

Introduction

- a. nostalgia
- b. Victor / friar / ^{Sister} people

It is the Midwife Librarian of the Bible or Xst

- a. "I come to proclaim Good News... a Saviour has been born to you"
- b. "The grace of God has appeared..."
- c. "The people who have walked in darkness..."

A. Announcement
of Good News

B. Statement

- a. about God's love for us: God so loved the world, that
- b. about God's union in us: He did not consider his divine equality to be clay to, but emptied himself, becoming like us in all the best in } Word became flesh...
- c. about the very nature of God + union like that:
The Son is the reflection of the Father's glory,
the exact representation of the Father's being

C. Drama of Personal
Witness

d. about our human quest and desire -

a. human yearning + growing w in the human spirit

to dream the impossible dream, to reach the unreachable star

"You have made us for yourself, O Lord, our hearts are restless until they rest in thee."

"It is vain to reject the golden word and worldly dream,
and to live temperate, justly, & devoutly in this age
as we await our blessed hope..."

In short, Midwife Librarian of the Bible or Xst is a proclamation about the inevitable and incomprehensible design of God for us.

It is an inevitable, inescapable, and irrefutable ~~the~~ proclamation & experience that God in Xst has wedded himself to humankind - forever and ever, till

the end of time.

II But God ^{in Xth} did ~~not~~ enter a dream world. Midnight 1980 also reveals the grain and ^{gray} ~~gray~~ ~~reality~~ ^{reality} of a broken world.

a. (M) - social order

tonight, in the city of Davis, in Berkeley, the in visible conflict, the dream, ^{v.i.} ~~the~~ hostages will pray for peace in a prison and symbolize the demand for international law, ^{which} ~~and~~ the people ^{of} ~~the~~ dream symbolize the obvious power of foreign power in their own country;

In El Salvador, a country whose name means Saviors, violence ^{is} ~~is~~ claim the lives of the powerless poor, while martyrs and missionaries for our own Davis & Cal. continue raise their voice and gain the floor in the name of the World Council, God, Love, Faith for a Peace & Peace for our own country, life, liberty - the pursuit of happiness in fact still to may a dear demand & a vision lost.

And, as we approach the end of the year of the family, we must acknowledge that the separated & divided family is now statistically a normal reality.

b. (M) in the psychological order - too many have no answer to the question, who are I? why do I exist? what is the ^{God} ~~purpose~~ of my life? what is the purpose of life itself? The vast numbers of our people, both young & older, who escape into drugs, promiscuous relationships, coexistence, & amatechic, ~~and~~ are witnesses to deep human problems ~~that~~ ^{are} in the personal & social psyche of humankind. d. (M)

c. Finally, it is (m) in the reported order?

How many of us truly love the faith and live. How many of us make fundamental decision about our personal lives based on faith? on our belief in God, on the treasured teachings and instruction of the Church? How many of us form our consciences, on gospel values. It is (m) Too few, it is (m)

III. There will always be a tension between the (m) Culture of the R. & K. & the (m) of the Order of the Word. There will too often be two distinct agendas, two distinct value systems, two distinct sources of inspiration and motivation:

For ^{the} one there is love, for the other love,

there is injury and pardon;

" " doubt " faith

" " despair " hope

" " darkness " light

" " sadness " joy

IV. My friend, ^{in Ps. 138} as you Bishop do thank you accepting the challenge of living the faith ~~the faith~~ I beg you prayer that I, too, may live that faith. It is our challenge together. We walk together in truth, in charity, in peace, in faith, in justice.

V. My knee prayer in that end of our instruments of the Mission's peace, agents of his reconciliation, herald of his Gospel, prophets of his justice, & transmitters of his love! May this Holy Eucharist gather us in unity and ^{spiritual} unity.

Our Lady of Angels
Christmas 1980
Midnight

Introduction - *personal joy*

- a. nostalgia
- b. Fr. Viator

I. It is the Midnight Celebration of the Birth of Christ

A. Announcement of Good News

announces
"I come to proclaim good news to you - a saviour has been born to you, the Messiah and Lord. (Luke)

affirms
"The grace of God has appeared, offering salvation to all men." (Titus)

foretells
"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light." (Isaiah)

B. Statement about God and about us

a. about God's love for us: "God so loved the world that he sent his only-begotten Son."

b. about God's union and communion with humankind:

"Though he was in the form of God, he did not deem equality with God something to be clung to. Rather, he emptied himself, and took the form of a slave, being born in the likeness of men."

"The Word became flesh, and dwelled among us."

c. about the very nature of God and the inner life of God:

"This Son is the reflection of the Father's glory, the exact representation of the Father's being." (Hebrews)

d. about our human quest

a basic yearning and groaning within the human spirit to dream the impossible dream, to reach the unreachable stars:

"You have made us for yourself, O Lord. Our hearts are restless until they rest in You."

"It trains us to reject godless ways and worldly desires, and to live temperately, justly, and devoutly in this age as we await our blessed hope..." (Titus)

In short, the Midnight Celebration of the Birth of Christ is a proclamation about the inscrutable and incomprehensible designs of God for us. It is an inescapable, irresistible, and irrefutable proclamation and experience that God in Christ has wedded himself to humankind - forever and ever, til the end of time!

II. But God in Christ did not enter a dream world. Midnight 1980 also reveals the grim and gray realities of a broken world.

