

Homily Christmas day 2020

A light that shines in the dark: this is the Good News of Christmas.

The dark, the darkness: we all have faced and witnessed a lot of darkness over these last months: not being able to meet friends and loved ones, sickness and death, being locked down and locked in, hundreds of lorry drivers, for days stuck in their lorries, hoping to go home for Christmas, a nearly failed trade agreement etc. So much darkness. And at times we may even have wondered: Where is the light? Where is God? Has God abandoned us?

The reading from the prophet Isaiah was addressed to the people in exile in Babylon; after 70 years in exile, they too may have asked the same question: Has God abandoned us? Today the messenger is bringing them Good News, news of peace and salvation: God has not abandoned you, God is King and is going to intervene. You will be able to return home.

The Good News in the gospel is even more dramatic: God has not abandoned us, but he has come to be with us, he has come to save us.

Saint John writes: *The Word was made flesh and he lived among us.* The word of God, the wisdom of God, which was with God since the beginning, has become someone, a human person, in the womb of Mary, Jesus.

This is the good news of Christmas: we are not alone, we are not left to ourselves in the darkness of the world, God is showing us his love, and has made himself into a gift to us, Jesus.

Jesus has come to be with us and to save us from the darkness! He is the light that shines in the darkness. He is the light born today in our hearts. His light is not overpowering and does not blind us, his light is gentle, his light does not scorch but brings warmth and comfort to our hearts, the light of Jesus gives hope and leads us forward out of darkness.

This week I read a message on my phone saying: *each of us is an innkeeper who decides if there is room for Jesus.* Let us welcome Jesus,

let us make room for him in our hearts. And let us welcome Jesus in each other and overcome the barriers that divide us.

To welcome Jesus, to welcome the light also means to choose light, rather than darkness. To choose service rather than status, to choose gratitude rather than jealousy, to choose to listen rather than to command, to choose hope rather than despair, and trust rather than mistrust.

If we do that, we will be bearers of light, and be the light of Jesus in the world.

Ferdinand Van Campen