu désert, inhabité, et sa naissance n'a pas été entourée d'une multitude d'hommes.

Il a voulu en confier l'annonce à quelques bergers qui, dans le calme de la nuit, commençaient à se reposer de la fatigue du jour. À eux, il a envoyé ses anges pour annoncer « une grande joie : il vous est né un Sauveur, le Christ Seigneur ». Puis il les a affermis par la multitude des anges chantant : « Gloire à Dieu au plus haut des cieux, et sur la terre la paix, et parmi les hommes la bienveillance. »

Ce choix des bergers n'est pas fortuit. Leur vie simple leur donnait la capacité de discerner la divinité du Christ et, par conséquent, d'accueillir son message de salut.

Par le silence de sa venue, le Christ enseigne que le vacarme n'engendre pas la vie, et que l'attachement aux apparences ne fait qu'augmenter les problèmes sans jamais les résoudre.

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Le silence n'a pas seulement accompagné la naissance du Seigneur ; il a marqué toute sa présence parmi les hommes. Le Christ a caché son mystère messianique et n'a voulu le révéler pleinement que sur la Croix.

Même lorsqu'il accomplissait des miracles, il demandait souvent à ceux qu'il guérissait de ne pas en divulguer la nouvelle, mais de se contenter de rendre grâce à Dieu.

Il n'a recherché ni reconnaissance, ni louange, ni glorification.

La Résurrection elle-même, pourtant sommet de l'économie du salut, s'est accomplie dans le silence. Elle n'a été accompagnée ni de tumulte ni de clamour. Un tremblement de terre eut lieu sans que personne ne le perçoive. Ce sont les femmes

porteuses de myrrhe qui en furent les premières témoins, lorsqu'elles trouvèrent la pierre roulée loin de l'entrée du tombeau.

Quant à Marie-Madeleine, elle ne reconnut le Seigneur que lorsqu'il l'appela par son nom, l'ayant d'abord pris pour le jardinier.

Le silence, selon les paroles de saint Isaac le Syrien, est un langage que seuls connaissent ceux qui se sont libérés du bruit de leurs passions ; il est la langue du siècle à venir.

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Ce silence révèle le mystère de l'abaissement divin. Le Seigneur Très-Haut s'abaisse ; le Dieu Tout-Puissant s'humilie ; le Saint des saints se cache dans la chair et le sang.

Il s'appauvrit pour enrichir, se vide pour combler, meurt pour faire vivre, et se donne pour nourrir.

Parce qu'il est le seul véritablement plein de tendresse, le Christ a accompli le salut sans éclat ni agitation. La tendresse naît d'un cœur comblé, et celui qui est comblé n'a pas besoin des projecteurs.

Si l'homme était suffisamment saisi par le Christ, il ne chercherait plus la vie ailleurs que chez lui. Son être serait rempli de la présence divine et il ne boirait plus une eau qui ne désaltère pas.

Si, en cette fête, il se prosternait pour contempler la beauté unique du Christ, la « bonne part » deviendrait son héritage.

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Voyant l'humanité livrée à la souffrance et à la misère, le Christ a dressé sa tente au milieu d'elle, et il y demeure encore, ouvrant la porte de la vie véritable.

Il est venu dans une simplicité absolue, disant par ses actes — et non par des paroles seulement — qu'il est Celui dont l'homme a besoin, et tout ce dont il a besoin.

La crèche humble enseigne que l'on ne rencontre le Christ que lorsque l'âme se dépouille de toute gloire mondaine. La valeur du Christ ne peut être reconnue que lorsque l'on fait l'expérience de la pauvreté devant laquelle la richesse elle-même se trouve confondue.

Cette rencontre appelle à ne pas fuir la confrontation avec soi-même, mais à se présenter devant Dieu tel que l'on est, afin d'être purifié par son silence et de s'unir à la louange des anges.

Elle appelle aussi à ne pas se réfugier dans ce qui fait oublier la réalité, mais à l'affronter armé de la force douce du Christ, afin d'y trouver la sécurité à la fois manquante et désirée.

Sois avec nous, ô Jésus tout-puissant et compatissant, afin que nous ne nous laissions pas emporter par le bruit de la chair, par l'argent, par l'orgueil, ou par aucun des bruits trompeurs de ce monde.

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Le Christ n'a ni disputé, ni polémiqué, ni cherché à démontrer qu'il est la Vérité. Il a simplement déclaré : « Je suis la Vérité, le Chemin et la Vie. » Ceux qui ont cru en lui ont découvert la vérité de ses paroles. Quant à ses disciples, ils sont appelés à se tenir dans l'ombre de son humilité, confiants dans la puissance de la grâce divine agissant en eux.

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Seigneur, en ce jour de ta naissance, apprends-nous à nous agenouiller et à nous taire, afin que nous soyons comblés de ta présence.

Seigneur, apprends-nous à contempler ta pauvreté manifeste, afin que nous nous dépouillions de nos désirs mortels et goûtons la joie de la libération de leur emprise.

Seigneur, accorde à nos cœurs une tranquillité qui les rende indépendants des attractions de ce monde, afin qu'ils trouvent la vraie paix.

En ce jour de fête, nous aspirons à la paix. Seigneur, guide nos pas sur ton chemin, afin que, lorsque nous expérimentons ta paix, nous puissions, par ta grâce, la partager en actes et non seulement en paroles.

Les bergers se prosternèrent devant toi, ne possédant rien d'autre que leur besoin de toi. Seigneur, aide-nous à nous dépouiller de tout ce à quoi nous nous accrochons lorsque nous venons à toi.

Onne-nous le courage, ô Jésus, d'accepter que nous ne pouvons véritablement t'ouvrir nos cœurs qu'en venant à toi les mains vides.