A. It is Midnight in the Social Order

- at this very time,*
- a. ~~tonight~~, in the City of David, in Bethlehem, there ~~is violent conflict~~; It is Midnight.
- b. In Iran, U.S. hostages will pray for peace in a prison which symbolizes the disregard for international law, while the people of Iran are symbols of the abusive powers of foreign forces that impinge upon their own rights. It is Midnight.
- c. In El Salvador, a country whose name means Saviour, violence still claims the lives of the powerless poor, while our own martyrs and missionaries from the Diocese of Cleveland continue to raise their voices and give their lives in the name of the Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, and Prince of Peace.
- d. In our own country, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness is for still too many a dream deferred and a vision lost. And, as we approach the end of the year of the family, we must acknowledge that ~~the broken home~~ the broken home is statistically a normal reality.

My friends, it is Midnight in the Social Order.

B. It is Midnight in the Psychological Order

- a. too many have no answer to the question, Who am I? Why do I exist? What is the goal of my life? What is the purpose of life itself? The vast numbers of our people, who escape into drugs, abusive relationships, consumerism, and materialism are witnesses to deep human problems that plague the human psyche.

It is Midnight in the Psychological Order.

C. Finally, it is Midnight in the Spiritual Order.

How many of us truly cherish the faith and live the faith? How many of us make fundamental decisions about our lives based on faith, based upon our belief in a loving and caring God, based upon the treasured instructions of the Church and the example of its heroic men and women, its saints, its contemporary exemplars, the ordinary good people whom we encounter in our day to day lives? How many of us form our consciences on gospel values. *There is for many a crisis of faith.*

It is Midnight in the Spiritual Order!

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Our Lady of Angels
Christmas Midnight, 1980

III. My brothers and sisters, there will always be a tension between
Midnight Celebration of the Birth of Christ and the Midnight Order of the
World. There will ^{often} be ~~too often~~ two distinct agendas, two distinct value
systems, two distinct sources of inspiration and motivation.

For the one there is hatred, for the other love;
there is injury and there is pardon;
there is doubt and faith;
there is despair and hope;
there is darkness and light;
there is sadness and there is joy.

My friends, with Bishop Pilla I thank you for accepting the challenge
of living the meaning of the Midnight Celebration of the Word-Made-Flesh.
I beg your prayers that I, too, may live that faith. It is our challenge
together - bishops, priests, religious, lay men and women. We must walk
together in truth, in justice, in peace, in freedom, in love.

My Christmas prayer is that each of us will be instruments of the
Messiah's peace, agents of His reconciliation, heralds of his gospel,
prophets of his justice, and troubadours of His love!

May this Holy Eucharist of the Midnight Celebration of the Birth
of Christ gather us in unity and nourish us in love.

(on to next page for poem)

~~My friends,~~ as the poet Frank Horne put it in December of 1942:

The wise guys
tell me
that Christmas
is Kid Stuff...
Maybe they've got
something there --
Two thousand years ago
three wise guys
chased a star
across a continent
to bring
frankincense and myrrh
to a Kid
born in a manger
with an idea in his head...

And as the bombs
crash
all over the world
today
the real wise guys
know
that we've all
got to go chasing stars
again
in the hope
that we can get back
some of that
Kid Stuff
born two thousand years ago.

*May this Holy Eucharist of the Midnight Celebration of the
Birth of Christ gather us in unity and nourish us in love.*

The Midnight Celebration
of the Birth of Christ
The Church of St. George
December 25, 1982

"While they were there the days of her confinement were completed,
She gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling
clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them
in the place where travelers lodged," Luke 2: 6-7

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord Jesus:

This is the Midnight Celebration of the Birth of
Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ:

The darkest time in the year,
The poorest place in the town,
Cold, and a taste of fear,
Man and woman alone,
What can we hope for here?
More light than we can learn,
More strength than we can treasure,
More love than we can earn
More peace than we can measure
Because one Child is born:

As though a single flake
Of snow touching the earth
Would all our thirsting slake
And turn all death to birth
Bidding our spirits wake

To what makes the many one,
The deep solicitude

Which bred both star and bone,
Claiming, by stable and rood,
God's will to be our own.

Christopher Fry

skip

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Christmas Midnight
St. George

Abundant joy and great rejoicing, the Good News redefines
and reshapes the symbol of Midnight:

"I come to proclaim good news to you -
a Saviour has been born to you,
the Messiah and Lord," (Luke)

"The grace of God has appeared, offering
salvation to all men," (Titus)

"The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light," (Isaiah)

The Midnight Proclamation of this Good News trumpets a new
melody about God and about us -

about God's love for us:

"God so loved the world,
that he sent his only begotten Son"

about God's union and communion with mankind:

Though he was in the form of God,
he did not deem equality with God
something to be clung to,
Rather, he emptied himself,
and took the form of a slave,
being born in the likeness of men,"

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Christmas Midnight

St. George

about the very nature and inner life of God:

"This Son is the reflection of the
Father's glory,

the exact representation of the
Father's being" (Hebrews)

"The Word became flesh,
and dwelled among us," (John)

about our human quest:

a basic yearning and groaning within the human
spirit - to dream the impossible dream, to
reach the unreachable stars:

"You have made us for yourself, O Lord,
Our hearts are restless until they rest in You,"
(Augustine)

"It trains us to reject godless ways
and worldly desires, and to live
temperately, justly, and devoutly
in this age as we await our blessed hope..."

(Titus)

In short, the Midnight Celebration of the Birth of Christ is a proclamation about the inscrutable and incomprehensible designs of God for us. It is an inescapable, irresistible, and irrefutable proclamation and experience that God in Christ has wedded himself to humankind - forever and ever, til the end of time!

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Christmas
St. George

But God in Christ does not enter a dream world. Midnight 1982 also ^{symbolizes} ~~reveals~~ the grim and gray realities of a broken world. It IS MIDNIGHT!

It is Midnight in the Social Order. At this very time, in the City of David, in Bethlehem, there are great tensions and seemingly irreconcilable differences. It is Midnight.

