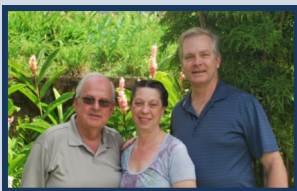




Greetings!

We want to wish you a most sincere Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! Enjoy your Christmas celebration and know that we are there with you in spirit. We again commit ourselves to you. May God continue to bless you, your families and the engaged couples of the English Caribbean Region.



**Steve & Claudia Schulz and  
Fr. Kevin Maloney.**  
*International Coordinators,  
Catholic Engaged Encounter*

Christmas Greetings!

We would like to extend our best wishes to you and your family for this Christmas, and to express our sincerest thanks for all your assistance during the past year.



We pray that the Holy Family will continue to protect you and yours in all that you do, and may you be abundantly blessed.

**Ricardo and Cintra Joachim**  
*National Coordinators, Catholic  
Engaged Encounter, T&T*

Greetings to all!

We would like to pray God's blessings on you and all who are dear to you, at this time when we celebrate the God's generosity, love, power, humility and compassion for all of us, by sending His Son as our greatest gift. May Christ ever be within us as we continue on our journey back to God.



A most blessed, peaceful, joyful Christmas within your heart, soul and spirit!

**Anthony and Angela Mitchell**  
*Caribbean Coordinators, Catholic  
Engaged Encounter English  
Speaking Caribbean*

## The Angel's Sermon Reveals the Meaning of Christmas

By Dr. Richard P. Bucher

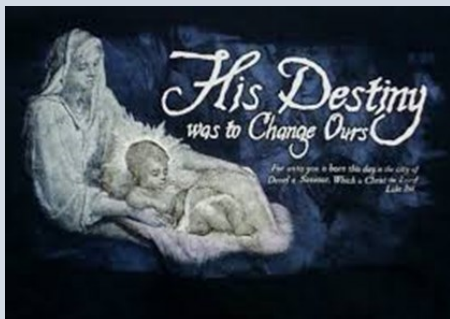
And the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which shall be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths, and lying in a manger."

It was in a lonely field outside of Bethlehem that this first "Candlelight" sermon was preached. The glorious angel of the Lord was the preacher, the reverent shepherds, the congregation. The quiet solitude of that ordinary night was shattered when heaven touched the earth.

Have you ever thought about how important that Christmas sermon was? If the shepherds had not heard it, how would they have interpreted the Galilean baby sleeping in a common stable? They would have known nothing about Him! And even if they had somehow discovered the stillness of the manger, they would have seen nothing special. The picture of commonness and ordinariness would have greeted their eyes.

On the first Christmas, God's Gospel Word made the difference between understanding and not understanding, between discovering and missing Christ's birth. Without the good Word of the angels, the Christmas manger would have attracted no attention at all. No shepherds would have made a special trip to see the tender baby born there. And even if they had, the birth of Jesus, son of Mary and Joseph, would have been so common and ordinary as to repel attention. It would have evoked pity perhaps, but wonder and awe, no.

God's Gospel announcement made the difference. The Gospel declared that what looked so humdrum on the surface was in fact a glorious event. This manger baby who evoked pity because of his knavish beginning was in truth, God's only Son, the Creator, the Savior, Christ, the Lord!



No human word could have announced this. It took the Word of God to open our eyes so that we could see the divine in the human, the glorious in the base, the marvelous in the humble. The Gospel message of the angel made the first Christmas, Christmas.

There is a lesson in all this. Here it is: Sinful man does not see things as God sees. Sinful man does not plan things as God plans. He never has -- he never will (cf. 1 Sam. 16:7). Man judges the importance of something by outward appearance. That which is big and strong,



wealthy and dynamic, beautiful and successful, man notices. That which is extra-ordinary rivets his attention. The ordinary he passes by. And when man plans something important, he feels compelled to make it look good on the outside. "If something is important," he reasons, "it must be flashy and dynamic, expensive

and beautiful -- extra-ordinary. Otherwise no one will know that it is important.

This is not the way of our God. It is His way to hide His greatness and power behind very humble means. Baptism is an example of this. So is the Lord's Supper. Unless the Gospel had told us, who would ever have guessed that such an ordinary-looking ceremony could bring us eternal life; who would have ever guessed that such plain looking wafers and wine could be the true body and blood of Christ Himself for our forgiveness? No one -- if the Word of God hadn't told us.

