

Patrons of Parishes

THE NATIVITY OF JESUS CHRIST

IN a few weeks the whole Church will once more celebrate the temporal birth of the eternal Son of God. Everywhere handsome shrines will be erected in remembrance of that in which the Child of Bethlehem was laid two thousand years ago. Everywhere at this moment the lips of the priests repeat the ardent wishes that the Patriarchs and Prophets uttered to heaven that the promised Messiah might come down from it. Everywhere also the faithful indulge in prayer, suspend their amusements and practise penance. All this will cease only on the beautiful festival of Christmas the anniversary of a *great joy*. (St. Luke II: 10).

When the Infant Jesus issued from the most pure womb of the Virgin Mary, four thousand years had elapsed since the first man had come from the hands of God. He was beautiful, sound in body, pure in soul. Placed in a delightful spot, he was destined one day to be transported to the eternal joys of the kingdom of Heaven.

Alas! Man did not realize his sublime greatness. At Satan's instigation, he counted it as nothing. But the proud desire to ascend still higher, to be equal unto God, cast him down from his height and plunged his mind and his heart into the abyss.

O ruin ever to be deplored! The mind of man which God had created, which he had enlightened with the most extensive knowledge, gradually became enveloped in intense darkness. The very idea of God became weaker day by day. Through a horrible revulsion, he came to confound the creature with the Creator; the stars, animals, stones were adored; even the «chosen people» adored its golden calf. Errors accumulated with years and with centuries, as the darkness increases with