

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Wow, finally, Christmas is here. I am Deacon Brian Cordeiro and a Merry Christmas to each and every one of you and your families.

The Gospel tonight is about the baby Jesus. We are describing the birth of a baby and the birth of a baby is always a time of great joy. But tonight we are celebrating the birth of not just any baby. **We celebrate the birth of our own Saviour, Jesus Christ.**

**There are 3 main scenes in the Gospel tonight and each of these scenes has something very important to say to us tonight and the beauty of these scenes is that they talk to us at our level-of us a human beings.**

Emmanuel, God is amongst us and so the scenes have much to offer us that are extremely relevant to living our daily lives 2000 years later.

**The first scene is that of the birth of Jesus.** Here we see that Mary and Joseph travelling a long ways off in order to comply with a census. They reach Bethlehem and Mary gives birth to Jesus. **There are two things to be noted about the birth scene. First, Jesus is born in a manger, not in a fancy palace, but in a stable in the company of animals.** The Incarnation,

the birth of Jesus, is a love story of God for His people. God knowing that man was incapable of winning his own salvation after having sinned, sent His own Son Jesus to save man. You parents, mothers and fathers who love your children and are protective of them can understand how hard it would be if your child had suffer for someone else. But God loved us so much that He not only sent His Son but that Son died to save us. Jesus is God but he is born in all humility in manger, not in a palace fit for a king. **The second thing to be noted about the birth scene is that there was no place for them in the inn.**

**The next scene in the Gospel is that of the shepherds keeping watch over their flocks at night.** Shepherds were considered low down in the social structure. The fact that God chose to reveal the birth of Jesus first to the humblest of folk is significant.

**Finally in the third scene, we see the Angel appearing to the shepherds and all the heavenly glory being revealed.**

**So how do these three scenes speak to us today?** Firstly, we know that God loves the humble. He himself chose to come not as an earthly king but as a child in a manger. He revealed himself first to humble shepherds. **The**

**manger is the sign of this humility.** Humility is a quality that is very close to God's heart; contrary to the values of today's world, where we are encouraged to market ourselves and become the most powerful and famous. So in this Christmas season, we are encouraged to practice humility with all those we meet and all that we do.

**The next message that we receive loud and clear tonight is “Do not be afraid”.** **GOD LOVES YOU** and with and in Him, you and I can do anything. He is the God of surprises, the God of the unexpected. Fear is often a great constraining element. We are afraid of how things will work out, what will happen in the future, what will be the consequences of steps we wish to take. Today's Gospel reminds me not to be afraid. God is with you. He is right beside you. **Take His hand and let Him lead you. You will be surprised beyond your wildest expectation.**

**And finally, the third most important message of today's Gospel is that of God's love.** God loves you as you are. He after all sent His own Son to die for us even though we were sinful. God loves you, He loves me. That is why the angel says to the shepherds “I am bringing you good news”. Maybe there are some here tonight who come to church infrequently. You are most

welcome today. God loves you and he wants to fill your life with all His goodness. He wants to bless you. Trust Him, Draw Near to Him. He is waiting to hear from you. He wants to bless you.

The shepherds, once they had received the good news from the angel, go to Bethlehem and they continued until they found Jesus. **Now that you have received the good News that God loves you, that He sent Jesus to save you and that He loves you and me even in our weaknesses, should we not go forward like the shepherds to meet Jesus?**

Therefore my Christmas wish for you tonight is that you be filled with hope and joy, that you may feel close to you a loving God and that you may step forward more and more to receive the blessings that He has in store for you.

The coming of Jesus was accompanied by light. The star and the light pointed the way that others could follow to find Jesus. **May the Light of Jesus shine in you and through you as you meet family and friends during this Christmas season. Keep Christ in your Christmas. Let Him find a place in the inn of your heart.**

On behalf of the pastor Fr. Gilles Surprenant, the Pastoral Team, the Liturgy Council and the other Councils, I wish each of you and your families a joyous and blessed Christmas.

Since we are such a multicultural community at St. Luke's, I thought it would be appropriate to wish you in your own language. So to those who speak

Italian: buon natal

Tagalog: Maligayang pasko

Arabic: Millaad saiid

Spanish: Feliz navidad

Portuguese: Feliz natal

Greek: Kala Christougenna

French: Joyeux Noël

And finally to all: A Blessed and Joyous Christmas to you and your family

May the peace and joy of Emmanuel, God amongst us, be with you throughout this season and the year to come. AMEN