

- Well...a very merry and blessed Christmas to all of you... especially to all of your little ones.
- Many of you grandparents will be able to relate to the scripture which says: “*Grandchildren are the crown of the aged...*” (Proverbs 17:6)
- Few things are as joyful and heart-warming as the squeals of delight from the young ones on Christmas eve and morning as they open their presents and renew their relationships with little friends and cousins and other family.
- [Liturgical note: kneel at the creed today.]

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- “Jesus”, meaning “God saves”. “Emmanuel”, meaning “God. With. Us. This the very reason for our celebrating this evening/morning: the greatest all gifts—our salvation coming in a child and through a young woman named Mary
  - ...a child not only Man, but also divine...and thus truly Son of God...and yet also “Son of Man”.
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  - Of course, the second person of the divine Trinity did not come into being at the Incarnation. The divine Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit—the one God in three persons—has always existed, and will always exist. God is the source of all things—and thus called the one self-existent being...else other things would be self-existent.
  - How there is three persons in one God is far beyond our understanding—each one of the persons not part of God, wholly God.
  - But perhaps a simple, though inevitably limping, way to imagine God is to think of a person—His body and will the Father, His intellect the Son, and His love the Holy Spirit. All three of these go into making that one person.
  - For IS the person THAT person without His intellect, will and love? All go into making the one Being, which is God.
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- And God, out of love, creates us. One question often asked is: “WHY did God create us?” And the only answer is much like that of parents toward their children: “So that He might have children to bestow His infinite love upon.”
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- But God saw how we would sinned against one another, and so also sinned against each person’s Creator and Father: God Himself...even though God gives life and love to everyone.
- So who could possible make amends to God but someone equal to God? But, since nobody is equal to God, to make amends, Jesus—one of the Holy Trinity—comes to make amends in our place.
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- Because mankind sinned, He had to come as man—and so He was born 2000 years ago for this very purpose: to accept just punishment in our place for the sins we do.
- And so we see God’s great love for us—that He Himself in Jesus takes punishment that we deserve...so that justice can be put in balance...and so that we can go to Heaven to be with God forever, which sin would prevent us from doing. This is why His name means: “God saves”.
- But...we must repent of evil and do the good that Jesus shows us.
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- This is why we come to Mass—on Christmas and Easter and every Sunday and every day we can—to thank God for His wonderful gift.
- And God’s coming to us in Jesus is what we celebrate especially tonight...because He didn’t have to do this for us, but does it out of absolute and complete and total love.
- This is why the angels sing when Jesus is born, because God comes to save all mankind—the ultimate mercy and goodness.
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- Jesus is like the fireman who runs into a burning building to save you...and even gives his life to make sure you’re safe. And only He shows the way out of the building and to safety—a safety which is eternal life with God in Heaven.

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- And so, all the people and events and stories of Christmas in the Bible are for one purpose: to bring us to eternal happiness with God forever.
- That is God's one wish for us...to be with Him and Mary and Joseph and all the saints...to be enfolded in the arms of love in the Holy Spirit—now, always and forever.
- So thank Jesus before you go to sleep tonight...knowing that the greatest gift you receive is not clothes, electronic thingamajig, or money or anything like that...but rather the love of your family and friends...and, most of all, the love of God Himself.
- ...and have a very merry and blessed Christmas.