



HOMILY by Father Robbie Low

## **Christmas Eve**

### ***Why are we here?***

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

Why are we here?

That is a profound existential question as well as a very simple one about our presence here tonight.

Why does this night above all nights draw us to the mystery of worship, to a sense of solidarity with one another and a deep longing to be in touch with the very secret at the heart of the universe?

Our children appear in tea towels and tinsel, dressing gowns and crowns. We are moved – not because of their Oscar winning performances or our own tendency to sentimentalise salvation – but because, in their simplicity and innocence the children lay before us the signs and symbols of the Incarnation that have echoed down the millennia and draw us close to the heart of God. They incarnate the truth.

We want to open our hearts and our lives, like Mary, to the transforming will of God. We want to make the long journey to Bethlehem. We want

to stand on the sheep strewn hillside under a night of crystal stars and see the powers of Heaven descend in the Angelic Host and hear the proclamation of the deepest hopes of Man fulfilled.

With them we will sing the Gloria in Excelsis in our Mass.

We will run to the stable and kneel before the God of All who, in His great love, has entrusted Himself to our humanity and lays in the arms of His Blessed Mother and ours. Having worshipped the Messiah, having known the truth, having heard and seen the sky borne angelic heralds of the Good News, with whom we will join our solemn adoration at the Sanctus, we cannot but run into the streets of Bethlehem or Bodmin and tell what we now know.

The Saviour of the world has come. The Gates of Eden that closed behind fallen man are now open. The highway to the Holy City, the eternal Jerusalem, is now open. The whirling and flaming sword of the Cherubim that kept us out of the Presence has been replaced by the road home. It leads via the manger to the hill of the Calvary and through the miracle and mystery of the Third Day.

But it begins here. It begins here, kneeling before the Lord of Glory who has condescended to share our humanity. It begins here with our hearts opened, perhaps by our children reminding us of the days before we became too complicated for our own good. The Christ child points to the lost child in us, the child who knew, beyond peradventure, the love of Our Father, the tenderness of our Blessed Mother.

It begins here with the simple prayers of love and thanksgiving, the Eucharistic prayer at the heart of the Mass, praising God, asking for His Grace that, in the words of the Deacon's dismissal, we might 'glorify Him by our lives'.

Why are we here? We are here for family. We are here for friendship. We are here for Faith.

But we are here above all to reconnect, to be in Communion, with our origin and our end. We are here because He came to save us from sin and death and refashion our perishable dust into sons and daughters of the Most High.

We are here as children of God, hearts open, eyes wide with longing and hope and expectation, the long Advent journey of our souls now come to kneel before the babe in the arms of Mary.

And, having received Him, we are to go out into the dark night of this fallen world and tell to the lost and the strayed the Good News and where they may find Him and kneel in penitence and gratitude and wonder and begin to walk, with us, in joyful pilgrimage on the long road home to glory.