

“You are to name Him Jesus because He will save His people from their sins”

Tonight (today) we celebrate as a Church and as a World the coming of the eternal Son of God as a little baby born for us in the course of time, so that we can live with Him **in communion** - beginning now and then for all eternity. **The name Jesus means Savior from sin.** Hence **the purpose of His coming** was to set us humans free from the enslavement of our being: *to sin, to death and to the power of the devil*. It's a joyous but also a very serious reality: the baby Jesus coming among us. Yes, the Lord's ways of doing things are not our ways. *He was not born in a palace, or in a big city, or to a famous family*; no, he was born in the tiny town of Bethlehem in a stable or a cave because there was no room for the Holy Family at the Inn. Both beautiful and sad at the same time. Is there room for the Holy Family in the inn of our hearts and minds?

1. **God works mostly in hidden quiet ways; being born in Bethlehem shows us that preference of our gentle, loving, and merciful but just God.** Just about 2 weeks ago, I discovered a beautiful book from 2017 detailing amazing ways God is working in people's lives, especially in the lives of hardened sinners, i.e., people who were away from the Church and the life of grace, it's called *Scandalous Mercy: When God goes beyond boundaries (I will have the title in my bulletin column this coming Sunday; please buy it and read it)*. One story caught my attention especially in relation to Christmas as we celebrate Jesus coming to save us from our sins. It was about a woman in the country of Columbia who turned away from God and the Church as a teenager, got involved greatly in the sins of the flesh, ended up having an abortion at 16, and then really went off the rails spiritually when a misguided priest who she went to Confess, instead told her to just have “fun” with her friends in her youth. Truly an evil priest. At that point she totally turned her back on God and hated God, men, and the Church and denied the existence of Hell and the Devil (out of self-interest - looking back). She became a successful and wealthy dentist and was a total secular feminist, even telling friends to abandon their husbands and go and have fun, and she mocked the people she knew who went to Mass. But as always is the case like in the story of the Prodigal Son, the Lord doesn't give up on souls. This dentist lady was going to a convention in Bogotá, Columbia and walking

along the way she was literally struck by lightning, and it knocked her completely out mainly because of the metal in her body from an IUD: in rebellion against God and the gift of fertility. She was rushed to the hospital and was in a coma. Her story got into the newspaper because of it being an odd event, and she was a well-known dentist in the city.

2. **While in the coma, she had a near death experience.** She went into a bright light that ended up at the Sacred Heart of Jesus. She saw a door there at His pierced Heart with two beautiful trees beside it and saw through the door: it was so beautiful with a garden and water and flowers and just a sense of total love, but she could not go through the door because she was not in the state of grace, i.e., she was living in mortal sin. All of a sudden she stared at an abyss where there was a crowd of creatures full of hate that started yelling at her. She was terrified. She cried out, *"I am a good Catholic. I have nothing to do here!"* Frighteningly someone else famous we know said that recently - so much need for prayer and penance for the conversion of hardened sinners! So back to the lady, a gentle voice then said to her, *if you are a good Catholic, tell us, what God's 10 Commandments are?* She vaguely mumbled something she remembered her mom told her as a little girl, *that we need to love one another.* At that point the gentle voice proceeded to tell her, how she trampled on every one of God's Commandments and taught others to do the same. **But amazingly this dentist lady was defiant and would not admit she did anything wrong.** So at that point, she then continued to descend lower and lower, she was cascading in a steep decent and passed through successive levels part of which was Purgatory where she saw her father there, but she kept descending to where the very gates of Hell are. Frightened out of her mind, at that point she recalled what a devout patient of hers told her once, *you doctor are a very materialistic woman, but someday I pray you will remember to ask Jesus to cover you in His precious blood.* The dentist lady started to scream out, *Jesus have pity on me! Give me a second chance. Please forgive me!* At that point, she started ascending back up until she stood before Jesus Himself who was beaming with light and love. He told her, *I am going to give you a 2nd chance, but know this has happened not because of the prayers of your family primarily, but because of the prayers of all those people who saw your story in the newspaper and who prayed for you out of pure love, despite not knowing you*

*personally. And then Jesus gave her a vision of a dark map which showed the flames of love of all the people offering prayers and acts of sacrifice and penance for her spiritual well-being. In particular one light showed brighter than the rest. She asked Jesus who that was; he told her it a peasant man who lived in the mountains outside of Bogotá, who was a very poor farmer who saw her story in the paper and even though he could barely read, figured out the details. Jesus told the dentist lady listen to the prayer he offered for you, *Lord, take pity on my little sister, Lord save her! Lord, save my little sister. I will make a pilgrimage to the Sanctuary at Buga. But save her Lord.* Jesus went on to say, *the poor peasant didn't even have enough to eat that day, and he was promising to travel across the country for you. Five days of travel for a stranger, whom he called his little sister, even though he didn't know you at all. You see, that is true love of neighbor.*" The dentist lady asked Jesus to tell her the name of this man who helped save her from Hell, but Jesus said, *you will only know him in eternity.* You will have to get the book to see how everything changes in the dentist lady's life; as well as many other inspiring tales, almost 50, of God's mercy and patience with us poor sinners. Truly amazing! Thank you Lord!*

3. **This true story that I just shared shows us what Christmas is really about – Jesus coming for the salvation of people.** Some of us here in all honesty may be far away from God and His ways, only here out of sense of holiday or family obligation. Jesus is calling you to repent and turn your life over to Him and live the real Catholic Faith - instead of playing spiritual games like this dentist lady was doing in her obstinate pride. Some of us who truly love the Lord are called to be more like this saintly peasant who offered much prayer and sacrifice for a woman he didn't even know, and would do that for many other souls as well. St. Therese is also a beautiful example of offering prayer and sacrifice for strangers as she did for the hardened criminals she read about in the newspaper. **We can do the same** when reading on the internet or watching the TV news or other shows, (*while being careful not to fall into sin ourselves by what we watch and read*), and we see people promoting evil and sin; instead of getting mad, train your mind to pray and offer some acts of penance for those sad spiritually blind souls: Let's help the Lord with our Blessed Mother to save souls, of which they want each of us to generously cooperate in that noble process. God bless you and have a blessed and merry Christmas.