

and therefore one mass is sung in the night, in the *Introit* of which we say: The Lord said unto Me: Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee. The second is His nativity in time, and the spiritual birth, whereby Christ rises as the day-star in our hearts, and on this account the mass is sung at dawn, and in the *Introit* we say: The light will shine on us today. The third is Christ's temporal and bodily birth, according as He went forth from the virginal womb, becoming visible to us through being clothed with flesh: and on that account the third mass is sung in broad daylight, in the *Introit* of which we say: A child is born to us."<sup>4</sup>

Such is the feast of the birth of our Lord in its historical and liturgical structure. Yet this feast is not something ancient; it is of perennial signification, because, like the Incarnation itself, it never ceases to be. The God-Man ever continues to affect that union between Himself and humanity for which He was born on that first Christmas night in the humble stable of Bethlehem.

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<sup>4</sup> *Summa Theologica*, III, Q. 83, Art. 2, ad 2um. (Translation of English Dominicans)

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## A CAVE

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BRO. JOHN DOMINIC REDMOND, O.P.

Hollowed by the hand of man,  
 To harbor lowly beasts, so mild.  
 Hallowed by the Will of God,  
 There Mary came to lay her Child.