Christmas is the ultimate example of the way our God works. He took the most significant event in man's history, the birth of His Son, and clothed it in swaddling rags. God revealed the importance of this birth not by outward pomp, but by the preaching of the Gospel, His Word. Anyone who did not hear the Gospel proclaimed by the angel would have missed the importance entirely.

Nothing has changed. Only those who hear and believe the Gospel Word of the angel understand and experience the significance of Christmas. Only when they hear and believe that the Christ-Child their Savior, has come to redeem them from the slavery of sin, and everlasting condemnation, do they rightly interpret and experience Christmas. The Gospel Word of Luke 2 is the key that unlocks it all.

Without the Gospel there is no Christmas. But man still tries. So determined is he to make what is important look good, he's tried to apply this principle to Christmas. Having heard that Christmas is important, but not understanding why, he has tried to make the events of that first Christmas beautiful and whimsical through story and song. He has even invented new Christmas legends and myths to try to dress up the original Christmas story and make it more festive.

Thank God that we need no such window-dressing. For we, like the shepherds, have heard and believed the Gospel Word of the angel. Our Savior, Christ the Lord has been born in the city of David. Our sins are forgiven. Heaven is ours by grace. It will be a merry Christmas.

<http://www.ortlutheran.com/html/chranglel.html>

## The Christmas Story



*It was a simple scene that first one-a rough room, a young couple and nothing but a feeding trough to put the child in. It was probably quite cold and with family far away there was little*

*help. Not exactly the Hallmark moment we like to show in Christmas pageants. And yet this rustic scene marked the greatest event in the history of mankind. God's Son became human and came to earth to save us. God had promised to send a Messiah, one who would save His people. He could have easily burst on the scene as a full grown man, a seven foot warrior with fiery eyes and arms of steel. This was what many people were looking for, but it wasn't how God did it. He arrived in the arms of a young girl. He was, as another of our authors put it, "a very small package, wrapped in rags, given from the heart of God. The perfect gift."*

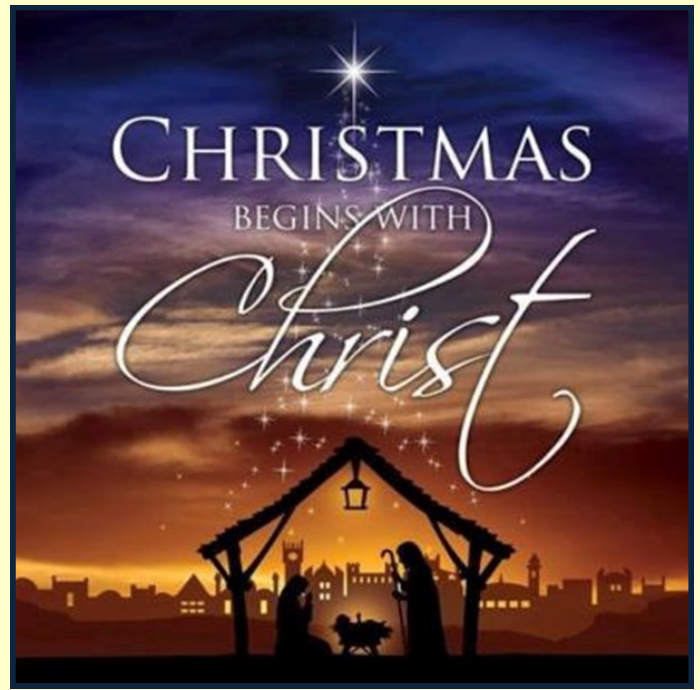
*God gave His only Son to die in our place so that we, in all our brokenness, could know forgiveness. He came so that we could know what love feels like, real love - love that never leaves, love that never disappoints, love that is never betrayed. He sent His Son into a corrupted world to bring us hope.*

### **How are you doing this Christmas?**

*Are you having a hard time finding hope in the world?  
Are you having a hard time finding peace? It doesn't have to be that way. You can have peace and find hope and know forgiveness through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ*

*Adapted from*

*<http://www.thoughts-about-god.com/christmas/christmasstory.htm>*



## This Little Babe?

by Denise J Feil

His hands are that of mercy  
His toes are full of strength  
His life a new beginning  
That has eternal length  
His skin is pure and perfect  
And eyes are full of grace  
What kind of king is born  
In such a common place?  
Our Father who art in heaven  
Our Father from above  
Truly is this your son  
You sent for us to love?  
This little babe in swaddling clothes  
Lying in a manger  
His innocence and purity...  
He'll keep us all from danger?  
Is it true if we believe in Him  
He'll lead us not astray?  
And you'll have mercy in your heart  
When it comes the judgment day?  
Oh, Alleluia, praise and glory  
As I follow I will sing  
Thank you Lord Almighty for this  
Blessed little King!

