

Homily of the Incarnation 2011

We are the Catholic Church!

We are one billion people from almost every nation on the earth, we are the Catholic Church!

We are the largest charitable organization on the planet.

We are a world wide web for human dignity and justice. We are the Catholic Church!

Yes we have bad apples among us, and those apples have been poisonous, yet still we are the Holy Roman Apostolic Catholic Church!

We are and will be life's light in the murderous darkness of Camden.

We are and will be a prophetic voice of the 99% to the 1%, speaking truth to power.

We are and will be priests, prophets and royal persons among dogs eating dogs. Our sons may sell substances on Sycamore Street but we will shout from the mountain that Jesus Christ is Born!

We are the Christian Church -Catholic, multicultural, embattled, mothered by Mary the God bearer, drenched in sacred scripture, bible based and Spirit burnt. We are the Catholic Church, obedient to the Dream, living the vision, married to the Hope, proclaiming the Word of God become flesh in the flesh of a woman named Mary!

Hello Mary! Full of grace, your gender proclaims the glory of God; your spirit rejoices in God our Savior!

Gathered here this evening you have entered into the Kingdom of Heaven. In this place, at this time, with these people, heaven and earth are met! The Kingdom of Heaven is present. In Mary's baby boy things visible and invisible mix and mingle. God has become human; humanity has become divine!

You have entered not cyber space but divine grace! This is not the twilight zone of Sukie Stackhouse, nor the over the top penthouse of Donald Trump, you have dared to enter the grotto, the tomb, the womb where the Word of God becomes flesh of your flesh, blood in your veins and bone of your bones. You have dared to approach the Holy of Holies singing jingle bells--paying no attention to the person behind the Curtin.

From Sacred Scripture for your reflection, we Christians are obedient to the dream, live the vision and are married to hope. We see in St. Joseph and the Virgin Mary a family that was obedient to the dream, lived the vision and married the hope that God was with them calling the shots.

The Bible tells us that Joe dreamed strange dreams, Mat. 1:19-24.

Joe was obedient to the dream. Though he had fear and felt un-manned, he was obedient to the dream. The dream of Joseph; son of David, was more than about the condition of Mary. It was the dream of his nation, his people. It was a dream of emancipation from the Roman Empire. It was a dream spoken of by Isaiah the prophet 500 years before Joseph. It began with Abraham, lived through King David and was consummated in Jesus. It was the dream of the Nation of Israel that God would save God's people --God not Pharaoh, not Cesar, not the CEO, not the triple O g, not yo daddy, not the president, but God would be king--on earth, in America, God's will be done.

It was to this dream that Joe, whom we call saint, was obedient. God would be in charge. God is the shot caller, the web master, the speaker of the House, the HNIC!

We are Catholic because we are obedient to the Dream; God, not Charles, is in charge!

Mary and Joe had to live out the vision given by the dream. This means Mary had to put up with the waging tongues of the women of the village where she lived. She was living in the vision that God was in charge, but before all generations would call her blessed, some would call her out- of- her- name.

Living the vision brought her to the cross with her son.

We are Catholic because Mary journeys with us to our crosses with our sons, husbands, brothers and priests--often wailing, weeping, crying. She is our Mother of Good Council, Refuge of Sinners, Virgin Most powerful; she is Mary Queen of Peace. In Camden our Mother of Sorrows weeps for her children who are not, while Gil Scott sings "*another brother's dead,*" and Elvis croons, "*and his momma cries.*"

We are married to hope--the hope that Christ will come again. We celebrate this hope in the seven sacraments of our Catholic Church. In the

sacraments we encounter the grace and mercy, the body and soul of Mary's Baby: his sacred heart, his precious blood, his forgiving word, his healing hand, his living breath, his resurrection power. In the sacraments we become what we celebrate. We recognize ourselves as the image and likeness of God -Genesis 1; the children of God -1 Jn.; the saints and witnesses of God -Paul to the Romans; citizens of the Kingdom of God -Jn. the Revelator; because the glory of God is the human person fully alive -the saints of the Catholic Church!

We are espoused to hope. To live in the city of Camden takes hope, supernatural hope. To live in the U. S. dominated by the empires of Visa, Comcast, Bank America, Verizon, Delta, and a millionaire Congress takes supernatural hope. Living with cancer, AIDS, diabetes, hypertension, addictions takes hope—supernatural hope!

We are Catholic because we have come to the wedding feast of the Lamb of God and the Lamb of God is our hope! The Lamb once slain, the scapegoated Lamb, the black sheep Lamb, the Lamb among wolves and gangsters, this Lamb is our supernatural hope and blessed are those called to the wedding supper of the Lamb!

We are the Holy Roman Catholic Church, obedient to the dream dreamed by Joseph that God is in Charge.

We are Catholic, living in seven sacraments the vision of life with God the shot caller, his will is done in heaven, on earth.

We are Catholic, married to the hope which brought Joe's step-son beyond the cross to the victory of the resurrection.

Mary had a baby, Joseph named him Yeshua—God saves his people. God is with us!

This is our story and we are sticking to it!