

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Today, we gather to celebrate the most joyous event in the history of the world—the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. The mystery of Christmas is not just about the birth of a child in a humble stable, but about the presence of God among us, Emmanuel—God with us. This simple yet profound truth holds the key to the hope and peace that this day offers to each of us.

The Gospel today invites us to reflect on the moment when the Word became flesh. The story of the birth of Jesus is familiar to many of us, yet it never loses its power to inspire and renew us. Jesus, the Son of God, did not come into the world in grandeur or wealth, but in the humblest of circumstances. He was born to Mary and Joseph in a stable, surrounded by animals, because there was no room for them in the inn. This speaks volumes about God's desire to meet us where we are, in our poverty, our struggles, and our limitations.

God's presence among us is a gift of love, a love that reaches down into our everyday lives. The birth of Jesus is an invitation for us to embrace God's love with open hearts, just as Mary and Joseph opened their hearts to God's plan. It is an invitation to seek His presence in our own lives, not in the places of wealth and power, but in the humble and quiet places of our hearts.

Christmas is a time when we are called to reflect on the love that God has for us. As we see in the manger, God does not come to us as a mighty ruler, but as a child. This should encourage us to welcome God with the innocence and trust of a child. Jesus is the Light that has come into the darkness, and that Light shines in every heart that is open to Him. Let us ask ourselves today: Have we allowed the Light of Christ to fill our hearts? Do we, like the shepherds, follow that Light and share it with those around us?

The birth of Jesus is also a reminder of God's hope for the world. The angel's message to the shepherds was one of joy and peace: "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord" (Luke 2:10-11). These words are as relevant today as they were when they were first spoken. Jesus brings us joy and peace that the world cannot offer. Even in the midst of challenges and struggles, we are reminded that Jesus is with us, and His love will never fail.

Christmas is a time to reflect not just on the birth of Christ, but on how we are called to live as His followers. As we look at the simplicity of the manger, we are reminded that true greatness is not found in wealth, power, or prestige, but in humility, love, and service. As Christians, we are called to make room for Christ in our lives, and to share His love and peace with others.

Let us remember, too, that the Christmas message is a message of hope for the whole world. Jesus came for everyone, and His love knows no boundaries. In the stable, there was no distinction between Jew and Gentile, rich and poor, or powerful and weak. All are welcome in the Kingdom of God. This Christmas, let us reach out to those in need, to those who are lonely, or suffering, or in despair, and let them know that the Light of Christ shines for them, too.

As we celebrate this holy day, let us offer our hearts to Jesus, who comes to us as a humble child, full of love and mercy. Let us rejoice in the gift of His presence, and allow that presence to transform us. May this Christmas fill us with hope, joy, and peace, and inspire us to live as true disciples of the Lord.

In closing, let us echo the words of the angels, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will." May we carry the

light of Christ with us into the world, and share His love with all whom we meet.

Merry Christmas, and may God bless you all.