## Why the Son of God Came into the World

### A Christmas Message

#### Six Reasons for Jesus' Coming

Six witnesses speak and testify to why the Son of God came into the world. The witnesses are Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, and the writer to the Hebrews. The answers they give are six reasons for Jesus' coming:

- \* to ransom many,
- \* to call sinners,
- \* to give sight to the morally blind,
- \* to divide households,
- \* to save from divine condemnation, and
- \* to give eternal life.

Are these imaginary acts dreamed up because of our need? Or do they fit our needs because they are true? You must decide.

Let's take these reasons for Christ's coming one at a time and just let the Bible witness to each one in its own words.



#### He came as a ransom for many.

Mark 10:45—"The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."

The reason we need a ransom to be paid for us is that we have sold ourselves into sin and have been alienated from a holy God. When Jesus gave his life as a ransom, our slavemasters, sin and death and the devil, had to give up their claim on us. And the result was that we could be adopted into the family of God.

Paul put it like this in Galatians 4:4-5, "When the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law so that we might receive adoption as sons." In other



words the redemption or the ransom frees us to be a part of God's family. We had run away and sold ourselves into slavery. But God pays a ransom and redeems us out of slavery into the Father's house.

To do that, God's Son had to become a human being so that he could suffer and die in our place to pay the ransom. That is the meaning of Christmas. Hebrews 2:14 puts it like this, "Since the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death." In other words, the reason Christ took on human flesh was so that he could die, and in dying pay a ransom and free us from the power of death.

Is this an elaborate creation of desperate human imagination, or is it God's exact provision for our need?

#### 2. He came to call sinners to repentance.

Luke 5:31-32, "Jesus said to them, 'Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.'"

Jesus came to call sinners to repentance. First, there needed to be a ransom to be paid for sinners. Then, there could be a successful call to sinners. The call is based on the ransom. And Jesus says he came for both of these things.

He does not leave the ransoming or the calling to others. He ransoms and he calls. Even today he is calling through the Bible and through the preaching of the Bible. He is calling this morning.

That is the meaning of Christmas. He came to call sinners.

*Cont'd on page 5*

*How many observe Christ's birthday!  
How few, his precepts!  
O! 'tis easier to keep Holidays than Commandments.  
~Benjamin Franklin~*



### 3. He came to give sight to the morally blind.

John 9:39, "Jesus said, 'For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see.'" And John 12:46, "I have come as light into the world, that whoever believes in me might not remain in darkness."

Jesus did not merely come to ransom and to call, he also came to open people's eyes so that they can see the light and walk in it. Our problem is not just slavery needing a ransom, and lostness needing a call, our problem is also moral blindness, needing the gift of sight. We are simply blind to some spiritual realities that are utterly crucial to see and embrace.

This is why Christ came: that those who do not see may see. This is the meaning of Christmas.

### 4. Christ came to divide households.

Matthew 10:34, "Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's foes will be those of his own household."

The point of this word is not that God loves division and strife. The point is that strife and division caused by true allegiance to Jesus, are better than no strife and division, with no allegiance to Jesus. The point is that when a person is ransomed and called and given sight, something really radical happens to them.

They see everything differently with that new sight, and they have a new master because of that sovereign call, and they are wonderfully free from fear and guilt because of that sufficient ransom. And so they think differently and feel things differently and act differently. And for some in the family, that can be very threatening, and so tension develops. For this Jesus came into the world. That too is the meaning of Christmas.

### 5. He came to save from divine condemnation.

John 3:17-18, "For God sent not the Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He who believes in him is not condemned, but he who does not believe is condemned already."

God sent his Son to save us from his own just condemnation and wrath. The need for salvation implies that there is a danger we need to be saved from. That danger is sin and death and the devil. But the most serious danger of all is the danger of the condemnation of God. If God is for us, then sin and death and the devil will fail to destroy us. But if God is against us, then nothing can save us.

