

From the Office of Liturgy

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“The Son of God became Man to enable Men to become the Sons of God.”

From Mere Christianity by C.S. Lewis

I am writing this reflection while the world is under the second wave of the Covid-19 Pandemic, and many people share the common feeling that this year Christmas will be very different. Should we sing with Faith Hill: “Where are you Christmas? Why can’t I find you? Why have you gone away...?”

Certainly, we may relate to these words, but as Christians, we know that Christmas is here. For centuries Christians have been celebrating Christmas in good and in bad times and were strengthened by the peace and joy that comes with this holy season. At Christmas we celebrate one of the main mysteries of Christian faith the mystery of Incarnation, which means God being born in human flesh, true God and true Man. It reveals the unconditional love of God to all creation, but first to human beings. A mystery is something we contemplate on our knees; we reflect upon it and we celebrate it. We discover its meaning in songs and in symbols, in ritual prayers and gestures, and it moves us out of ourselves to share it with others. A mystery is to be experienced.

So, we gather with the Church community to celebrate the mystery of God becoming one with us, the Emmanuel. Year after year, we hear the same story again and again. The story does not change, but we change, our life circumstances change, the world is changing. We celebrate the same mystery in different life circumstances. This year, we may not be able to attend our favourite Christmas Mass time. Our children will not be taking part in the Christmas Pageant or even celebrate the Children’s Liturgy. Communal singing of our heart-warming Christmas Carols may not happen this year, as congregational singing is not encouraged, or even allowed. Regardless of the circumstances, we will continue to celebrate Christmas following local guidelines and the directives of the bishops.

Our worship spaces and our homes will be decorated as always; with Christmas trees and lights everywhere to remind us of the joy of the season. The Nativity scenes will be displayed in Churches and in our households. Attending in-person or online, we will hear the good news; “Today is born our Saviour Christ the Lord”. Once again, we will kneel down in adoration on front of the Nativity Scene. Mary and Joseph are guarding the manger in the company of the sheep, shepherds, and angels, where the Son of God born in human flesh is laying down as a newborn Babe, and will sing “*O come let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him, Christ the King...*”. The words of Christmas carols will warm our hearts and move us from the historical fact 2000 years ago to the mystery it signifies: The Son of God is now one of us, Emmanuel – God with us.

On Christmas Day we will hear in the Gospel of John “*at the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God... and the Word became flesh and lived among us and ... to all who receive Him, He gave power to become children of God*”. Through our baptism we, humans share in God’s divine nature. We become daughters and sons of God, sisters and brothers of Jesus Christ. That Word comes to us again and again, calling us to enter into that great mystery so that as humans, we may live more in Christ, as sons and daughters of God and continue the Mystery unfolding.



When the song of the Angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone
When the kings and princes are home
When shepherds are back with their flock

The work of Christmas begins:

To find the lost and the lonely one,
To heal the broken soul with love,
To feed the hungry children with warmth and good food,
To feel the earth below the sky above,
To free the prisoner from all chains,
To make the powerful care,
To rebuild the nations with strength of good will,
To see God’s children everywhere,
To bring hope to every task you do,
To dance at a baby’s new birth,
To make music in an old person’s heart,
And sing to the colours of the earth.

Poem by Howard Thurman