

God With Us Now and Ever More

December 25, 2020, The Nativity of The Lord

Gospel of John 1:1-18

Fr. Brad

All of us are living under our own individual family and personal circumstances this Christmas, happy and sad.

And we all recognize in our hearts each of us has a longing for love, acceptance and peace.

The season of Advent invited us to focus one at a time on the virtues of hope, peace, joy, and love and to wait.

Before Jesus was born into the world, the people of Israel had their hopes and longings for a Messiah. And they were in effect waiting. In the meantime, they lived difficult and often isolating and oppressed lives, families were split apart, there was slavery, suffering, and uncertainty every day.

But as a people, their narrative was that God would follow up on a promise he made to them that has been celebrated every year since the exodus from slavery in Egypt.

Today, we can still very much relate to such a brokenness in this world. And....under this pandemic, even more so.

With the birth of Jesus comes a strong message of hope from above. It would become, for countless follower, the tangible reassurance of the presence of God who does not just reign from above in a very broken world, but of the presence of God IN a very broken world.

As we reflect, right now, today, on the birth the child Jesus, we ponder the meaning of the ***Word made flesh.***

Few were privileged to witness first hand, the first hours and days of Jesus' life in our world, a helpless infant commended to the care of a virgin mother and caring protector in Joseph.

But to this day 2000 years later, we celebrate His birth as a sign of our own renewal, and the hope in the fulfilment for which we all long. And through our own faith and a generosity of heart, we have a part to play in bringing it about.

In His human live, as Jesus grew from infancy to adulthood, to mission. He taught, He healed, He forgave, He loved. And in His death and resurrection He demonstrates how to approach the world in truth, face suffering and death, all which remain within the realm of God's loving plan. He continues to love us.

The God of the universe, **WITH US** in person, shines a light for us in a dark world, and continues to be with us through the Holy Spirit.

In the Eucharist, Jesus continues to nourish us with His life, that we may carry on His work in the world.

We are invited over and over again to participate with Him.

As we mature in faith, we realize that more and more we are invited constantly, to become more and more like Him. And that through Him, with Him, and in Him, and in His way of love and compassion, we find the peace and joy we all long for.

Perhaps the message of Christmas may be summed up nicely in this Christmas verse:

When the song of the angel is stilled,

When the star in the sky is gone, when the kings and princes are home,

When the shepherds are back with their flock,

Then the work of Christmas begins:

To find the lost...to heal the broken...to feed the hungry...

To release the prisoner...to rebuild the nation...

To bring peace to all...

To make music in the heart!

That is the recipe for a truly Merry Christmas.