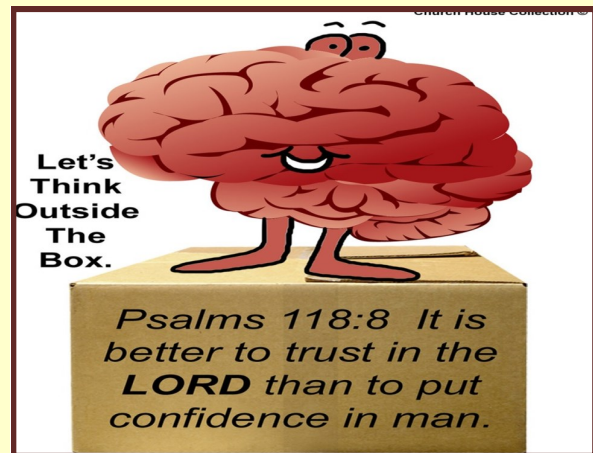
Christmas, the coming of Jesus, is God's way of being for us—if we will believe. "He who believes is not condemned, but he who does not believe is condemned already."

### 6. He came to give us eternal life.

John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes on him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Christmas means that God sent his Son so that we could believe and have eternal life.

<http://www.desiringgod.org/sermons/why-the-son-of-god-came-into-the-world>



## Being Different Can Be A Blessing

### The True Story Of Rudolph

A man named Bob May, depressed and brokenhearted, stared out his drafty apartment window into the chilling December night.

His 4-year-old daughter Barbara sat on his lap quietly sobbing. Bob's wife, Evelyn, was dying of cancer. Little Barbara couldn't understand why her mommy could never come home. Barbara looked up into her dad's eyes and asked, "Why isn't Mommy just like everybody else's Mommy?" Bob's jaw tightened and his eyes welled with tears. Her question brought waves of grief, but also of anger. It had been the story of Bob's life. Life always had to be different for Bob.

Small when he was a kid, Bob was often bullied by other boys. He was too little at the time to compete in sports. He was often called names he'd rather not remember. From childhood, Bob was different and never seemed to fit in. Bob did complete college, married his loving wife and was grateful to get his job as a copywriter at Montgomery Ward during the Great Depression.

Then he was blessed with his little girl. But it was all short-lived. Evelyn's bout with cancer stripped them of all their savings and now Bob and his daughter were forced to live in a two-room apartment in the Chicago slums. Evelyn died just days before Christmas in 1938.

Bob struggled to give hope to his child, for whom he couldn't even afford to buy a Christmas gift. But if he couldn't buy a gift, he was determined to make one - a storybook! Bob had created an animal character in his own mind and told the animal's story to little Barbara to give her comfort and hope.

Again and again Bob told the story, embellishing it more with each telling. Who was the character? What was the story all about?

The story Bob May created was his own autobiography in fable form. The character he created was a misfit outcast like he was. The name of the character? A little reindeer named Rudolph, with a big shiny nose. Bob finished the book just in time to give it to his little girl on Christmas Day.

But the story doesn't end there.

The general manager of Montgomery Ward caught wind of the little storybook and offered Bob May a nominal fee to purchase the rights to print the book. Wards went on to print, "Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer" and distribute it to children visiting Santa Claus in their stores.

By 1946 Wards had printed and distributed more than six million copies of Rudolph. That same year, a major publisher wanted to purchase the rights from Wards to print an updated version of the book.

In an unprecedented gesture of kindness, the CEO of Wards returned all rights back to Bob May. The book became a best seller. Many toy and marketing deals followed and Bob May, now remarried with a growing family, became wealthy from the story he created to comfort his grieving daughter.

But the story doesn't end there either.