In your own native land of Lithuania, there is persecution, imprisonment, the curtailment of basic freedoms, the denial of fundamental human rights, the destruction of churches and schools, the closings of orphanages, hospitals, homes for the aged, the suppression of newspapers and publishing houses. It is Midnight!

In El Salvador, a country whose very name means "Saviour," violence still claims the lives of the powerless poor, while our missionaries lives are threatened when ^{they} ~~their~~ raise their voices and preach in the name of the Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, and Prince of Peace. It is Midnight!

In our own country, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness is still for too many a dream deferred and a vision lost. As we approach the end of the year, the statistics of unemployment, poverty and hunger represent dreadful realities, and large expenditures for nuclear armaments forecast further impoverishment of the human spirit. It is Midnight in the Social Order.

It is Midnight in the Psychological Order. Too many of our people have no answer to the question: "Who am I? Why do I exist? What is the goal of my life? What is the purpose of life itself? The large

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St. George

numbers of our people who escape into drugs, abusive relationships, consumerism, and materialism are witnesses to deep human problems that plague the human psyche. It is Midnight in the Psychological Order.

Finally, it is Midnight in the Spiritual Order. How many of us truly cherish the faith and live the faith? How many of us make fundamental decisions about our lives based on faith, based upon the belief in a loving and caring God, based upon the treasured instructions of the Church and the example of its heroic men and women, its saints, its contemporary exemplars, the ordinary good people whom we encounter in our day to day lives. How many of us form our consciences on gospel values? There is for so many a crisis of faith. Indeed, it is Midnight in the Spiritual Order!

My Brothers and Sisters of St. George, there will always be great tensions between the Midnight Celebration of the Birth of Christ and the Midnight Order of the World. There will often be two distinct agendas, two distinct values systems, two distinct sources of inspiration and motivation:

For one there is hatred, for the other, love;
there is injury, and there is pardon;
there is doubt, and there is faith;
there is despair, and there is hope;
there is darkness, and there is light;
there is sadness and there is joy.

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Christmas

St. George

My friends, with Bishop Pilla I thank you for accenting the challenge of living the meaning of the Midnight Celebration of the Word-Made-Flesh. I beg your prayers that I, too, may live that faith. It is our challenge together - Father Bacevice, Father Wright, the parishioners of St. George, all bishops, priests, religious, and lay men and women. We must walk together in truth, in justice, in peace, in freedom, in love.

My Christmas prayer is that each of us will be instruments of the Messiah's peace, agents of his reconciliation, heralds of his gospel, prophets of his justice, and troubadours of his peace!

Back in 1942, when the world was in a similar dilemma, the poet Frank Horne, captured it so beautifully:

The wise guys
tell me
that Christmas
is Kid Stuff,...
Maybe they've got
something there --
Two thousand years ago
three wise guys
chased a star
across a continent
to bring
frankincense and myrrh
to a Kid

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Christmas

St. George

born in a manger
with an idea in his head,,,
And as the bombs
crash
all over the world
today
the real wise guys
know
tht we've all
got to go chasing stars
again
in the hope
that we can get back
some of that
Kid Stuff
born two thousand years ago,

May this Holy Eucharist of the Midnight Celebration of the Birth of Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, gather us in unity and nourish us in love. May Mary, whose womb ^{was} as the first tabernacle for the Saviour, intercede for us, so that the inn of our hearts may be a dwelling place for the Christ Child.

"While they were there the days of her confinement were completed. She gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the place where travelers lodged."

Trinity High School
Christmas Liturgy
December 22, 1983
11:00 a.m.

"IN THOSE DAYS CAESAR AUGUSTUS PUBLISHED A DECREE ORDERING A CENSUS OF THE WHOLE WORLD."

Introduction

August 28, 1983 -- Bishop Pilla published a pastoral letter on youth previous to this he had ordered a census of the youth of the Diocese of Cleveland

You poured out your hearts to him and shared your deepest thoughts about your problems, aspirations, and hopes. In a sense, you told him what you need, in order that your hearts might be better disposed to welcome Christ into your lives, so that you might no longer walk in darkness but in the light of Christ.

Reflecting on that experience of consultation and on the Bishop's pastoral letter, there are two thoughts I would like to share with you about you: 1) something you should ^{understand} know about yourselves; 2) something you should understand about others.

I. The banner displayed at a high school liturgy: YOUTH IS MADE NOT FOR PLEASURE BUT FOR HEROIS:

I am made not just to have a good time, to play around, or to please myself
Though I am young, I am made for serious living, working, studying, praying....
I am made for greatness; I am made for a purpose;
With whatever talents and gifts God has given me, with the enormous amounts of energy God has given me, I am called to the height, breadth, and depth of human living: I am called to greatness.

Mr friends, I say the same about you in this stage of your life: YOU ARE CALLED TO HEROISM. In the words of Paul's letter to Titus, it is possible for you "to reject godless ways and worldly desires, and live temperately, justly, and devoutly in this age, as you await our blessed hope, the appearing of Our Saviour Jesus Christ."

To quote Bishop Pilla:

There is a goodness and giftedness in each of you that must be acknowledged and nurtured and affirmed. You bring to this world of ours, this Church of ours, a perspective that can cause us to see our faith with a different vision. You hold exciting visions of what tomorrow could be. Your idealism is a sign of hope. Your spontaneous acceptance of life is filled with enthusiasm and a vitality that charges the air around you with energy. You have a basic honesty which demands that you, your friends, and the adult community live authentic lives, without phoniness of any kind. This same demand for honesty is at the heart of accepting Jesus and living the gospel.

