

Homily for Christmas 2020

In April we were just a month into the Coronavirus social restrictions, and looking forward to a quick end of the pandemic. At that time, one Youtube contributor with the name “Tom Foolery” presented a nursery rhyme (in English) told in the future about the time of a great change. A father is tucking his son in for the night, and he hears, “Tell me the one about the Virus, then I will go to bed.”

And so he told the story of a world where people once took each other for granted, as well as wasted a lot of things in the world. Then everyone was forced to slow down. They had time to think about what was really important. Neighbor again looked after neighbor. First world citizens found they could do with less. And when the virus ended, people decided to retain the new habits they had learned. He called it, “The Great Realization.”

Our life has continued to be impacted past April, and June, and October, and will still be impacted for a great while. People still get sick and die. Businesses are slowed down, and paychecks are smaller. The home-bound and those in group homes can't see loved ones.

We have heard people talking first about “getting back to normal,” and then “The New Normal.” And political parties are arguing about having what is being termed a “Great Reset.”

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The Great Realization, the New Normal, the Great Reset. These phrases have been noticed by the Christian social media. In the past few weeks I have seen several Memes which had the image of the Nativity scene and the words, “The Real Great Reset.”

That is what we proclaim always, and we proclaim this night (day) and this season. Jesus is God's version of the Great Reset. He is the original, the best, the ongoing, and if we think about it – the only Great Reset. The Nativity – the Birth of Jesus, when the Incarnate Son (the Word Made Flesh) was first seen by human eyes.

Today we celebrate God's Great Reset. It is first and foremost a reset of our hearts. Christmas is an invitation to come to Him, who has come to us first.

Ultimately – God is about resetting our hearts. And that is an ongoing event. Every generation needs to hear of the Incarnation, of God's Great Reset. But it is not just about every generation.

Like Christmas gifts. Every year there is a new crop of seniors in high school or college who are getting basic pots, pans, hammers and screw drivers as they prepare to head out on their own.

In the same way – every year there is someone who might finally be noticing for the first time that God the Son has married Himself to creation, and particularly humanity, for all time and for eternity. The Word has been made flesh. Every year, even if they have gone to Church all their lives, they might just now be realizing this great event – this Great Reset.

And of course, each of us needs the liturgical year to remind us of this regularly – often daily. God Loves Us This Much. And Even More.

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The image of a great realization or reset or new normal in the case of our faith does not mean starting over as if everything before has been erased. If that were the case, we would learn nothing. And we would have no reason to be grateful.

We are not starting a video game over again. Rather, we are given a fresh start; with the knowledge that it is a new chance – given to us by One who loves us.

That newness is refreshing and enlivening. This newness is recalled in the first verse of Psalm 96, which is used in our Mass during the night, and Psalm 98, which is used in the Mass at Dawn. In this opening verse, we pray, “Sing to the LORD a new song.”

The Song we sing is ever new. The song we sing is to the God who willingly gives us life newly cleansed from sin whenever we ask.

There is a reason our faith, our message, is called the Gospel. As we have are told so often, “Gospel” means “Good News.” The message – ever ancient, is ever new.

It is new in the ears that hear it for the first time.

It is new in the hearts that finally understand.

It is new to a worn out world that has tried everything else.

And the invitation we celebrate today is that in Him we are born anew. God even comes to us as a newborn child. Jesus is God! It is the Incarnation. In Him, heaven and earth meet.

In Jesus will always be the newness of: the Great Realization; the New Normal; the True Great Reset.

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