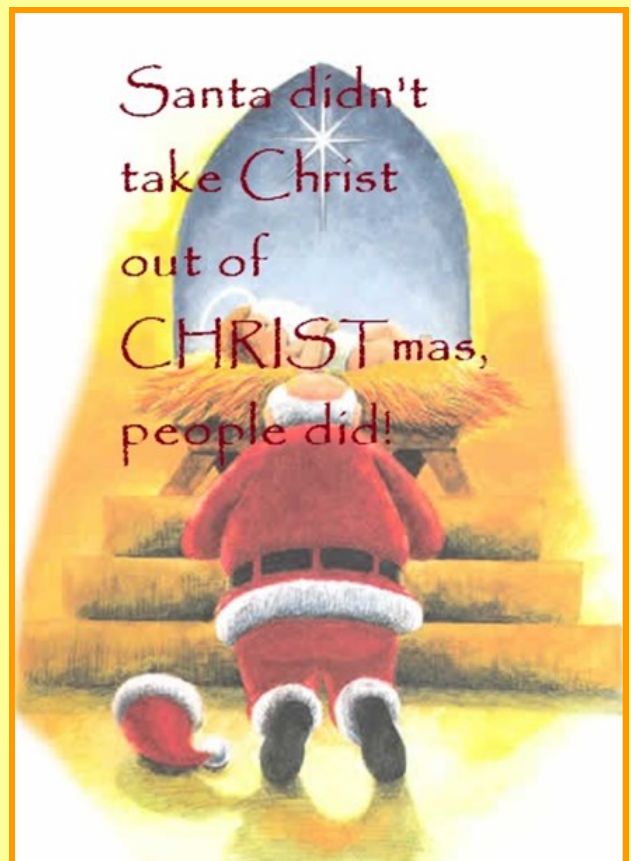
Bob's brother-in-law, Johnny Marks, made a song adaptation to Rudolph. Though the song was turned down by such popular vocalists as Bing Crosby and Dinah Shore, it was recorded by the singing cowboy, Gene Autry. "Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer" was released in 1949 and became a phenomenal success, selling more records than any other Christmas song, with the exception of "White Christmas."

The gift of love that Bob May created for his daughter so long ago kept on returning back to bless him again and again. And Bob May learned the lesson, just like his dear friend Rudolph, that being different isn't so bad. In fact, being different can be a blessing.

Author Unknown

"May Light always surround you;  
Hope kindle and rebound you.  
May your Hurts turn to Healing;  
Your Heart embrace Feeling.  
May Wounds become Wisdom;  
Every Kindness a Prism.  
May Laughter infect you;  
Your Passion resurrect you.  
May Goodness inspire  
your Deepest Desires.  
Through all that you Reach For,  
May your arms Never Tire."

~D. Simone~



## EIGHT GIFTS THAT DO NOT COST A CENT

Author unknown

### THE GIFT OF LISTENING...

But you must REALLY listen. No interrupting, no daydreaming, no planning your response. Just listening.

### THE GIFT OF AFFECTION...

Be generous with appropriate hugs, kisses, pats on the back and holds. Let these small actions demonstrate the love you have for family and friends.

### THE GIFT OF LAUGHTER...

Clip cartoons. Share articles and funny stories. Your gift will say, "I love to laugh with you."

### THE GIFT OF A WRITTEN NOTE...

It can be a simple "Thanks for the help" note or a full sonnet. A brief, handwritten note may be remembered for a lifetime, and may even change a life.

### THE GIFT OF A COMPLIMENT...

A simple and sincere, "You look great in red," "You did a super job" or "That was a wonderful meal" can make someone's day.

### THE GIFT OF A FAVOR...

Every day, go out of your way to do something kind.

### THE GIFT OF SOLITUDE...

There are times when we want nothing better than to be left alone. Be sensitive to those times and give the gift of solitude to others.

### THE GIFT OF A CHEERFUL DISPOSITION...

The easiest way to feel good is to extend a kind word to someone, really it's not that hard to say, Hello or Thank You.

*Love has a name. JESUS  
Love has a place. Our hearts.  
Love has a story.  
And it's not finished yet.*



"I hope that in this year to come, you make mistakes.

Because if you are making mistakes, then you are making new things, trying new things, learning, living, pushing yourself, changing yourself, changing your world. You're doing things you've never done before, and more importantly, you're Doing Something.

So that's my wish for you, and all of us, and my wish for myself. Make New Mistakes. Make glorious, amazing mistakes. Make mistakes nobody's ever made before. Don't freeze, don't stop, don't worry that it isn't good enough, or it isn't perfect, whatever it is: art, or love, or work or family or life.

Whatever it is you're scared of doing, Do it.

Make your mistakes, next year and forever."  
~Neil Gaiman~



"Those who love you are not fooled by mistakes you have made, or dark images you hold about yourself. They remember your beauty when you feel ugly: your wholeness when you are broken: your innocence when you feel guilty : and your purpose when you are confused.

~Alan Cohen~



Christmas symbols and characters are attractive on everyone's eyes. But unless we discover their meaning and understand the stories behind them, they will remain as mere

decorations. Let us therefore reflect with four usual symbols and characters of Christmas and see if we can get valuable lessons from them so we can celebrate this season better.