II. SOMETHING YOU MUST UNDERSTAND ABOUT OTHERS:

EVERY HUMAN BEING IS A CHILD OF GOD
loved by God
created in his image and likeness
called by Christ to the privilege and cost of discipleship

If I may dramatize this point, let me say that the person whom you dislike the most is a child of God and commands your respect. And, yes, the person who has harmed you the most is a child of God and commands your respect. IF WE ALL UNDERSTOOD THIS, THEN THERE WOULD BE LESS DISLIKING AND MORE LOVING, LESS HARMING AND MORE HEALING. MY FRIENDS, THE WORD BECAME FLESH FOR ALL: CHRIST WAS BORN FOR EACH AND EVERYONE OF US. IN CHRIST, WE ARE BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN THE FAMILY OF GOD.

Students, the battered women at Templum House, the hungry, thirsty, homeless, alcoholic, and mentally disturbed at the West Side Catholic Center, those dieing of cancer at Holy Family Cancer Home are as much children of God as any one of us: they command our respect, in Christ they have a dignity beyond measure. Whatever we do in their behalf is something we owe them, because they are children of God. LET ME SAY TO YOU, I AM PROUD OF YOU FOR WHAT YOU HAVE BEEN DOING FOR THESE LEAST OF OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS. IN HELPING THE POOR, YOU BECOME RICH IN MERCY AND COMPASSION, AND GOD SHALL BLESS YOU FOR IT. THOSE WHOM SOCIETY SO EASILY PASSES BY, YOU HAVE EMBRACED WITH SPECIAL AFFECTION.

One final word, my friends: WE LIVE IN A WORLD AT WAR AND YEARNING FOR PEACE. There are now forty-five wars being waged around the globe and thereis an increasing threat of nuclear annihilation. Borrowing the words of Our Holy Father, I say to you: "YOU HAVE TO CREATE A BETTER WORLD THAN YOUR ANCESTORS. IF YOU DON'T, THE BLOOD WILL CONTINUE TO RUN, AND TOMORROW TEARS WILL GIVE WITNESS TO THE SORROW OF YOUR CHILDREN. I CALL ON YOU TO FIGHT WITH ALL THE ENERGY OF YOUR YOUTH AGAINST HATE AND VIOLENCE, UNTIL LOVE AND PEACE IS ESTABLISHED IN YOUR NATIONS."

Finally, I make the poetry of Langston Hughes my Christmas wish to you:

Peace on Earth

I DREAM A WORLD

Langston Hughes

I dream a world where man
No other will scorn,
Where love will bless the earth
And peace its paths adorn.
I dream a world where all
Will know sweet freedom's way,
Where greed no longer saps the soul
Nor avarice blights our day.
A world I dream where black or white,
Whatever race you be,
Will share the bounties of the earth
And every man is free,
Where wretchedness will hang its head,
And joy, like a pearl,
Attends the needs of all mankind.
Of such I dream ---
Our world!

The Celebration of the Birth
of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ
The Church of Saint Colman
December 25, 1983
8:00 p.m.

You have nothing to fear. I come to proclaim
good news to you - tidings of great joy
to be shared by the whole people. This day
in David's city a saviour has been born to you,
the Messiah and Lord. Luke 2: 10-11

My Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

This is an awesome, fascinating, startling, and
baffling mystery we celebrate tonight - the birth of our
Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. It is a mystery, I say:
an event from the mind, heart, and spirit of God -
solely of God and from God. I repeat, it is a mystery -
this unfathomable happening in human history astounds
human intelligence. Only by the gift of faith from the God
from whom the mystery comes can we approach this marvelous
mystery, this awesome answer, this fascinating feast, this
startling story, this baffling belief.

Jesus has become flesh, my friends! WHAT DOES
THIS MEAN?

He has come! the skies are telling;

He has quit the glorious dwelling;

And first the tidings came to us, the humble shepherd folk.

He has come to field and manger,

And no more is God a stranger:

He comes as Common Man at home with cart and crooked yoke.

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Saint Colman
Christmas

Jesus became flesh! He became one of us! WHAT
DOES THIS MEAN?

More light than we can learn,
More strength than we can treasure,
More love than we can earn,
Because one Child is born.

Yes, my brothers and sisters, Jesus has robed himself in our mortality, he has emptied himself in a human body, "tiny-ed" himself in a human mind, he has frailled himself in an earthen vessel, he has imprisoned himself in the created world.

WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN? Listen to the parable:

It was Christmas eve. Sean and Judy and their children were getting ready to go to church. However, Sean decided that he would not go. "I simply can't understand what Christmas is all about, this claim that God became a man," he told his wife.

Now it had been snowing all day and it was beginning to snow harder as Sean's family rode off to church without him. He drew a chair up to the fireplace and began to read the newspaper.

A few minutes later there was a thudding sound at the kitchen window. When Sean went to investigate, he found a flock of birds out in the back yard. They had been caught in the storm and, in a desperate search for shelter, were trying to fly through the kitchen window. Sean was a very kind man, so he tried to think of something he could do so the birds wouldn't freeze.

"The barn!" he thought. "That would provide a nice shelter."

Sean put on his coat and overshoes and tramped through the deepening snow to the barn, opened the doors wide and turned on the light. But the birds didn't come in.

"Food will bring them in," he thought. So he hurried back to the house for bread crumbs, which he then sprinkled on the snow to make a trail into the barn.

But the birds ignored the bread crumbs and continued to flop around helplessly in the snow. Sean tried shoo-ing them into the barn by walking around waving his arms. They simply scattered in every direction - except into the warm lighted barn.

"They find me a strange and terrifying creature," Sean said to himself, "and I can't think of any way to let them know they can trust me."

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Saint Colman
Christmas

Puzzled and dismayed, Sean pondered, "If only for the moment I could be a bird myself, perhaps I could lead them to safety."

