

## Christmas

A four-year-old girl went with a group of family and friends to see the Christmas lights, displayed at various locations throughout the city. At one Church, they stopped and got out to look more closely at a beautiful Nativity scene. "Isn't that beautiful?" said the little girl's grandmother. "Look at all the animals, Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus." "Yes, Grandma," replied the granddaughter. "It is really nice. But there is only one thing that bothers me. Isn't Baby Jesus ever going to grow up...? He's the same size he was last year!"

Dear Friends,

I would like to wish you a Merry Christmas. It is a joy to be together with our families during this time. I welcome you to our church for this celebration and it is good to see you in this cold weather. May God bless you with some joy that stays forever.

Tonight, I want you to think about Christmas. What gives you Joy? Basically, we are here to be joyful in celebrating the birth of Jesus. For some, it gives joy to see all the lights and decorations in the houses and in church. For some, it is the food that mother or grandmother cooks that brings Joy. For the kids, the gifts they are going to get bring joy. There are a lot of things that bring joy to different people.

One thing is clear, Christmas brings joy to all the people. Christmas is about much deeper things than Santa, and the birth of Jesus is not just some delightful fairy tale meant to warm the heart. We measure time by this event. Christmas is about God being born physically and historically into this world and, among many other things, we have some stunning lessons to learn from the manner in which this happened.

As virtually all of our iconography around Christmas makes clear, God is born, not as some superstar whose earthly power, beauty, and muscle shadow us. No. God is born as helpless, vulnerable, thoroughly underwhelming baby who looks out at us quietly, and as we look back at him, it calls forth what's best in us.

The readings bring joy to people of Isarel when they saw the light. Through king Ahaz of Judah, people believed in seeing the light. That brought joy to them and great rejoicing. They had a reason for their joy.

The second reading tells us that Grace of God has appeared, which means the incarnation. God is with us and would deliver us from all the worldly things that hinder our joy.

In the Gospel, Jesus' birth is announced to the ordinary shepherds who rejoiced about this. Luke has described well how Joseph and Mary were out of their house for enrollment. God came into the world with all social and political context. Expectations were high on

the Messiah at that time. But the good news was given to the shepherds, the lowly people. They were joyful when they heard the good news of joy.

Pope Francis quoted St. Newman saying, "Christmas should find us always more like him, who at this time became a child for his love of us. Every Christmas should find us more simple, more humble, more saintly, more charitable, more resigned, more happy, more full of God."

How do you want your Christmas to be a joyful one? What are you joyful for?