

Christmas Vigil Mass

Merry Christmas – finally here after weeks of waiting – all the shopping, decorating, wrapping.
Tonight Santa Clause will be flying all over the world visiting home after home of good boys and girls.
But we know Christmas is NOT about all that – Christmas is about God keeping His promises

After the Fall, in the Garden of Eden, **God made a promise.**

God promised the snake that the offspring of the woman would defeat him,
On Christmas we celebrate the birth of the Christ - Son of God, Son of Mary

Now then – while God keeps His promises – He does it in His time
In the Gospel we have long lists of names – all of these people were waiting for the Christ
Generation after Generation – waiting for God to keep His promise

This long parade of people remind me of a story about another parade

There was a boy in a small town who heard the circus was coming to town
His father said that after he had finished all his chores he could go
So he worked as fast as he could and his father gave him a dollar (admission)
He got to town just as the parade started – headed off into the Big Top
He saw wagons with lions, elephants, beautiful women riding bareback on horses
There were jugglers, and acrobats, and finally at the end of the parade CLOWNS.
At the end of the parade he went up to the last clown and gave his dollar
“Thank you for a wonderful circus”

Now he had not seen the circus – he'd only seen the parade
He'd only seen the coming attraction

Christmas is great – but its only the coming attraction.
The reason Jesus was born in Bethlehem
The reason God intervened in human history and became a person
Is EASTER

Jesus was born and angels sang:
GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST AND PEACE TO MEN OF GOOD WILL
Shepherds came and adored Him
Wise men came from distant lands to give Him homage
All this is true and right and proper – but *Christmas really isn't such a big deal*

What's really important is EASTER

Without EASTER Jesus is just another prophet
Jesus rose from the dead
Jesus defeated death, He defeated satan
And through Jesus we have salvation

- God's promise back in the Garden of Eden isn't fulfilled at Christmas
The reason Jesus comes at Christmas is EASTER

We are redeemed

We rejoice at Christmas, because Jesus is born.
We rejoice at Christmas, because Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead.
We rejoice at Christmas because Jesus has delivered us
Jesus has claimed a people as His own – *and here we are.*

Jesus is born this day to bring salvation to creation – to each one of us – let us rejoice and be glad!