"If only I could be a bird myself...."

Just then the church bells began to ring, pealing the glad tidings of Christmas. Sean stood silently for a minute, then he sank to his knees in the snow.

"Now I understand," he whispered, as he lifted his eyes toward heaven. "Now I see why You had to become a man."

WHAT DOES CHRISTMAS MEAN?

Hymn for Advent Season
Text: Michael Gannon

Behold our Hope and Life and Light,
The promise of the holy night;
We lift our prayer and bend our knee
To his great love and majesty.

WHAT DOES CHRISTMAS MEAN?

Gerard Manley Hopkins

Hail be thou, full of grace aright!
For so God's Son, the heaven's Light
Loves man, that He a man will be and take
Flesh of thee, maiden bright,
Mankind free to make
Of sin and devil's might.

WHAT DOES CHRISTMAS MEAN?

What gift brings
peace and happiness
and keeps the world from harm?
The tiny Infant Jesus
asleep in Mary's arms.

My friends, the Birth of Our Lord and Saviour
Jesus Christ signifies the Father's love for us:

God so loved the world
that he sent his only begotten Son....

John 3: 16

It tells us that

...the grace of God has appeared,
offering salvation to all

Titus 2: 11

Christmas is the sign of a new vocation for the human family,
a call for women and men

to reject godless ways and worldly desires,
(to) live temperately, justly, and devoutly
in this age as we await our blessed hope,
the appearing of the glory of God and of
our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Titus 2:12

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Saint Colman
Christmas

Christmas means that

the people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light; upon those
who dwell in the land of gloom
a light has shone

Isaiah 9:1

It means

the kindness and love of God our Saviour
appeared, saving us, not because of any
righteous deeds we had done, but because
of his mercy

Titus 3:4

Christmas signifies that God is not silent. The Father has not forgotten his children. It portrays a divine intervention in what is often thought to be purely worldly affairs. It announces the wedding of the secular and the sacred, in such a way that no human being can avoid God.

Christmas means that we cannot put God on the backburner of our lives. It expresses that God has meddled in the affairs of people - in our consciences, in our economics, in our politics, in our race relations, in our church matters, and in the often beaureaucratic soap operas of human relationships.

Christmas means that God now designs his image anew and inerascibly in and through Christ, in the embodied souls of every woman and man -- that there is an irresistible requirement of everyone's dignity that commands respect and reverence, regardless of race, nationality, social class, sex, physical or mental ability or disability. The Incarnation tells us that God in Christ is involved in the existence of human life, from womb to tomb, and in the quality of human life. Now, in Christ, God never escapes the realities of human life - that's why he became flesh: to face us squarely, to confront us in our depths, to experience us fully. Christ was serious about becoming one of us.

WHAT DOES CHRISTMAS MEAN? It means that
Everywhere, everywhere, Christ is born tonight!
In lands of the fir-tree and pine,
in lands of palm-tree and vine,
where snow peaks stand solemn and white,
where cornfields stand sunny and bright,
where children are hopeful and gay,
where the old are patient and gray,
where peace, like a dove in its flight,
broods o'er the victim in the thick of the night.
For the Christ-Child who comes is Master of all;
No palace too great, no cottage too small.

adapted from CHRISTMAS

EVERYWHERE, by Phillips
Brooks

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Saint Colman
Christmas

"THIS DAY IN DAVID'S CITY A SAVIOUR HAS BEEN
BORN TO YOU, THE MESSIAH AND LORD."

My Brothers and Sisters, this is an awesome,
fascinating, startling, and baffling mystery we celebrate
tonight. I repeat, it is a mystery: it is an event from
God. It is a mystery, I say again, this unfathomable
happening in human history that baffles human intelligence.

WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN? A new and exciting and
challenging way of living and loving, a vision of a
reconciled humanity...

a star that stirs hope and stills despair
that stops hate and stimulates love,
that stands injury and stores pardon,
that stifles sadness and shouts joy,
that shatters doubt and shines faith,
that scurries darkness and skews light!

"THIS DAY IN DAVID'S CITY A SAVIOUR HAS BEEN BORN
TO YOU." Christmas is forever, my friends:

When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princies are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:

To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among brothers and sisters,
To make music in the heart.

(Unknown)

St. Colman
1983

The Celebration of the Birth
of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ
The Church of Saint Catherine & St. Thomas
December 25, 1984

You have nothing to fear. I come to proclaim
good news to you - tidings of great joy
to be shared by the whole people. This day
in David's city a saviour has been born to you,
the Messiah and Lord. Luke 2: 10-11

My Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

This is an awesome, fascinating, startling, and
baffling mystery we celebrate tonight - the birth of our
Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. It is a mystery, I say:
an event from the mind, heart, and spirit of God -
solely of God and from God. I repeat, it is a mystery -
this unfathomable happening in human history astounds
human intelligence. Only by the gift of faith from the God
from whom the mystery comes/can we approach this marvelous
mystery, this awesome answer, this fascinating feast, this
startling story, this baffling belief.

Jesus has become flesh, my friends! WHAT DOES
THIS MEAN?

He has come! the skies are telling;

He has quit the glorious dwelling;

And first the tidings came to us, the humble shepherd folk.

He has come to field and manger,
And no more is God a stranger;

He comes as Common Man at home with cart and crooked yoke.

Edwin Markham

Christmas

Jesus became flesh! He became one of us! WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

More light than we can learn,
More strength than we can treasure,
More love than we can earn,
Because one Child is born.

Yes, my brothers and sisters, Jesus has robed himself in our mortality, he has emptied himself in a human body, "tiny-ed" himself in a human mind, he has frailled himself in an earthen vessel, he has imprisoned himself in the created world.

WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN? Listen to the parable:

It was Christmas eve. John and Judy and their children were getting ready to go to church. However, *John* decided that he would not go. "I simply can't understand what Christmas is all about, this claim that God became a man," he told his wife.

Now it had been snowing all day and it was beginning to snow harder as John's family rode off to church without him. He drew a chair up to the fireplace and began to read the newspaper.

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Christmas

A few minutes later there was a thudding sound at the kitchen window. When John went to investigate, he found a flock of birds out in the back yard. They had been caught in the storm and, in a desperate search for shelter, were trying to fly through the kitchen window.

John was a very kind man, so he tried to think of something he could do so the birds wouldn't freeze.

"The barn!" he thought. "That would provide a nice shelter."

John put on his coat and overshoes and tramped through the deepening snow to the barn, opened the doors wide and turned on the light. But the birds didn't come in.

"Food will bring them in," he thought. So he hurried back to the house for bread crumbs, which he then sprinkled on the snow to make a trail into the barn.

But the birds ignored the bread crumbs and continued to flop around helplessly in the snow. John tried shoo-ing them into the barn by walking around waving his arms. They simply scattered in every direction - except into the warm lighted barn.

"They find me a strange and terrifying creature," John said to himself, "and I can't think of any way to let them know they can trust me."

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Christmas

Puzzled and dismayed, John pondered, "If only for the moment I could be a bird myself, perhaps I could lead them to safety."

"If only I could be a bird myself...."

Just then the church bells began to ring, pealing the glad tidings of Christmas. John stood silently for a minute, then he sank to his knees in the snow.

"Now I understand," he whispered, as he lifted his eyes toward heaven. "Now I see why ^{God} You had to become a man." *in order to save us.*

WHAT DOES CHRISTMAS MEAN?

Hymn for Advent Season
Text: Michael Gannon

Behold our Hope and Life and Light,
The promise of the holy night;
We lift our prayer and bend our knee
To his great love and majesty.

WHAT DOES CHRISTMAS MEAN?

Gerard Manley Hopkins

Hail be thou, full of grace aright!
For so God's Son, the heaven's Light
Loves man, that He a man will be and take
Flesh of thee, maiden bright,
Mankind free to make
from
Of sin and devil's might.

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Christmas

WHAT DOES CHRISTMAS MEAN?

What gift brings
peace and happiness
and keeps the world from harm?
The tiny Infant Jesus
asleep in Mary's arms.

My friends, the Birth of Our Lord and Saviour
Jesus Christ signifies the Father's love for us:

God so loved the world
that he sent his only begotten Son....

John 3: 16

It tells us that

...the grace of God has appeared,
offering salvation to all

Titus 2: 11

Christmas is the sign of a new vocation for the human family,
a call for women and men

to reject godless ways and worldly desires,
(to) live temperately, justly, and devoutly
in this age as we await our blessed hope,
the appearing of the glory of God and of
our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Titus 2:12

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Christmas

Christmas means that

the people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light; upon those
who dwell in the land of gloom
a light has shone

Isaiah 9:1

It means

the kindness and love of God our Saviour
appeared, saving us, not because of any
righteous deeds we had done, but because
of his mercy

Titus 3:4

Christmas signifies that God is not silent. The Father has not forgotten his children. It portrays a divine intervention in what is often thought to be purely worldly affairs. It announces the wedding of the secular and the sacred, in such a way that no human being can avoid God.

Christmas means that we cannot put God on the backburner of our lives. It expresses that God has meddled in the affairs of people - in our consciences, in our economics, in our politics, in our race relations, in our church matters, and in the often beaureaucratic soap operas of human relationships.

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Christmas

Christmas means that God now designs his image anew and inerascibly in and through Christ, in the embodied souls of every woman and man -- that there is an irresistible requirement of everyone's dignity that commands respect and reverence, regardless of race, nationality, social class, sex, physical or mental ability or disability. The Incarnation tells us that God in Christ is involved in the existence of human life, from womb to tomb, and in the quality of human life. Now, in Christ, God never escapes the realities of human life - that's why he became flesh: to face us squarely, to confront us in our depths, to experience us fully. Christ was serious about becoming one of us.

in poverty & plenty
in unemployment & gainful work
in education & miseducation
in good times AND in bad
in sickness & in health
in spiritual search & spiritual wholeness

WHAT DOES CHRISTMAS MEAN? It means that
Everywhere, everywhere, Christ is born tonight!
In lands of the fir-tree and pine,
in lands of palm-tree and vine,
where snow peaks stand solemn and white,
where cornfields stand sunny and bright,
where children are hopeful and gay,
where the old are patient and gray,
where peace, like a dove in its flight,
broods o'er the victim in the thick of the night.
For the Christ-Child who comes is Master of all;
No palace too great, no cottage too small.

adapted from CHRISTMAS

EVERYWHERE, by Phillips
Brooks

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Christmas

"THIS DAY IN DAVID'S CITY A SAVIOUR HAS BEEN BORN TO YOU, THE MESSIAH AND LORD."

My Brothers and Sisters, this is an awesome, fascinating, startling, and baffling mystery we celebrate tonight. I repeat, it is a mystery: it is an event from God. It is a mystery, I say again, this unfathomable happening in human history that baffles human intelligence.

WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN? A new and exciting and challenging way of living and loving, a vision of a reconciled humanity...

a star that stirs hope and stills despair
that stops hate and stimulates love,
that stands injury and stores pardon,
that stifles sadness and shouts joy,
that shatters doubt and shines faith,
that scurries darkness and skews light!

