

- Well...a very merry and blessed Christmas to all of you.
 - We hope and pray that you are able to spend some quality time with the family...renewing Christmas traditions, and those family bonds so important nowadays, as family members are often scattered around the world.
 - [Liturgical note: kneel at the creed today.]
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- Oh, how we love the beauty of the Christmas season...the lights, tinsel, Christmas songs, presents, time with family...but, of course, the reason for it all is the greatest all gifts—our salvation coming through a young woman...
 - ...a child not only Man, but divinity taking on our human nature as well...who is thus truly the Son of God...and yet also “Son of Man”...fulfilling a promise made by God to King David a millennium before.
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 - Not that the Son of God did not already exist...but, to that moment in time, He existed only in Spirit...infinite, like the Father and the Holy Spirit in the unity of the Holy Trinity.
 - But, nine months before, that same Holy Spirit blessed the womb of the virgin Mary to conceive a Son—in whom was the completeness of the divinity of God, while taking His human flesh from her—thus He is both God and Man... not only for 33 years of His earthly life, but for eternity.
 - Completely God while also completely human: body, blood, soul...even human will, soul and spirit—a great mystery, and truth which has awed the world ever since.
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- But why? Why did God come to us in such a fashion?
- Our faith tells us: “*For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven...by the Holy Spirit was incarnate [enfleshed] of the Virgin Mary, and became man.*”
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- God created Man in goodness and gave Man guidance, but willful Man abused His freedom and disobeyed ...losing the initial sanctity in which He was created.
- So, in His love for Man, God comes to us AS Man to help us restore that sanctity...to take our sins upon Himself that we might have eternal life with God.
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- We accept His grace by believing in Him and following His Word and teaching as given through the Church
- To believe in Christ—to love Him—to receive that salvation...is to follow Him...to follow God's will above all other considerations... and to love neighbor as ourselves.
- Because, in the end, what else really matters? Fame and fortune, honors and beauty—all are lost. Prince, pope or pauper, our final earthly resting place is a hole in the ground.
- Then we go before God to be judged by our lives—whether we have been faithful to Him, or not...whether we have accepted the great gift offered us.
- We must do what is good in God's eyes. Only then can we achieve the salvation that Jesus has won for us.
- Will we choose Him? Will we choose eternal life? This is the very reason of His birth, the very reason of our celebration at Christmas: that He came to offer us eternal life in Heaven.

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- We rejoice in the baby born to the world...and for the world...to save the world...that we might become saints, and share divine life with God.
 - So don't make this a token holiday visit to God; let us not be "CEOs" ("Christmas and Easter Only" Catholics), but let us realize the great gift offered to each of us...accepted and received by our seeking to live truly according to God's holy will.