



The Holy See

MIDNIGHT MASS

HOMILY OF JOHN PAUL II

Friday, 24 December 2004

1. "*Adoro te devote, latens Deitas.*"

"*Godhead here in hiding, whom I do adore.*" On this Night, the opening words of this celebrated Eucharistic hymn echo in my heart. These words accompany me daily in this year dedicated to the Eucharist.

In the *Son of the Virgin*, "wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger" (*Lk 2:12*), we acknowledge and adore "*the Bread which came down from heaven*" (*Jn 6:41, 51*), the Redeemer who came among us in order to bring life to the world.

2. Bethlehem! The city where Jesus was born in fulfilment of the Scriptures, in Hebrew means "*house of bread*." It was there that the Messiah was to be born, the One who would say of himself: "I am the bread of life" (*Jn 6:35, 48*).

In Bethlehem was born the One who, under the sign of broken bread, would leave us the memorial of his Pasch. On this Holy Night, adoration of the Child Jesus becomes *Eucharistic adoration*.

3. We adore you, Lord, truly present in the Sacrament of the Altar, the living Bread which gives life to humanity. We acknowledge you as *our one God*, a little Child lying helpless in the manger! "In the fullness of time, you became a man among men, to unite the end to the beginning, that is, man to God" (cf. Saint Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, IV, 20, 4).

You are born on this Night, our divine Redeemer, and, in our journey along the *paths of time*, you become for us the food of *eternal life*.

Look upon us, eternal Son of God, who took flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary! All humanity, with its burden of trials and troubles, stands in need of you.

Stay with us, living Bread which came down from heaven for our salvation! Stay with us forever!
Amen!

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