

Saint Thomas' of the Air Church  
Christmas Day 2020  
rmcneely+

But as many as received Him  
To them gave He power  
to become the sons of God.

Merry Christ's Mass everyone.  
We read St Luke's account of the nativity today because how  
would it be Christmas without it,  
but the alternate Gospel for Christmas Day  
is the first Chapter of the Gospel of St John  
and that is the text of this short sermon  
on this Glorious Christmas Day here at St Thomas.  
That is the source of the words I just gave you.

Synthesized to its core St John's words may be translated in 21<sup>st</sup>  
Century Speak as:

He who takes the Son, Gets it all.

I want to tell you a story of a small family in England,  
York in fact.  
a wealthy family.  
They lived on a large estate in a magnificent manor around the turn  
of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The father was a widower. He had one son the last of the family  
line.

The boy was the light of his life.  
The Father had a keen interest in Art  
And had become a collector of some repute.

As the son matured  
the Father introduced him to the art he had collected  
and was very pleased to see the boy share his passion.  
They traveled together all over the world  
adding to the family collection.  
They were able to purchase the masters,  
Monet,  
Van Gogh,  
Raphael,  
and others  
and their collection was the envy of many and ultimately was  
worth millions.

In 1914, as England mobilized for the Great War,  
the son responded to his country's call.  
His country needed him  
and he volunteered and joined the British Army  
and was sent to France to fight the Hun.  
It was several months later,  
that the Father received the telegram  
that all parents dread in wartime.  
His only son had been killed in action.  
He was devastated.

It was Christmas Morning a few years later,  
there was a knock at the door  
and there stood a young man,  
a soldier.  
He said he had served with the Son,  
had something to show the father  
and could he please come in.

The soldier told the father how his son had died.  
How he had sacrificed himself  
and had saved several men from their deaths  
including the young visitor.  
And he had something to show the Father.

He handed a large flat package.  
The Father took it and unwrapped it.  
The Soldier said he was an artist  
and that he had painted the portrait of his son  
and would like the father to have it.  
With tears in his eyes  
the Father swept aside priceless pieces from the wall  
and hung the portrait of his son over his desk in his study.

It was about 10 years later that the Father died  
and there was to be an auction of his famous collection.  
Buyers from all over the world assembled,  
museums,  
galleries  
and collectors of renown  
to have a glimpse of the collection  
and for the opportunity to bid  
and maybe purchase one of the pieces.

At the instruction of the Father  
the auction was held on Christmas Day  
The day the young soldier  
had made the gift of the Son's portrait.

The first piece was not on the schedule and no one knew about it.  
It was the portrait of the Son painted by the soldier  
whose life the son had saved.

The bidders objected.

This is nothing,  
we did not come all this way to waste time on this.  
We have brought millions to spend on the collection.  
Pass it and let's get to the valuable pieces.

The auctioneer was firm.

The instruction is to begin with this piece.

It must be sold first.

I will begin the bidding at 100 pounds.

The room was silent. The bidders then objected all the more.

The instructions in the Last Will and Testament are clear, said the auctioneer.

We cannot proceed  
until this painting is sold.

They grumbled.

What am I offered then.

A voice in back said,

I am a neighbor

and knew the boy.

I would love to have his portrait in our home,  
but I have only 50 pounds.

The auctioneer brought down the gavel.

Sold for 50 pounds.

That's the ticket,

now lets get down to the real purpose of the auction they cried.

The auctioneer quietly announced

“the auction is concluded”,  
and brought down the gavel.

The room erupted.

When he regained the floor the auctioneer explained;  
The will is clear,  
There is to be an auction on Christmas Day following my death  
The portrait of my son  
    is to be auctioned off first to the highest bidder  
    And whoever takes the Son gets it all.  
The remainder of the collection goes to the man who took the son.  
The auction is closed.

He who takes the Son  
    Gets it all

Today we celebrate the birth of our Lord.  
    He who died to save us all.  
Today we celebrate the birth of our Lord,  
    God's gift of His only Son.  
Today we celebrate the birth of our Lord.  
Today,  
He who takes the Son  
Gets it all.  
Merry Christmas Everyone.