



Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ,

Fifth century Church Father Saint Theodotus of Ancyra gave a truly beautiful image of the Incarnation of the Word: “Since there was no bed on which to lay the Lord He was placed in a manger, and this lack of what was necessary became a glorious prophetic announcement.”

The Gospel takes pains to specify: “The days were completed for her [Mary] to be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.” (Luke 2:6-7) And also: “You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.” (Luke 2:12)

It’s in the trough that the food ration for domestic animals was placed. So, God has chosen to be born in a manger to show that He is coming to give Himself as food – in other words, to give us His Life. Isn’t this the most beautiful symbol of the Eucharist?

Herein lies the very secret of Love. As a poem says, “Love is to die within oneself in order to be reborn in another.” This is the very mystery of the Nativity of Our Lord: it contains within it His Passion and His Resurrection. God is born out of Love, dies out of Love, and resurrects out of Love for each and every one of us. True Love only resides in the impassioned embrace of others in all the poverty of their humanity. All that normally makes true and profound communion of hearts and souls impossible, in Christ becomes a path of freedom and of life. God reveals Love to us by taking into Himself the totality of our humanity – He makes of it a place of tenderness, love and healing.

There is one condition, however, and that’s where the difficult part comes in – we have to accept our poverty in order to meet the One who became poor in our poverty. Our poverty is the only way of Love. God embraces our human poverty so that we may be able to embrace Him in His divine richness.

Glory to God in the Highest and Peace on Earth!