

CHRISTMAS DAY



Guido Remi
The Nativity at Night 1640

THE GOSPEL: John 1:1-18

And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

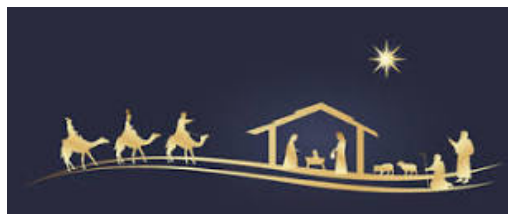
The
angels sang
in wonder and awe.
And the shepherds listened.

Down went the wall
between heaven and earth.
Through it poured Love
beyond all telling,

holding onto our hands,
laughing with us,
crying with
us,

just
a baby,

whose name
was Jesus



THE FIRST READING. Isaiah 9:1-6

You have brought them abundant joy and great rejoicing.

For
a child
is born to us,
a son given us.

Mary gave birth to her firstborn son.

Upon his
shoulders dominance rests.
His victory is vast and forever peaceful.

You will find him wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger.

Here is the name they give him:
Wonder-Counselor.

God-Hero,
Father-Forever
Prince of Peace.

Jesus.

Come,
let us adore him.



THE SECOND READING Hebrews 1:1-6

***For to which of the angels did God ever say:
“You are my son; this day I have I begotten you”?***

To
our forebears
God spoke in partial
and various ways, tacitly
through prophets and through others
as through a wall or over it or around it.

Now
he speaks directly
through his
Son.”

O God
in your generous love,
you talk to us
face to face,

straight to our hearts
in Jesus.

Let us listen,
help us hear.



REFLECTION: God is with us *(Long, but worth reading! – Sr. Maura)*

The journey of Joseph and Mary on that long road to Bethlehem conjures up an eternal story for us, a story that appears on Christmas cards, paintings, and stained-glass windows, a story that is always fresh, and touches the deepest part of our soul. It is the story of love. Love is the reason God wanted to enter the world as one of us. The angels and shepherds rejoice that this story is being told, and all of creation settles into this moment when we know, in the firmament of our hearts, that God’s love has come for us.

This is our moment to enter into a very quiet wonder, a hope that we could all know this God who wants to be with us, and that we can share this God with each other as a gift. This is a moment of silent mystery and joy, to be able to hold the One who is Word of God made just like us. This is a time of mutual embrace, where we hold the Christ child, and God holds us with

pride and astonishment. On Christmas, as we worship in Church or gather with loved ones, we are the people we hoped we would be all year long.

Christmas brings about the possibilities for peace, harmony, and right relationship, at any level, whether it is within families or the family of nations. We know peace is possible, and we pray for peace throughout the year. Tonight, we get a sign. A child has been born for us, a Son is given, and he is the Son of Peace.

In our Christian spirituality, we yearn to see and love the world the way God sees, knows, and loves the world. We become more understanding, patient, loving people as our worldview becomes more like Christ's. We know that we have the desire and ability to let go of grudges, hurts, and anger and to replace it with goodwill, kindness, and radical affection for one another, in which God continues to reconcile and bring all into harmony. It is the day we know and understand that we are all brothers, sisters, friends of God, and we treat each other with dignity and honor. This birth gives us the courage to make what seems impossible, a new reality based on God's mercy.

Today is not just a day when we look upon this birth in wonder; it is a day when God beholds us in wonder, to see the miracle of the persons that we are, to marvel at who we are becoming, to admire how we have become the people we hoped we would be all year long. We sit in mutual wonder and admiration in this moment of stillness, and we know this to be real and true. This is a moment of goodness, a time to share goodwill to others when it doesn't make sense, but that our actions change the world for good. God was creative in bringing about the birth of Jesus to a young man and woman from Nazareth, and God continues to be creative in inviting us into this creative venture, where our goodness and mercy, changes the world one heart at a time. Let us bring our hearts, full of awe and wonder, to our world that is hungering for his mercy and reconciliation. A very happy Christmas, my dear friends. For unto us, a child is born. (*John Predmore S.J.*)



(A painting inspired by a photo of a woman in the Kyiv Underground tending to her baby, while overhead, missiles continue to explode. *Christ comes...*)