Homily for Christmas 2025 Year A

There is always an appealing freshness about the Christmas story.

We never tire of hearing how the infant Jesus lay wrapped in swaddling clothes in a poor Manger in a stable in Bethlehem.

The shepherds guarding their flocks on the nearby hillsides were filled with all as the chorus of angels broke the silence of the night with their joyous song of praise “Glory to God in the highest and peace to his people on Earth”.

Today's great feast of the birth of Jesus celebrates the closeness of God to us, born into our ordinary human life.

It is an awesome mystery which stretches our minds beyond their normal limits, moving us towards that horizon where time touches eternity.

This new-born child is our living link with God. We are amazed and surprised that God should deign to become man in the humblest of circumstances.

The sheer daring simplicity of it all challenges us to get rid of the falseness and pretence that there is in our lives, Otherwise we will never realise our need for a saviour who will open up a door for us into the inner life of God and give us a fresh start full of glorious possibilities.

To make this sort of new beginning, we too need to adopt the vulnerability of a child, rediscover our lost innocence, and acknowledge our dependence on God.

Christmas is also a promise that we are not alone in our struggles.

Christ did not remove himself from the brokenness of our human condition but allowed himself to experience and share our poverty.

From the moment of his birth in a poor stable as one who was homeless, to the danger and exile of the strange land of Egypt, to his death on the cross as a common criminal, Jesus always associated and identified himself with the poor of this world.

The physical, spiritual, and material pore of this world.

The tiny child who drew his first breath upon the poor covering of straw in a stable in Bethlehem, was the same Christ crucified on that cross of Calvary that we might have everlasting life.

Many of us are sometimes disappointed because in our search for God, we tend to look for him in the spectacular, but today's feast should remind us that God is found right under our eyes in the ordinary, in the people and situations we take for granted.

During these past weeks of Advent, we have been reflecting on how God comes to us, but sadly too often when He knocks up on the door of our hearts we are not at home. God's entry is inhibited by all the barriers and obstacles that the risks and hurts and pains of life have forced us to erect.

If the love and the glory of God that comes to us in this tiny child is not to be lost, then we must ask the Lord for the grace, in this short life of ours, to do the things his way.

By softening our hearts and sharing what we have with the poor and the needy, we lessen the gap between what we are and what we should be.

Forgiveness is one of the hallmarks of Christmas. As well as expressing sorrow for our own sins, we must rid ourselves of all bitterness and open the doors of forgiveness to those to whom we need to be reconciled.

This is a great time for healing rifts, for mending broken friendships and letting bygones be bygones.

It is a time for a fresh start.

It is also a time for remembering especially all those who have been bereaved during this past year, and all those we ourselves have lost. The pain of loss always surfaces and is sharpest during this feast of the family.

As the years quickly roll by each Christmas mass, I see less and less of the old loved and familiar faces which graced these walls.

Outside these walls tonight, the world, for differing reasons, is a dangerous and hostile place. The size of the suffering seems to overwhelm us. But Christmas is also supremely about hope. Each year at this time our hurts and our weariness are healed, and hope is given to us once more. Not just enough hope to carry on, but that little bit of extra hope which we should shine into the lives of others.

In this feast, Christ is born into our hearts once more so let us try in the days and months ahead to bear his gift of hope into the lives of others, to a world that desperately needs it.

May I wish each and everyone of you, a very Happy and Holy Christmas, and a Peaceful and Healthy New Year.

To the Manger

This sparkling early Christmas morn

I awoke, refreshed, new-born.

Though little, less,

Some little more.

I am left, for good, for free.

Never more to return.

Questions, thoughts, unanswered, unfocussed

Place me with simplicity beside His crib.

In his innocence and stillness

I prepare to journey forth in faith.

Awake to truth, reflecting truth,

And in all this wondrous silence

The gift, once given is given once more..

Christ's body, incarnate, enfleshed in mine

And I, through love, infleshed in His

Until the very end of time.

And then, some little more.