CHRISTMAS WITHOUT THE ONE WHO WAS BORN

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Beloved in Christ the Lord. In the collect of today's Holy Mass the Church cries out: O God, You make this most holy night radiant with the brightness of the true light. Grant, we beseech You, that we who have come to know the mystery of that light on earth may be filled with His joy in heaven, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, world without end. And indeed this Christmas night is lit with a supernatural brightness, a brightness hard to grasp, a brightness surpassing any light we know on this earth.

But at the same time, my dear ones, I repeat every year that the feast of Christmas is perhaps the saddest feast in the liturgical calendar. Why? Imagine that you are celebrating your birthday. You invite relatives and friends. You prepare the food, you decorate your home. When the day of your birthday comes, the guests arrive, but no one greets you. No one brings any presents. The guests have a splendid time in their own company. They have no need of you at all; you are completely unnoticed, disregarded. When you think of it, when you picture this scene, indignation certainly rises up in you. How can anyone treat in this way the one who is celebrating his birth, who is celebrating his birthday?

But is it not exactly so with Christmas? We Catholics, nominal Catholics, have learned to celebrate Christmas without the one who was born, without Christ, and therefore without meaning. We celebrate the feast of Christmas without realising, forgetting who was born and why. The divine Child lying in the manger arouses no great interest in us. It is one more occasion to eat, to drink, to chat, to gossip. And for yet another year in a row, in most of the supposedly Catholic homes in Poland it was probably the case that at the Christmas Eve table, and now at the festive table, the names Tusk, Kaczyński, Braun will be declined in every case, but no one will mention the name of Jesus. Frightfully sad are these modern Christmases of ours, which we have learned to celebrate without God, without the one who was born.

FLEEING FROM THE LIGHT

Dear faithful, we may ask ourselves why this is so. Why Christmas without the divine Child? The light has come into the world, we read in the Gospel of Saint John. But men loved darkness rather than the light, because their deeds were evil. Modern man flees from this light which comes into the world, because he is afraid of that light. This light fills us with terror because in the light everything can be seen.

Consider: when you enter some dark room, the first thing you do is instinctively look for a source of light. You want the room to be lit, because then you will see what is around you. That is our natural reaction, our reflex. But what is terrifying is that in the spiritual life we act completely differently. We prefer to remain in darkness rather than turn towards the light. From the light that has come into the world we Catholics flee, we turn our eyes away from it, we reject that light, because our deeds are evil.

And this light that comes into the world comes in order to illuminate the darkness of our life. So that we too may come to know the truth about ourselves. A truth so often uncomfortable, painful, a truth which departs significantly from the image we have of ourselves.

Dear faithful, how much misfortune in the modern world results from this flight from the light, from the light that comes from heaven, from the light whose source is the Lord God Himself. How much misfortune results from the fact that modern man prefers to live in darkness, in the darkness of sin, in the darkness of error, rather than turn towards the light.

STANDING IN THE LIGHT

We gather on this night of Christmas, rejoicing that the darkness of this night is lit by a light. A light coming from heaven, a light coming from God Himself. May we, my dear ones, flee from this light no more. May we, my dear ones, stand in this light, see what we are, and realise how many changes are still necessary in my life. How far I fall short of that ideal, that model, which is the Immaculate Virgin, who was set before us by the Lord God as a model to imitate. How much work on myself, my dear ones, there still is in my life.

May we, my dear ones, we Catholics, Polish Catholics, living in the twentieth century, never follow in the footsteps of those who have learned to celebrate a winter holiday, a vaguely defined holiday, a holiday without meaning. The light comes into this world to dispel the darkness of our life.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Praised be Jesus Christ.