

Nativity of the Lord - Mass During the Day  
December 25, 2018  
Fr. Rick Lorenz

## Reflection

When I was young, my favourite presents were educational. A Meccano set, an electronics project from Heathkit or Radio Shack; a chemistry set. One year I got a microscope. Something that looked like dust within the slide was revealed to be a tiny plant or animal, with marvelous beauty and complexity. Curved glass bending light brought silent discovery. But the best thing ever was a telescope that my uncle made by hand: a Newtonian 4.5" reflector. When I saw it Christmas morning, I approached it with awe wondering who it was for. I was astounded to see my name on it. It brought the heavens close. I spent hours in the backyard using it to look at the moon. The psalm says "O sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvellous things." So I will tell you something about the moon. Its apparent diameter matches that of the sun. It's just the right size and the right distance from the earth. It sometimes blocks the sun - exactly - giving a solar eclipse. "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it."

We heard last night about the shepherds. They saw the same stars as me, and were probably equally satisfied by the grandeur. But then they saw something more. "An Angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them." No instrument was needed to resolve the image, no great wisdom to understand the message.

Is 52:7-10  
Ps 98  
Heb 1:1-6  
Jn 1:1-18

The Angel brought "good news of great joy for all the people...a Saviour, who is the Christ, the Lord." The shepherds saw the mystery that is revealed by today's Gospel: "The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world."

Like them, we need "to open our hearts to the true light, Jesus Christ. He is the light that can illumine life and turn our darkness into light; the light of goodness that conquers evil; the light of the love that overcomes hatred; the light of the life that triumphs over death; the divine light that turns everything and everyone into light. He is the light of our God: poor and rich, merciful and just, present and hidden, small and great."

I spoke of a microscope that made small things great, and a telescope that made great things near. St. Macarius the Great wrote this about Christmas 1700 years ago: "God makes himself little! The inaccessible and uncreated One, in his infinite and ineffable goodness, has taken a body and made himself little. In his goodness, he descends from his glory. No one in the heavens or on earth can grasp the greatness of God, and no one in the heavens or on earth can grasp how God makes himself poor and little for the poor and little. As incomprehensible is his grandeur, so too is his littleness."

The Eucharist reminds us of his littleness. We see him just as the shepherds saw him in Bethlehem. We treasure him in our hands, just as Mary treasured the infant Jesus.

We receive him in faith, and he transforms us. "To all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God."

Christmas is the feast of the "great God who makes himself little, and in his littleness does not cease to be great." In this we find the tender love of God, "the victory of our God," certain that his light will continue to shine.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ncregister.com/blog/edward-pentin/pope-francis-2018-christmas-address-to-the-roman-curia>. Accessed 24 December 2018.