

Bible reading and devotional:

And she gave birth to her firstborn son. (Luke 2:7)

Anytime a baby is born, a true miracle occurs. It is hard to grasp how fast the baby has developed during the nine months in the mother's womb. Now there are complex organs. The child is able to breath, to cry, to move, to hear, to see, to taste, and do so much more. The birth of a child – truly a miracle!

However, this miracle does not happen without sacrifice and pain. As long as the child was in the womb, the mother provided everything for it. Only mothers know the pain of childbirth. There are dangers involved for them. Certainly, no one can express his gratitude towards his own mother enough, even if only regarding these nine months.

When the Son of God came down from heaven in order to become a human being, he first became an unborn baby. He did not skip this part. God did not put him on this earth as a „finished“ adult. Jesus, too, developed in his mother's womb. As true man, he had to learn everything just like we have to.

God also did not give Mary an exemption from pain and suffering, when he became man. She not only received the message of the angel in faith and therefore believed that she as virgin would bear him. Nine months long she provided for him through the umbilical cord. She had to endure the same pain of childbirth as every other mother has to. That's why she is duly honored in the Christian church, although we should only invoke and pray to her son, Jesus Christ.

God humbles himself this much. He comes wonderfully close to us. He shares in our fate, in our experience to such a high degree. Every newborn is a reminder that God's Son came to us as such a baby. That's what the Christian Church celebrates every Divine Service, particularly during the Christmas season.

Quote from a Church Father: Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, Sermon 185

„That day, Christmas, is called the birthday of the Lord on which the Wisdom of God manifested himself as a speechless Child and the Word of God wordlessly uttered the sound of a human voice. His divinity, although hidden, was revealed by heavenly witness to the Magi and was announced to the shepherds by angelic voices. With yearly ceremony, therefore, we celebrate this day which saw the fulfillment of the prophecy: “Truth is sprung out of the earth: and justice hath looked down from heaven” (Ps. 84:12). Truth, eternally existing in the bosom of the Father, has sprung from the earth so that he might exist also in the bosom of a mother. Truth, holding the world in place, has sprung from the earth so that he might be carried in the hands of a woman. Truth, incorruptibly nourishing the happiness of the angels, has sprung from the earth in order to be fed by human milk. Truth, whom the heavens cannot contain, has sprung from the earth so that he might be placed in a manger.

For whose benefit did such unparalleled greatness come in such lowliness? Certainly for no personal advantage, but definitely for our great good, if only we believe.

Arouse yourself, O man; for you God has become man. “Awake, sleeper, and arise from among the dead, and Christ will enlighten thee” (Eph. 5:14). For you, I repeat, God has become man. If he had not thus been born in time, you would have been dead for all eternity. Never would you have been freed from sinful flesh, if he had not taken upon himself the likeness of sinful flesh. Everlasting misery would have engulfed you, if he had not taken this merciful form. You would not have been restored to life, had he not submitted to your death; you would have fallen, had he not succored you; you would have perished, had he not come.

Let us joyfully celebrate the coming of our salvation and redemption. Let us celebrate the festal day on which the great and timeless One came from the great and timeless day to this brief span of our day.“

Bible Verse of Encouragement: Elijah said, "Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." (2 Kings 6:16)

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