

DAVID'S THRONE IS ESTABLISHED FOREVER

Hear again the Word of the Lord to His Church on this Feast of the Nativity:

Then your house will be made sure, and your kingdom forever. Before My Face your throne will be established forever.¹

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

Merry Christmas! At the end of this day, the Christmas season will be half over. During that time, there will be in this place, after this Lord's service, five (or four, after the 5PM DS) more opportunities for God's people to celebrate Christmas through hymn, chant, readings, and Sacraments! Half of the Christmas season is yet to come!

Yes, we are in the midst of Christmas. This is the day, according to the song, that your true love is to give you six geese a-laying. According to internet myth, those geese are supposed to represent the six days of Creation. That God, by His Word, brought forth from the waters, a perfect creation over six days, is not a mysterious teaching to be hidden in a twelfth – night song. It is revealed by the Word of God for all to see. The six-days of Creation should be no persecuted teaching, whether one's confession of faith be Jewish, Muslim, Protestant, Mormon, Lutheran, Anglican, or Catholic.

In fact, according to the Roman Catholic calendar of feasts, today is not the day to remember the six days of creation. Rather, it has been declared to be the Sunday to celebrate the Feast of the Holy Family. You see, in the Roman confession of faith, a cult of the Holy Family had begun to grow in popularity about four hundred years ago.

¹ II Samuel 7:16.

As it takes a while for received tradition to become doctrine in the Church of Rome, it was not until 1921 that December 30 was declared to be a Feast day. This was done by papal proclamation in order to celebrate the dignity of the family, as even then family ties had been slipping, and morals corrupted. This Collect was composed for that Feast:

O God, who were pleased to give us the shining example of the Holy Family, graciously grant that we may imitate them in practicing the virtues of family life and in the bonds of charity, and so, in the joy of your house, delight one day in eternal rewards. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.²

That can help us to know what our “separated-brethren” might be reflecting upon today. By extension, then, the Feast of the Holy Family on December 30 means that the Roman Catholic faithful are to celebrate God’s gift of family today. We can hope and pray that they can grasp the reality that no one outside of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph can truly be like that Holy Family. Our children are not perfect as is Jesus. The human man who stood or stands in the role of “father” in our household has not been declared, “a just man,” by the Word of God in the same manner as Joseph. (Though, our earthly father may have been declared “just” on account of Jesus’ Faith given to him in the Water and Word of Holy Baptism). Most certainly, none of our mothers conceived and bore us into life while remaining virgins!

Imitate the Holy Family all you want, you will never attain that reality.

Family life, from our family experience outside that of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, daily proves that we are all sinners. That means that we each and all fall far short of the glory

² Internet. <http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2011-12-30>, accessed 12-29-12. See also, internet, <http://uscgb.org/bible/readings/123012.cfm>.

of God, even in families striving to “imitate the Holy Family.” We cannot truly imitate Jesus, Mary, and Joseph and actually gain anything before our Father in heaven. We cannot, on account of the sin which still clings to us, remain in the bonds of charity into our eternal home with our heavenly Father.

That means, for sinners like us to be with Him forever, it is necessary that God work His charity upon us. He had to become one with us. Then on account of His perfect sacrifice, He declares us right before His Face.

Thank God for forgiveness for those who try to imitate the “perfection” of those, especially Mary and Joseph, whom God had called into His family without visible earthly means-of-grace. We, who cannot perfectly imitate the Holy Family *in practicing the virtues of family life, in the bonds of charity*, are, on account of God’s fulfilled promises, free in His forgiveness to give thanks to God for joining us into His Holy Family, the Church. Through His Word here we are liberated from the bonds of sin and able to rejoice that He has named us part of His family in Jesus.

All that being declared, while today’s Word does mention the Holy Family, its focus is on God giving and fulfilling His promise to David to establish his house, kingdom, and throne forever. In other words, this sixth Day of Christmas is really about Jesus, the Son of David and Son of God. That is why Anna could spread the Good News of Jesus to those waiting on the Promise of their redemption. It is why Simeon could declare that, in Christ, the heart-thoughts of many people will be revealed. They had

held fast to the Word of the Old Testament promises, while they beheld their fulfillment in Jesus.

That is the manner in which all who have come to Faith in the New Testament era have come to see God's promises. As a matter of fact, the New Testament views the last section of today's Old Testament reading as a witness to Jesus as the Christ. From the New Testament writings beginning in the *Gospel of St. Luke*, into the *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, the witness contained in today's Word from *II Samuel* is declared to point the faithful to the One about Whose coming God declares,

*Then your house will be made sure, and your kingdom forever. Before My Face your throne will be established forever.*³

God spoke those words to King David after, as you heard; David had been given rest from his enemies. God had granted him a permanent home in which to dwell. God had given David relative peace from the struggles through which God established His people firmly in the Promised Land.

In thanksgiving for all that, David wanted to give back to God. So, he determined to build God a magnificent house. One of King David's pastors, Nathan, had heard the King's plan, and considering it reasonable thanksgiving, without consulting God in prayer, affirmed David in his plans.

