



A meditation based on Hebrews 10:5-10

He takes away the first to establish the second. (Hebrews 10:9)

Here we are, just two days before Christmas, and the Scripture readings at Mass are still telling us about all the new things that Jesus' birth has brought about. Take today's second reading. The author of Hebrews tells us that Jesus came to take away one thing - "the first" - and establish something new - "the second" (Hebrews 10:9). What are these two?

The "first" is the entire system of "sacrifices and offerings" that took place in the Jewish Temple (Hebrews 10:8). The time had come to end the practice of offering up bulls and goats in atonement for sin. In place of these sacrifices, Jesus established the "second" thing: "Behold, I come to do your will" (Hebrews 10:9). He replaced countless sacrifices with his own heart of trust and obedience.

God doesn't need our sacrifices. We don't have to convince him to love us. We don't have to prove ourselves to him by giving things up or by working ourselves to death. Of course, he delights in seeing his children making sacrifices for the sake of his Church, but his love doesn't depend on it. It's not something we earn. It's something we receive as a generous gift - just as we receive any gift sitting under our Christmas tree.

Of course, our sacrifices do please the Lord - especially the sacrifices we make for our families and for the poor. But Christmas is about Jesus' love, not our efforts. It's about his generosity, not our hard work. Instead of demanding sacrifices from us, Jesus did the exact opposite: he sacrificed himself for us by becoming a man. Instead of abandoning us because of our sin, he came closer to us so that he could redeem us. Not by our sacrifices. Not by our suffering. But by his love.

There are just two days left. Jesus is about to do a new thing all over again. Fix your eyes on him. Let him reveal this new thing to you - the love that saves and the obedience that sanctifies.

TODAY'S OTHER READINGS

Micah 5:1-4

Psalm 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19

Luke 1:39-45

Pray...

"Jesus, thank you for your love. Thank you for your sacrifice. Thank you for doing your Father's will"

Sunday, 23rd December 2018



The 4th Sunday of Advent symbolizes Peace with the "Angel's Candle" reminding us of the message of the angels:

"Peace on Earth, Good Will Toward Men."

Luke 1:26-38

This Gospel reading, often called the Annunciation, tells how Mary found out she was going to be the Mother of Jesus. Mary did not understand what Gabriel explained to her, but because of her love and faith she accepted, saying, "May it be done to me..."

Do you think it was hard for Mary to say yes? When do you say yes to God?

[Listen to Pentantonix's version of "Mary Did You Know?"](#)

