

Bringing Things to Fulfillment

On a night like many others... in a place like many others... God became incarnate so as to fulfill his plan for creation. On an ordinary day. In an ordinary place. Frankly speaking, everyone should have been a little more attentive: the prophets had already foretold that the Davidic

dynasty and the oracles concerning the Chosen People would be realized in Bethlehem. But you know how it is: there had been so many prophecies down the ages—who honestly cared anymore? But upon closer consideration, it is clear that the time was ripe. It had been quite a while since there had been a prophet in Jerusalem (leaving aside the small detail that almost all of them had come to a brutal end). Among the Jews, there was a strong feeling in the air that they lacked the leader they needed to unite them to cast out the domineering Romans once and for all. The air was also charged with powerful yearnings for the coming of the Messiah. Yet on that holy night it seems as if no one noticed what was going on. Our small and defenseless Savior was born out of the sight of curious eyes.

The salvation of humanity would be brought to fulfillment in this way. Strange, isn't it? As a matter of fact, no, it isn't. Look, in the darkness, some figures are timidly approaching the grotto: angels and shepherds..... True, there aren't many of the latter, but at least there are some who are ready to seize the moment, thank goodness!

Karl Rahner was right to say that the important experiences of life are a grace of God, but he also said that more often than not these graces are granted only to those who are ready to receive them. Once this newborn Child had grown to adulthood, he would warn his disciples to “stay alert” just before bringing about our salvation by way of the cross.

He says the same thing to us on this holy night, regardless of the time and place in which we live. Let us be alert because we have been visited by the grace of God. The “fullness of time” has arrived for us too....

There, in the distance—can you too see what is happening?



Prayer

Tonight I look back with nostalgia
on the past that was
and that will never come again.
How many opportunities lost!
How many graces ignored!
In the darkness and silence,
I also think of the present
and of what is to come.
Holy Child, give me the eyes
to see you passing by
and the ears to recognize
the time you will come to me
so that my destiny will be fulfilled in you.
Amen.

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