

Christmas Eve 2022
Sermon – Saint Joseph Parish
Father Craig Looney

The Crèche Titus 2.11-15 St. Luke 2.1-14



God does not make his presence known to us in blazing flashes...but rather with a fragile flame...a baby.

We heard these words as we lighted the fourth candle on the Advent Wreath. In lighting the candle...we proclaimed God's love for us. Just as God's love...the candle to give its light must give itself away.

Our Advent Journey has brought us to where we are now. Our eyes are immediately fixed on the Crèche. What do we see?

We commenced tonight's Liturgy with the Blessing of the Crèche and sang "O Come all ye faithful". We proclaimed Jesus to be...

*...King of Angels
...God of God
...Light of Light
...Very God, Begotten, not created
...Child for us sinners
...Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing
...Christ the Lord*

Doesn't it seem strange God would choose to reveal himself to us as the fragile flame of a baby boy born in a barn 2000 years ago. Why not a magnificent palace...isn't that where king's live. Not our King!

Jesus didn't have a nice soft bed and servants to watch over him. His bed was a hay trough...the dinner plate for a donkey. Instead of servants...he had barn animals watching over him. Jesus would later say he didn't come to be waited on...he came to serve.

The Crèche is more than a collection of figures we set up in our homes and churches at Christmastime. It is the visual

and compelling representation of the event that forever changed the history of mankind, the *Incarnation*, literally God *taking on flesh*.

Tonight we celebrate Jesus...our *Emmanuel...God with us*. Tonight we celebrate the story of how God learned to walk among us...so one day we might walk with him in heaven.

Angels announced the birth of Jesus to shepherds watching their sheep. The shepherds were drawn to the Manger and heard the Angels sing...

*...Glory to God in the Highest Heaven,
and peace on Earth to those with whom
he is pleased!*

Let's place ourselves inside the Manger Scene. We are there along with Mary and Joseph and the shepherds and barn animals. The greatest Christmas present we have ever been given is God's gift of himself through his Son, Jesus. And he is right here with us.

Tonight or tomorrow morning we will go home and open our Christmas presents. Let me share what was written in a Christmas card I received...

*...Let us celebrate God's Priceless Gift,
...Let us live in God's Perfect Love,
...Let us share God's Blessing of Peace.*

Like the light of the Advent Candle...like the fragile flame of the baby boy...we can't keep God's gift of his Son, Jesus, to ourselves. He is the one present we must share...we must give him away.

Let's look again at the Crèche and what it teaches us? Let's not hold back on sharing the Christmas Story...

*...Jesus our God and King and Savior is
here...O come, let us adore him!*

Merry Christmas!