God, on the other hand, was not done blessing David. So, He came to Nathan and basically told him to inform the King that God did not want him to build Him a permanent place of worship. After reminding David that God did not need him or

³ *II Samuel* 7:16.

anyone to do anything for God, let alone build God an earthly home. God had determined in Himself to build for Himself an eternal Living Temple many centuries in the future.

You, dear Christians are part of that Holy Temple, founded upon the Son of God who long ago tabernacled in our flesh, setting aside His full divinity for a time, becoming one with you, to save you from your sins. Neither David, nor his pastor, Nathan, truly grasped that reality. But, what they did learn is that God had determined to bless David more than he could have ever imagined. Why, for him it was enough to have his own beautiful home, and united nation, and relative peace from his enemies.

For God though, there were many more blessings to pour out upon His servant. These began with the declaration that God would make David great. God begins His blessings as He says to David: *I will make for you (a) Great Name, as (a) name of the great ones who are in the earth.* In other words, God says, “Don’t do for Me, let Me continue to do for you!” After all, God is the Creator of the whole universe, what can any person, even this dear friend of God, give to Him that is not already His?

So, God continues to desire to multiply His blessings for King David without any work or gifts on David’s part. He promises to set His people in one place, to keep them undisturbed, to remove the violent men who would attack them. God will give King David, and by extension, all Israel, rest from their enemies. In all this, what has God asked David to do for Him? In this text, nothing.

God continues to name His coming blessings for David, which will also be for all His people. This promise moves beyond David's lifetime, past his falling asleep in the Lord when he can no longer attempt to do anything for God. God declares:

When your days are fulfilled, and you lie down with your fathers, I will cause to raise up your Seed after you, which will come forth from your body, and I will establish His Kingdom.⁴

Those words begin the section which the New Testament writers, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, declare to be of the greatest Son of David, Whom you know is Jesus. Perhaps you have already noted who is "doing the verbs?" God says, *I will cause... I will establish.* In such manner, God still speaks to you. In Holy Baptism, God said over you, *"I baptize you..."* Today, He said, *"I therefore forgive you all your sins..."* Soon, God will say to you who are rightly instructed in the mysteries of the Faith, *"Take, eat; this is My Body, which is given for you... Drink of it, all of you, this cup is the new testament in My Blood, which shed for you for the forgiveness of sins...."*

Those gifts He speaks over you and into you on account of His grace. God gives His gifts to His Holy Family, the assembly of the saints who participate in His Holy Things because of His grace. He knows you cannot earn them, even by imitating Him unto death... as if you could! God still "does the verbs," even as you heard Him promise King David:

When your days are fulfilled, and you lie down with your fathers, I will cause to raise up your Seed after you, which will come forth from your body, and I will establish His Kingdom.⁵

⁴ II Samuel 7:12.

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The Seed He promises to raise up is singular, and He will come after David sleeps in the dust of the earth. God promises One Son. In Him, God will set forth David's eternal Kingdom. Of this Son, God foretells,

He will build (a) House for My Name and I will establish the throne of His Kingdom forever.⁶

This God's-House-builder is not ultimately David's son Solomon. That son, though also blessed by God, did build an earthly Temple for God. But the stone, cedar, and gold of that building could never serve as an eternal House for the Name of God. That House would come in the Body of the Son - an eternal, spiritual House built of living stones.

In that Son of David, the builder of the House for God's Name, God would, and did establish His throne forever. He even tells of how that eternal establishment would take place:

I will be to Him, Father. And He will be to Me, Son. When He causes to commit iniquity, I will cause to chasten Him from rod of men, and from stripes of (the) sons of man.⁷

The Son of David would be the Son of God. He would bear the sins of all mankind, the iniquities we all commit or omit. He was chastened in our sins. His back was welted with the punishment we, you, deserve. He took your beating at the hands of men, that you need not suffer so on account of your sins. And, He did all that, all the way into death, for you, for He knew these words to be true:

⁶ II Samuel 7:13.

⁷ II Samuel 7:14.

*My steadfast love shall not depart from Him, that which I took from Saul, whom I caused to put away from before you. Then your house will be made sure, and your kingdom forever. Before My Face your throne will be established forever.*⁸

God's unconditional love allowed His Son, the Son of David, to bear your sins into death. His sacrificial love raised Him from the dead. His steadfast love brought His ascension into heaven to reign over His creation until the Day when He will come again to restore it to even greater perfection than it had those first six days when He spoke and Creation came into being. In the Son of David, the Son of Mary and step-Son of Joseph David's house is made sure, his kingdom forever. Before the Face of the Father the Son of David reigns forever. He has joined you to His Holy Family..., and that news should make for a very blessed six more Days of Christmas to you and yours!

The peace which passes all understanding guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus

First Sunday after the Feast of the Nativity (*Lutheran Service Book* one-year series)

Exodus 40:17-21, 34-38; Titus 3:4-7; John 1:1-18

December 30, 2012

Pastor Michael A. Morehouse

SOLI DEO GLORIA

⁸ *II Samuel* 7:15-16.