Dimanche dans l’Octave de la Nativite 2013

**Galatians 4:1-7**

Or je dis ceci : Aussi longtemps que l’héritier est enfant, il ne diffère en rien d’un esclave, quoiqu’il soit le maître de tout ; mais il est soumis à des tuteurs et à des curateurs jusqu’au temps marqué par le père. De même, nous aussi, quand nous étions enfants, nous étions sous l’esclavage des rudiments du monde. Mais lorsque est venue la plénitude des temps, Dieu a envoyé son Fils, formé d’une femme, né sous la Loi, pour affranchir ceux qui sont sous la Loi, afin de nous conférer l’adoption. Et parce que vous êtes fils, Dieu a envoyé dans vos cœurs l’Esprit de son Fils, lequel crie : Abba ! Père ! Ainsi tu n’es plus esclave, tu es fils ; et si tu es fils, tu es aussi héritier grâce à Dieu.

« tu n’es plus esclave, tu es fils. »

In nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen. Ave Maria!

During this Christmas Octave, the Divine Liturgy invites us to meditate upon the Eternal Word made Flesh. The Son of God was begotten of His Father from all eternity, but received a created, integral human nature at the time of the Annunciation. As St. Paul says, in « la plénitude des temps, Dieu a envoyé son Fils, formé d’une femme ». The Divine Infant whom we worship in the creche is, therefore, the true natural Son of God, and the true natural son of Mary. This is what we mean when we say that the one Christ has two distinct natures—he is true God and true Man!

Why did Christ « descend from his royal throne » as the Introit says? St. Paul answers, « pour affranchir ceux qui sont sous la Loi, afin de nous conférer l’adoption. » By way of comparison, consider for a moment the adoption of a human child by human parents. By means of adoption, a child receives the name of the father and mother, and is entitled by law to all the privileges of natural-born children—tres bon. This beautiful act of generosity, however, does not thereby effect a change in the *nature* of the child : the child’s genes remain the same, no matter how great the love of the adoptive parents. On the other hand, consider the two-fold adoption of the Christchild. As an act of great humility, the Christchild consented to be adopted by St. Joseph, and to take him as his true foster-father. This consent was mutual, as we learn from St. Luke’s account of St. Joseph’s deliberation before taking the Blessed Virgin into his home. God, however, is never outdone in generosity, and by a Divine Miracle, the Christchild consents—nay, *eagerly longs and desires*—to adopt each one of us in turn! This Divine adoption, springing as it does from the Heart of Divine Love itself, *is* able to effect a change in the nature of the one adopted. At the moment of baptism, the Spirit of God is poured out into our hearts (Rom. 5 :5), rendering us true « partakers of the Divine nature » (2 Pet. 1 :4), true heirs of the Kingdom of God (Gal. 4 :7)!

Returning to our analogy of human adoption, we note that loving parents early on learn to discern the cry of their child from that of others—the voice of each child is unique. Similarly, God the Father recognizes us as His children, precisely because he hears His own Voice—the Voice of the Holy Spirit—crying out from the depths of our hearts, « Abba, Pater. » By bathing in the Radiance of the Divine Christchild—especially in silent Adoration before the Tabernacle—our hearts are purified, allowing the Divine Word—the Word now made Flesh—to make us ever more his own true, adopted children.

God bless you, and Ave Maria!