

## DECEMBER 25 2025 FATHER ERNESTO DE CICCIO

For those of you who are following the readings in your missalette, you'll notice that we're doing the Mass at Dawn. I have a confession to make. Whenever I celebrate Christmas Day, it's Mass at Dawn well into the afternoon. For the simple reason that we need to hear the Christmas story. The reading about "the Word was made flesh" is beautiful too, of course. But Christmas comes once a year, and we so need to remember what happened 2,000 years ago in Bethlehem.

What a wonderful, wonderful thing happened. And there was no real sound and light show, except for the shepherds who got to see angels in the sky. It was very simple—this little baby, born in a stable, lying in a manger.

And Christmas has changed a lot since then, eh? What do we think of when we celebrate Christmas nowadays? Well, a couple of things that we tend to do, and I think they're appropriate after all these years.

Number one, we put out lights. I love when I go into certain neighbourhoods, and it seems like the whole street is covered with light. It's not by accident, it's not just meant to be pretty. It's a reminder that the light has come into the world. Christ is the light who leads us out of darkness.

And of course, Christmas is placed right at the time of the winter solstice, because now the days are gonna get longer. Light is starting to come. But it's an acknowledgement that we had been in darkness—not because of the shorter days, but throughout history humanity had experienced a certain separation from God. And even though we were not out looking for God, God came looking for us. So much so, that the Son of God would come down from heaven to share our life. What God

does that? Only a God who can love us so much could do that—give us His only Son, to be born, to grow up, to live, to suffer and die, and then to rise again.

So light is an important symbol that we use at Christmas time. And hopefully we keep those lights burning, maybe not on our balconies or in the trees in our house, but in our hearts. May we never allow the light to go out, 'cause we need to walk as children of the light.

The other thing that happens at Christmas, of course, is there is the giving of gifts. I love that tradition. Send them my way! No... But isn't it wonderful that people show signs of affection by giving a gift? That's great. It's not even the price that matters, it's the thought. Well, this is exactly what we celebrate at Christmas. Jesus has been given as a gift to all of us. There is no more precious gift. All we have to do is open our hearts and say, "Thank you, I want to receive this gift."

How ungrateful we can be sometimes. Even when somebody else gives us a gift, and we look at it and say, "Meh. Not the best." We can't say that to God. God, our God, has given us the best gift of all—the gift of His own Son. You can't buy that in a store. And this gift is one that lasts forever. So let's receive this gift with gratitude. And when we receive that gift, hopefully we're inspired to do the same. Because when we've been blessed in such a great way, then we should be inspired to open our hearts, as God opens His heart. We open our hearts to our brothers and sisters, 'cause they also need to receive the same gift—the gift of God's infinite mercy and love, made visible in the birth of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.