### I- THE NATIVITY

Mat 2:6 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.'

Luke 2:7 and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

1. The nativity depicts the story of the Prince of heaven who abandoned His throne, stripped off his attributes of deity, and was born as a child in manger at Bethlehem so He can be identified with his own people by personally living among them

2. As the birth of Christ makes Bethlehem among the landmarks of the world, the birth and propagation of Christianity will make a great impact to any place of the world.

3. As the birth of Christ makes a new meaning to the lowly manger, we can also find our own worth by allowing Jesus to be born in the manger of our hearts.

### II - THE STAR (MAT 2: 1-12)

Mat 2:1 Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem in

Judea, during the reign of King Herod. About that time some wise men from eastern lands arrived in Jerusalem, asking,  
Mat 2:2 "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We have seen his star as it arose, and we have come to worship him."

### S - SEEK GOD WITH YOUR WHOLE HEART

### T - TRAVEL THE JOURNEY OF FAITH

### A - ADORE THE LORD JESUS OUR SAVIOUR

### R - RESPOND AND OBEY GOD'S WORD

1. When Jesus was born, the world full of darkness found the light. Peace hope and love can only come through the birth of Jesus in our own heart.

2. The star of Christmas led those wise men to the Lord... You too can be called a star on your own right, if you lead someone to Jesus.

3. Before finding Christ, the wise men needed the light of the star outside as a guide, but when they found Jesus, the light is already shining within their hearts. Hence, they can hear the voice of God.



### III- THE GIFT S

Mat 2:11 They entered the house where the child and his mother, Mary, were, and they fell down before him and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasure chests and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.



GOLD - JESUS IS OUR KING

FRANKINCENSE - JESUS IS OUR HIGH PRIEST

MYRRH - JESUS IS OUR SAVIOUR

Cont'd on page 9



1. The wise men gave their symbolic gifts to Christ, but the gifts they gave told us that God is the one who gave the best and greatest gift for us.

#### IV – THE SHEPHERDS

Luk 2:8 And there were shepherds living out in the fields near by, keeping watch over their flocks at night.

Luk 2:9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified

Luk 2:10 But the angel said to them, Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.

Luk 2:11 Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.

Luk 2:12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.

Luk 2:16 So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.

Luk 2:17 When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child,

Luk 2:18 and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.

1. When royal kings and famous people announce the birth of their child, they usually include only the elite people on their list. But when God announced the birth of His son, it was proclaimed by heavenly angels to the lowly shepherds. This proved to us that there is no discrimination in God.

2. If God regards the poor shepherd of Bethlehem, then He is concerned with ordinary people like you and me.

3. Being shepherd was one of the most boring works during the biblical times, until they found Christ on the manger. Boring lives can be transformed into exciting ones, once you find the real reason for living.

4. Divine revelation and enlightenment can come not only in the sacred temples, but while we are doing our every day duties in our work place. Keep your ears open to God's message, because he can send his angels to give us his word while we are doing our duties every day.

5. If God can use an ordinary shepherd to become evangelist, why not an educated engineer, or nurse to become a preacher? When God calls and uses people, our efficiency always depend on our willingness and obedience

6. Seminaries and bible colleges make professional preachers, but hearing the voice of God in a personal way, makes the difference. Personal experience with God put fire on the message of the shepherds. Because of that everybody was thrilled, amazed and believed

7. God is still on the business of promoting shepherds into ambassadors for those who don't care whether or not there's salary increase

#### CONCLUSION:

#### THERE ARE THREE REACTION TO THE NEWS OF CHRIST BIRTH

1. THE REACTION OF HATRED AND HOSTILITY – HEROD
2. THE REACTION OF INDIFFERENCE – THE CHIEF PRIEST AND SCRIBES
3. THE REACTION OF ADORING WORSHIP

What is your personal reaction to Christ's Birth today?  
Sermon shared by Randy Bataanon

<http://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/rediscovering-the-meaning-of-christmas-randy-bataanon-sermon-on-christmas-163160.asp?Page=1>



"Tomorrow, is the first blank page of a 365 page book.  
Write a good one."  
~Brad Paisley ~

## What Christmas Is Really About

By Fr. Larry Rice, CSP

Over the centuries, the celebration of Christmas has gathered so much extraneous material that it's difficult for most of us to remember precisely what we're celebrating. Take away Frosty the Snowman, Rudolph the red-nosed Reindeer, Santa Claus, and the elves. Put aside the Currier and Ives Christmas cards, Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol", and that little kid who wants the toy gun. Let go of the gift-giving, the parties, the charities, and a White Christmas. Let's even forget, for a moment, about our hopes for peace on Earth and good will toward all.