"THIS DAY IN DAVID'S CITY A SAVIOUR HAS BEEN BORN TO YOU." Christmas is forever, my friends:

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Christmas

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

The work of Christmas begins:

To find the lost,

To heal the broken,

To feed the hungry,

To release the prisoner,

To rebuild the nations,

To bring peace among brothers and sisters,

To make music in the heart.

(Unknown)

The Celebration of the Birth
of Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ
The Church of the Holy Rosary
Midnight Liturgy
December 25, 1987

You have nothing to fear. I come to proclaim
good news to you - tidings of great joy
to be shared by the whole people. This day
in David's city a saviour has been born to you,
the Messiah and Lord.

Luke 2: 10-11

My Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

This is an awesome, fascinating, startling,
and baffling mystery we celebrate tonight - the birth of
our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. It is a mystery,
I say: an event from the mind, heart, and spirit of
God - solely of God and from God.

I repeat, it is a mystery - this unfathomable
happening in history astounds the human intelligence.
Only by the gift of faith / from the God from whom the
mystery comes / can we approach this marvelous mystery,
this awesome answer, this fascinating feast, this
startling story, the baffling belief.

"I come to proclaim good news!..." What
does this mean, dear friends?

He has come! The skies are telling;
He has quit the glorious dwelling;
And first the tidings came to us, the humble shepherd folk,
He has come to field and manger,
And no more is God a stranger:
He came as Common Man at home with cart and crooked yoke.

"...tidings of great joy!" Jesus became flesh!

What does this mean?

More light than we can learn,
More strength than we can treasure,
More love than we can earn,
Because one Child is born.

Yes, my brothers and sisters, Jesus has robed himself in our mortality; divinity has "emptied himself" in a human body, "tiny-ed" himself in a human mind; he has frailed himself in an earthen vessel; imprisoned himself in the created world.

WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN? Listen to the parable:

* * * * *

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It was Christmas Eve. John and Judy and their children were getting ready to go to church. However, John decided that he would not go. "I simply can't understand what Christmas is all about, this claim that God became a man," he told his wife.

Now it had been snowing all day and it was beginning to snow harder as John's family rode off to church without him. He drew a chair up to the fireplace and began to read the newspaper.

A few minutes later there was a thudding sound at the kitchen window. When John went to investigate, he found a flock of birds out in the back yard. They had been caught in the storm and, in a desperate search for shelter, were trying to fly through the kitchen window. John was a very kind man, so he tried to think of something he could do so the birds wouldn't freeze.

"Food will bring them in," he thought. So he hurried back to the house for bread crumbs, which he then sprinkled on the snow to make a trail into the barn.

But the birds ignored the bread crumbs and continued to flop around helplessly in the snow. John tried shoo-ing them into the barn by walking around waving his arms. They simply scattered in every direction - except into the warm lighted barn.

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"They find me a strange and terrifying creature," John said to himself, "and I can't think of any way to let them know they can trust me."

Puzzled and dismayed, John pondered, "If only for the moment I could be a bird myself, perhaps I could lead them to safety."

"If only I could be a bird myself...."

Just then the church bells began to ring, pealing the glad tidings of Christmas. John stood silently for a minute, then he sank to his knees in the snow.

"Now I understand," he whispered, as he lifted his eyes toward heaven. "Now I see why God had to become a man in order to save us."

WHAT DOES CHRISTMAS MEAN? "A Saviour has been born to you".

Behold our Hope and Life and Light,
The promise of the holy night;
We lift our prayer and bend our knee
To his great love and majesty.

WHAT DOES CHRISTMAS MEAN? "The grace of God has appeared....":

Hail, be thou, full of grace aright!
For so God's Son, the heaven Light
Loves man, that He a man will be and take
Flesh of thee, maiden bright,
Mankind free to make
from sin and devil's might.

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WHAT DOES CHRISTMAS MEAN? "You have nothing to fear":

What gift brings
peace and happiness
and keeps the world from harm?
The tiny Infant Jesus
asleep in Mary's arms.

People of Holy Rosary, the birth of our Lord and Jesus Christ is a sign of the Father's love for us:

"God so loved the world
that he sent his only-begotten Son...."

The Child's birth tells us that

"The grace of God has appeared,
offering salvation to all."

The coming of the Saviour signals a new vocation for the human family, a solemn call to women and men and children of the world

"...to reject godless ways and worldly desires,
(to) live temperately, justly, and devoutly
in this age as we await our blessed hope,
the appearing of the glory of God and of
our Saviour Jesus Christ."

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The Nativity of the Saviour means that

"The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light; upon those
who dwell in the land of gloom
a light has shone."

Christmas affirms that God is not silent. The Father has not forgotten his children. It portrays a divine intervention in what is often thought to be purely worldly affairs. Christmas announces the wedding of the secular and the sacred, in such a way that no human being can avoid God.

Christmas makes it clear that we cannot put God on the backburner of our lives. It troubles us with the fact that God meddles in the affairs of people - in our consciences, in our economics, in our politics, in the scenes of international violence, in our race relations, in our soap-opera relationships, and, yes, in every realm of church discussion, action and policy.

Christmas means that God forever designs his image anew and inerascibly in and through Christ in the embodied souls of every woman and man.

Christmas tells us that there is an irresistable requirement of everyone's dignity that commands respect and reverence, regardless of race, nationality, social class, sex,

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physical or mental ability or disability.

The Incarnation of the Son implies that God is involved in human life, from womb to tomb.

Now, in Christ, God never escapes the realities of our lives - that's why he became flesh: to face us squarely, to confront us in our depths, to experience us fully.

Yes, the Lord of life and history was SERIOUS about becoming one of us.

