

Christmas Eve 2025

Sermon – Saint Joseph Parish

Father Craig Looney

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

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Christmas...the Christ's-Mass...the completion of our Advent Journey through Liturgy, hymns and the prophetic messages of Isaiah, Malachi and John the Baptist telling us to get ready to welcome our Savior...he is coming sooner than we think.

When we entered the church tonight, our eyes are immediately fixed on the Crèche...the distinctive and highly instructive feature of the Christmas and Epiphany Seasons. The Crèche graphically shows what the Advent Season teaches us...God does not make his presence known to us in blazing flashes...but rather with a fragile flame...a baby boy with barn animals for his companions.

We commenced tonight's Liturgy with the Blessing of the Crèche and sang "O Come all ye faithful". In the hymn 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

Tonight we celebrate the birth of Jesus...our *Emmanuel...God with us*. Tonight we celebrate the story of how God learned to walk among us as a human being...so one day we might walk with him in heaven. Tonight we celebrate with Christians around the world the birthday of Jesus.

This is a birthday like no other birthday. The birth of Jesus has at a specific time in history forever changed the world and mankind. His birth brings with it love, hope, redemption, and a peace that transcends anything the world can offer.

Tonight we join with the Angels who announced the birth of Jesus to shepherds watching their sheep and say...

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

In the commercial world Christmas is about trips to the Mall (do people still do that?), Internet sales, greeting cards and finding the perfect gift for a friend or family member. These material things are not bad, but the commercialization of Christmas misses the real meaning of Christmas. After-Christmas sales send out a false message Christmas is over. For Christians, the celebration of Christmas has just begun and lasts for twelve days.

Let me share with you again what was written in a Christmas card I received several years ago...

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

There is Divine Reversal in God's gift of himself revealed to us in the flesh and blood of a baby boy born in a barn. God has given us the greatest Christmas present ever in his Son, Jesus Christ.

When we are invited to celebrate the birthday of a family member or friend, we often bring them a gift. What sort of gift could we possibly bring to Jesus on his birthday...when he is the gift we take from here tonight?

Nineteenth century writer Christina Georgina Rossetti (1830-1894) wrote the words to the children's poem "In the Bleak Midwinter" in which she asked the same question...

...What can I give him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb; If I were a wiseman, I would do my part. Yet what I can I give him—-Give him my heart.

What sort of present can we give Jesus on his birthday? We give him the only thing we can give him...we give him our hearts.

Happy Birthday, Jesus. Merry Christmas to all of you.

