



## HOMILY

### ON THE OCTAVE OF MOST HOLY CHRISTMAS

The first day of January coincides with the Octave of Christmas, when the Liturgy is centered on the Circumcision of the Lord and the Divine Motherhood of Mary Most Holy, proclaimed by the Council of Ephesus in 431 as *Deipara* – in Greek *Theotokos* – or Mother of God. In ancient times, two Masses were celebrated on this day, one of the Octave and one in honor of the Virgin Mother. Later the memory of the Marian celebration remained in the *postcommunio* and in the station church at Santa Maria in Trastevere.

In the Incarnation, the Word of God became flesh, making fruitful the unblemished virginity of the Holy Mother of the Redeemer. The Word takes shape – *Verbum caro factum est* – generating Emmanuel in the womb of the Virgin, by the power of the Holy Spirit. *And he will be called*, as Scripture says in Isaiah's prophecy, *admirable counsellor, strong God, Prince of peace, Father of the coming age, Angel of the great counsel* (Is 9:6). Even the Archangel Gabriel, in bringing the announcement to Mary, says to her: *Behold, you will conceive and bear a son, and you will call his name Jesus. He will be great and called the Son of the Most High; the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will have no end* (Lk 1:31-33). With the Circumcision, His Name is imposed on Him: Jesus, God saves.

To name someone or something means to define the person or thing in its essence. And this is the prerogative of the Most Holy Trinity, of the Triune God who manifests Himself by revealing His Name. In the creative act, the name designates creation itself: *Let there be light. And there was light* (Gen 1:3). *And he called the light day and the darkness night* (Gen 1:5); *he called the firmament heaven; he called the dry land the earth and the mass of the waters the sea* (Gen 1:10). Having decreed that man should be in His image and likeness (Gen 1:26) and that he should rule the earth, He allows Adam to participate in some way in the creative act by allowing him to give a name to the animals: *Then the Lord God formed out of the ground all kinds of wild animals and all the birds of the air and brought them to the man, to see what he would call them: whatever the man called each of the living beings, that was to be*

*his name* (Gen 2:19). The name expresses reality and defines it: this is why the Word is holy, and why the name of God is *holy and terrible* (Ps 111:10) – as the Psalm says – because it is the Word of Truth. This is why the sacraments have matter, intention and *form*, that is, the sacramental word: “I baptize you,” “I absolve you,” “I confirm you,” are all *words* that bring about what they *say* and signify.

In a few days we will celebrate the feast of the Most Holy Name of Jesus: *so that at the name of Jesus every knee may bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth; and every tongue may proclaim* – here too, the *word* proclaimed, spoken – *that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father* (Phil 2:10-11). In the Name of Jesus the devil is cast out: because the Name makes present the one who bears it, and the Truth makes the lie manifest as the Light dispels darkness. Creator and creature are in some way united by the word: *Ecce, venio*, says Wisdom in the eternity of time. *Fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum*, replies the Seat of Wisdom, Mary Most Holy. And that blessed body that by obedience the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity assumes in the hypostatic union begins His journey towards the Passion from the cradle, facing the rigors of winter in a cave; and shortly thereafter, again out of obedience, the Holy Child will shed the first drops of His Precious Blood in the rite of Circumcision, in which the Passion is prefigured.

In this new civil year, which for two thousand and twenty-five years has been counted from the Birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ, I would like us to reflect on the importance of the word: the Word of God, in which the meaning of our eternal life is preserved; and the word with which we communicate and express ourselves, which preserves the meaning of our daily life.

The Revolution, the satanic matrix of this rebellious world hostile to the Incarnate Word, knows well that changing words also changes their meaning. This is why the lie of the ancient Serpent uses false and deceptive language. This is why the servants of the Evil One hide their deceptions behind words that are only apparently harmless. It is the Orwellian *newspeak* that renames the horrendous crime of abortion as *reproductive health*, mutilation as *gender transition*, vice and transgression as *freedom*, the destruction of Creation as *green deal*, the extermination of humanity as *net zero*, and ethnic replacement as *inclusion*.

And if up until a few decades ago Holy Mother Church knew how to oppose this subversion by repeating unchanged the eternal and true Word of God and using the language proper to Faith and Morals, today a corrupt Hierarchy shows its betrayal in the same way, manipulating language, thus *annulling the word of God* (Mk 7:12). It renames the destruction of the divine constitution of the Church and the manipulation of the Papacy as *synodality*, the renunciation of the need for

evangelization and conversion as *ecumenical dialogue*, redefines the poor as the *real presence*, and the legitimization of sin as *acceptance*.

The Word of God is the word of Truth. It does not limit itself to echoing in eternity, but becomes flesh and food, immolates itself on the Cross so that the Word proclaims the glory of the Father, redeems us from Satan's lie and preserves us on this earthly journey from the falsehood and deception of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Remaining faithful to the Word of God means remaining faithful to the Gospel, to doctrine, to Tradition, and to the Mass of all time in which the words, spoken in the sacred language of the Church, keep their meaning intact and communicate it unequivocally, as light shines in darkness. Remaining faithful to the Word of God, that is, to God himself, means knowing how to respond to the word with the word, as Mary Most Holy did when she welcomed the greeting of the Archangel Gabriel.

Let us therefore call things by their name: let us refer to virtue as virtue and vice as vice; mindful of the admonition of Sacred Scripture: *Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who change darkness into light and light into darkness, who change bitter into sweet and sweet into bitter (Is 5:20). Let your speech, therefore, be Yes, yes, no, no: all the rest comes from the Evil One (Mt 5:37).* And so may it be.

+ Carlo Maria Viganò, *Archbishop*

January 1, 2025  
*In Circumcisione Domini*