What's left, and what remains the theological and spiritual core of Christmas, is the Incarnation. It's the reality that God has taken on human flesh, been born as one of us, like us in all things except sin. We Christians believe that in Jesus Christ, the human and the divine are brought together, are simultaneous realities. It was part of God's plan and purpose that he should experience life as we experience it— being born as a child, living and growing as a human child, knowing all our wonder and fear and joy.

In the coming of Jesus into the world, our human nature could be redeemed, and his divine nature could be concretely accessible to us. The world was changed by Jesus coming into it, giving birth to our hopes for salvation. Through his birth, his life, his teaching, and his death and resurrection, God Incarnate has made possible the Peace on Earth we long for, and the love and reconciliation we still believe can reign.

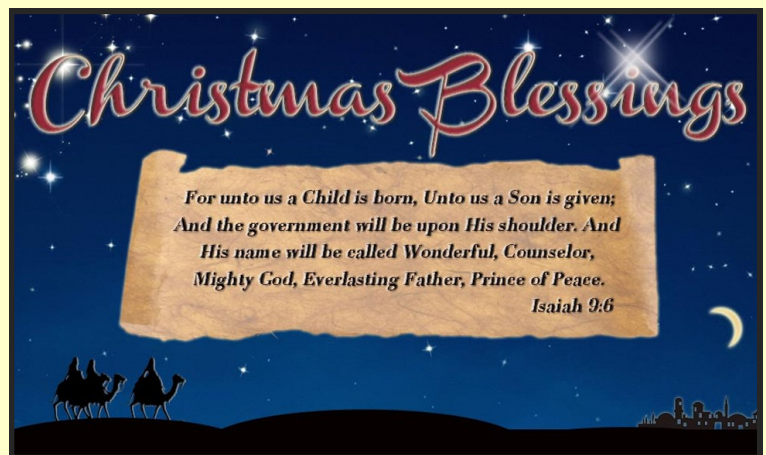
So, happy Feast of the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, and Merry Christmas. May God continue to bless us with his healing love throughout the year.

From <http://www.foryourmarriage.org/what-christmas-is-really-about/>



### GIVE THE FOLLOWING GIFTS:

- To your enemy . . . forgiveness,*
  - To your opponent . . . tolerance.*
  - To a friend . . . your heart.*
  - To a customer . . . service.*
  - To all men . . . charity.*
  - To every child . . . a good example*
  - To yourself . . . respect*
- Author Unknown



Ray and Pamela Garcia 30 years married

We thank God for Ray and Pamela Garcia, members of our CEETT team, and ask God's continued blessings upon them as they celebrate a milestone anniversary.

May the Lord ever be present to you, and may He be your guide, protector and your companion on your journey together.

Congratulations!

## "Dat Baby Jesus - He Makes me Laugh"

By Katherine Kehler

*"I have set the Lord always before me. Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure."* Psalm 16:8 and 9

Brennan Manning, in his book, *The Relentless Tenderness of Jesus*, tells of an experience he had at an airport. It was just before Christmas and he was in the Chicago airport waiting to get a flight to Texas for a week-end retreat. But because of a severe storm, he and thousands of others were not going anywhere. The flights were all delayed. Public address systems were blaring, people were at the ticket counter demanding a projected departure time, children were crying, some people were just sitting and staring.

Then he noticed a middle-aged black woman cradling a child in her arms and laughing. Manning asked her, *"Would you mind telling me why you're so happy?"*

*"Sho,"* she said. *"Christmas is coming and dat baby Jesus---He make me laugh."*

According to the Psalm 16, verses 8 and 9, focusing on Jesus at all times is the key to a happy and joyful heart. How about you?

During the Christmas season, our already busy life become more busy.

Are you 'setting the Lord before you' today?

Do you want to have a merry Christmas?

Bring Jesus into all your activities.

Talk to Him all day long.

He will make you laugh!

*Father, you fill us with joy in your presence. Give us the grace to remember to enjoy your presence. We want to laugh, Lord. Amen*