WHAT DOES CHRISTMAS MEAN? It means that --

Everywhere, everywhere, Christ is born tonight!
In lands of the fir-tree and pine,
in lands of palm-tree and vine,
where snow peaks stand solemn and white,
where cornfields stand sunny and bright,
where children are hopeful and gay,
where the old are patient and gray,
where peace, like a dove in its flight,
broods o'er the victim in the thick of the night.
For the Christ Child who comes is Master of all;
No palace too great, no cottage too small.

Oh, God, give us this Jesus! ::

in our hearts and in our homes
give us Jesus!

in our streets and neighborhoods
give us Jesus!

in Bethlehem and in Cleveland
give us Jesus!

in Big Italy and in Little Italy
give us Jesus!

in the United States and in all nations
give us Jesus!

in our Church here and worldwide
give us Jesus!

in a broken humanity striving to be reconciled
give us Jesus!

at this Eucharistic Table,

One Bread, One Body,

One Lord of all,

remembered in this Holy Place

on this Holy Night

here and in every corner of the earth

give us Jesus!

GIVE ME JESUS//

CHILD BORN OF MARY!

GIVE ME JESUS!

The Midnight Celebration of the Birth
of Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ
The Church of Our Lady of Peace
December 25, 1988

You have nothing to fear. I come to proclaim
good news to you - tidings of great joy
to be shared by the whole people.
This day in David's city a saviour has been born to you,
the Messiah and Lord.

Luke 2: 10-11

My Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

This is an awesome, fascinating, startling, and baffling
mystery we celebrate tonight - the birth of our Lord and Saviour,
Jesus Christ. It is a mystery, I say: an event solely of God and
from God.

^{Divinity}
~~Jesus~~ has robed himself in our mortality. ^{Jesus}
~~Divinity~~
has "emptied" himself in a human body, "tiny-ed" himself in a human
mind, "frailed" himself in an earthen vessel, and "imprisoned"
himself in a created world. This unfathomable happening in human
history astounds the mind, challenges the will, and grips the soul.
Surely, this is "mystery of faith."

What does all this mean? Listen to the parable.

It was Christmas Eve. John and Judy and their children were getting ready to go to church. However, John decided that he would not go. "I simply can't understand what Christmas is all about, this claim that God became human," he told his wife.

Now it had been snowing all day and it was beginning to snow harder as John's family rode off to church without him. He drew a chair up to the fireplace and began to read the newspaper.

A few minutes later there was a thudding sound at the kitchen window. When John went to investigate, he found a flock of birds out in the backyard. They had been caught in the storm and, in a desperate search for shelter, were trying to fly through the kitchen window. John was a very kind man, so he tried to think of something he could do so the birds wouldn't freeze.

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"They find me a strange and terrifying creature," John said to himself, "and I can't think of any way to let them know they can trust me."

Puzzled and dismayed, John pondered, "If only for the moment I could be a bird myself, perhaps I could lead them to safety."

"If only I could be a bird myself...."

Just then the church bells began to ring, pealing the glad tidings of Christmas. John stood silently for a minute, then he sank to his knees in the snow.

"Now I understand," he whispered, as he lifted his eyes toward heaven. "Now I see why God had to become a human being in order to save us."

What does Christmas mean? It means, "A Saviour has been born to ^(FOR US) you."

Behold, our Hope and Life and Light,
The promise of the holy night;
We lift our prayer and bend our knee
To his great love and majesty.

What does Christmas mean? It means, "The grace of God has appeared...."

Hail, be thou, full of grace aright!
For so God's Son, the heavenly Light
Loves man, that He a man will be and take
Flesh of thee, maiden bright,
Mankind free to make
from sin and devil's might.

What does Christmas mean? It means, "You have nothing
to fear":

What gift brings peace and happiness
and keeps the world from harm?
The tiny Infant Jesus asleep in Mary's arms.

Dear friends, the coming of our Saviour announces an old
but ever new call to the human family, a solemn summons to all of
us --

to reject godless ways and worldly desires,
to live temperately, justly, and devoutly in this age
as we await our blessed hope,
the appearing in glory of God
and of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

What does Christmas mean? It means that,

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who dwell in the land of gloom a light has shone.

Christmas tells us that God is not silent, that God has not forgotten us. It's about a divine intervention in what is thought to be purely human affairs. Christmas discloses the wedding of earth and heaven.

Christmas makes it clear that we cannot put God on the backburner of our lives. It troubles us with the fact that God has meddles in human affairs. God invades our consciences, ^{questions} ~~revokes~~ our economics, challenges our politics, confronts our racial and ethnic relations, demands that we seek justice and peace in international concerns, and tests us in every realm of church discussion, action and policy.

Christmas means that God has entered into the too often soap-opera relationships of our families and demands that we order our lives around truth and trust.

Christmas means that God has designed his image anew in the embodied souls of every man and woman - in abused children, in

poor and unemployed and homeless and hungry families, in victims of terrorism and violence.

Christmas is a summons^{plus} to respect the dignity of all, esteem all, and reverence the image of God in all - of whatever gender, ethnic background, or race or of whatever physical or mental condition, of whatever age, of the child in the womb or the elderly person moving towards the end of life.

Christmas reminds that God became flesh: to face us squarely, confront us in our depths, experience us fully, and draw us into mystery.

What does Christmas mean? It means that -

Everywhere, everywhere, Christ is born tonight!

In lands of fir-tree and pine,

In lands of palm-tree and vine,

Where snow peaks stand solemn and white,

Where cornfields stand sunny and bright,

Where children are hopeful and gay,

Where the old are patient and gray,

Where peace, like a dove in its flight,

Broods o'er the victim in the thick of the night.

For the Christ Child who comes is Master of all;

No palace too great, no cottage too small!

*Let us pause now, in the awesome solemnity of this Holy Night,
that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith and in the Eucharist we
are about to share.*