

Homily for Christmas 2021

The Christmas message is that God is not up there or out there or distant from us or removed from your life and mine, or peering over the edge of heaven to see if we have been naughty or nice. Christmas shows us that **God wanted to be with us...** *God is with us* right here and right now. Just as you are. Just as life is. The story begins with real life. Roman taxation. A young woman unexpectedly pregnant. A mother's dream wrapped up in the birth of a child in an occupied land. And, it continues from then to now.

God with us as strength and steadfastness and patience. That which you need as you do the hard work of raising children and sustaining relationships.

God with us causing us to lift our eyes and unwrap ourselves from our sometimes-shrink-wrapped lives so we can sort through the difference between what we want and what we need and how that gets lived out in a culture and climate that incessantly tells us more is always better.

God with us as vision and hope and possibility as we wrestle with the complexities of the issues that face us – hunger and war, poverty and unemployment and political stalemate – the complexities of all those issues and the absolute simplicity of human need.

God with us right in the middle of all those places where we do our best to follow our best angels and hold faith and values and a vision for tomorrow close amidst the push and pull of life as it is.

God with us that unnerving, ever hopeful, not settling for *good enough* presence which continually challenges us to turn strangers into neighbours, and enemies into guests at the table, and to look not just inward at our own family, but outward towards that larger human family.

The promise of Christmas is that God is with us in all those moments...and more.

And tonight/today we have another opportunity to open ourselves the gift of Jesus, bringing to us all that we *truly need* in life.

And, God comes to be our

Hope. Promise. Peace. Presence. Compassion.

Who comes to be **God with us...** In every moment of every day in life just as it is.

Let us thank God for the gift of Jesus – the most perfect gift of love and remember that this season

- is full of **hope, wonder** and **amazement**.
- has **community spirit** from the shepherds.
- **Astrology** and present-giving from the wise men.
- Spiritual support from **angels** and the spiritual realm.
- A **love** so strong that Joseph sticks around to marry and look after Mary
- **Strangers helping strangers** in need allowing them to stay in a stable.
- Our hopes and **dreams** for what this baby would grow up to be and the responsibility on his shoulders from birth because we are so loved by Jesus....

What do you call an old snowman? WATER!!

Why does Santa have three gardens? So he can 'ho ho ho'!

I asked my wife what she wanted for Christmas.

She told me, "Nothing would make her happier than a diamond necklace."

So, I bought her **NOTHING**.