



The Holy See

GENERAL AUDIENCE

Wednesday 17 December 1997

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Continuing our catechesis on the Jubilee, we reflect today on the incarnate life of the Son of God, which is the essential point of reference for our faith. The people living at the time of Jesus had the privilege of hearing and seeing him, but many did not recognize him as the Saviour. Jesus helped his disciples to understand that in seeing him they saw the Father. Their witness is the basis of our faith, whereby we come into contact with the mystery of Christ's person.

The Gospel presents the earthly life of Jesus as a marriage of love between God and humanity. Although the wedding feast is essentially a time of joy, Jesus warns his disciples that the Bridegroom will be taken from them. Already, before his entry into Jerusalem, Jesus had foretold that his life would be a redeeming sacrifice. Because of the sins of humanity the wedding feast is linked to the drama of the Cross, in which Jesus enters into conflict with the power of evil. The time of the earthly life of Jesus is the time of the Paschal mystery of death and resurrection, from which the salvation of the human family flows.

I extend a special welcome to the young people from Sweden and to the Brighton School Choir from Adelaide in Australia. I greet the participants in the International Christian Conference on Praise and Worship. Upon all the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors I cordially invoke the blessings of Almighty God. To all of you, a Happy Christmas!

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