



My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We are entering the Christmas Season. God invites us into the intimacy of the manger: "O come let us adore Him!"

God becomes man. That is EVERYTHING! The eternal, omnipotent God has chosen to humble Himself to become one of us: still remaining truly God, but truly becoming man as well. Both/and, not either/or nor parts of one and parts of the other. This should give us pause.

We are called to come to the manger and adore the Lord of the universe in infant's flesh. He is the answer to all of our problems – **ALL** of our problems! **Look to the Child in the manger.**

How many of us are struggling with peace in our families, peace in our hearts? A better question would probably be how many of us are not struggling with this?! And He is the PRINCE OF PEACE. While He may not answer our prayers the way we ask, He will always do what is truly best for us. By giving Him our hearts, our lives, our whole selves, He will give us a deep and inner peace that the world cannot give.

Look to the Child in the manger.

When we struggle with financial instability, we can look to Jesus. We'll see in Him a God who provides for all of our needs (though not all of our wants). When we ponder the poverty of Almighty God, emptying Himself to take on humanity – and not even as a king, but being born in a cave where animals stayed, being laid in a feeding trough – we see a God who has united Himself to us in our poverty, who knows an empty stomach, who has experienced biting cold and blistering heat. In our hunger, we can see our God who has become food for us, symbolically represented when He was laid in a manger. Our God promises always to hear the cry of the poor... He will never abandon nor forsake us. In all of these worries and anxieties: **Look to the Child in the manger.**

When we are overcome by sickness, trauma or depression, when we are overwhelmed by the betrayal of a loved one, abandonment of friends, or the loss of a loved one through death we can look to Jesus who endured all of these. Here is our God who was hunted as a baby, and so had to flee His homeland; He experienced the trauma of the scourging, crowning with thorns and crucifixion; He knew the darkness of God-forsakenness on the cross, was betrayed by an intimate and abandoned by all of His friends. He knew the loss of death, as His dear adoptive father, Joseph, died. He knew, from the inside, the deepest fears and anxieties the world can give as He endured His agony in the garden and sweat blood. There is no darkness that our God has not first experienced, endured and conquered by His resurrection. **Look to the Child in the manger.**

The world is promising us happiness, but leaves us bored. It promises us fulfilment, but leaves us empty. It promises us pleasure, but leaves us with self-loathing. The Child in the manger promises us a cross... but through the cross a resurrection that gives us all of the deep and lasting joy, peace, fulfilment, and love for which we are truly longing.

Look to the Child in the manger – O come let us adore Him!