

MERCY CHRISTMAS

2015-12-25 kl. 18.00

John 1:1-18

Juldagen / Nativity of the Lord

”Merciful like the Father” is the motto of this Year of Mercy. The word *mercy* comes from Latin *miser cordia*, which combines the word *miser* (poor) and *cor* (heart). Mercy is the virtue of having a heart for the poor. Christmas is the feast of mercy, because God the Father showed us his absolute mercy. He looked with love upon us poor human beings. He showed us his boundless compassion in the nativity of the Lord. He sent the divine Word to us as *the light that shines in the darkness*, as the message of grace and charity. And this message was more than a prophecy or a revelation; it was a living person, our brother Jesus. *The Word was made flesh, he lived among us, and we saw his glory, the glory that is his as the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.* The little child in the manger is the visible mercy of God. A season greeting of these days is “Merry Christmas!” Let us change it with one letter and say “Mercy Christmas!”

The mercy of God was given to us in Jesus Christ, but people did not receive him. Pope Benedict XVI said in a sermon about the gospel of today – and I quote him, because he can say it far better than me:

Saint John, in his gospel, went to the heart of the matter: “He came to his own home, and his own people received him not”.

- *This refers first and foremost to **Bethlehem**: the Son of David comes to his own city, but has to be born in a stable, because there is no room for him at the inn.*
- *Then it refers to **Israel**: the one who is sent comes among his own, but they do not want him.*
- *And truly, it refers to all **mankind**: he through whom the world was made, the primordial Creator-Word, enters into the world, but he is not listened to, he is not received.*
- *These words refer ultimately to **us**, to each individual and to society as a whole. Do we have time for our neighbour who is in need of a word from us, from me, or in need of my affection? Do we have time and space for God? Can he enter into our lives? Does he find a room in us, or have we occupied all the available space in our thoughts, our actions, our lives for ourselves?*

So long Pope Benedict.

God the Father offers his mercy to us. We have to understand and accept his mercy, when we celebrate the Nativity of the Lord. And as a consequence, we have to be merciful to others – “merciful like the Father”.