



## WHEREVER WE ARE...

we are called in this Christmas Season  
to prepare inwardly in silence and anticipation  
to bring hope and liberation  
to celebrate the feast of life



- The wilderness will bloom Is 35: 1-10
- The Lord will help the poor and needy. Is 41
- By waiting and by calm you shall be saved, in quiet and trust your strength lies. Is 30



## Christmas Blessings!

Beannachtai na  
Nollag

Bendiciones  
Navideñas

Nga Whakapainga o  
te Kirihimete kia  
Kotou katoa

Natal kmanek ho  
na'i nia bensa

Let the Heavens be glad and earth rejoice.  
Sing a new song to the Lord.  
Light shines in darkness.  
Come, Jesus, and live ever more fully in our  
lives.  
Come, Emmanuel—God with us!

We stand in the midst of the burning world, primed to burn with  
compassionate love and justice  
to turn inward and find holy fire at the core  
to turn outward and see the world that is all of one flesh  
see under the trash  
through the smog  
the furry bee in the apple blossom  
the trout leaping  
the candles our ancestors lit for us.

Fill us as the tide rushes into the reeds of the marsh  
Fill us as the rushing water overflows the pitcher  
Fill us as light fills a room with its dancing  
Let the little quarrels of the bones—and the snarling of  
the lesser appetites— and the whining of the ego—cease  
Let silence still us so you may show us your shining  
and we can—out of that stillness—rise and shine.

Marge Piercy: 'Nishmat', Eight Chambers of the Heart: Selected Poems, Penguin 1995

The gift you  
have received,  
give as gift.

## WHOEVER WE ARE ...

we are called into partnership with the Divine

Jesus comes to us in the midst of  
everyday fragments and asks us  
to create space for him where  
he has never been before.

Joyce Rupp

Wishing to encourage his progress on the piano, a mother took her little boy to a Paderewski concert.

After they were seated, the mother spotted a friend in the audience and walked down the aisle to greet her. Seeking the opportunity to explore the wonders of the concert hall, the little boy found his way through a door marked NO ADMITTANCE. When the hall lights dimmed, the mother returned to her seat and discovered that the child was missing. Suddenly the curtains parted and spotlights focused on the impressive Steinway on stage. In horror, the mother saw her little boy sitting at the keyboard, innocently picking out "Twinkle, twinkle Little Star". At that moment, the great piano master made his entrance, quickly moved to the piano, and whispered in the boy's ear: "Don't stop! Keep playing."

Leaning over, Paderewski reached down with his left hand and began filling in a bass part. His right hand reached around to the other side of the child and he added a running obligato. Together the old master and the young child transformed a frightening situation into a wonderfully creative experience. The audience was mesmerized.

We are now celebrating the coming of our God. We hear the message of God who longs to be in partnership with us, saying to each one of us "Don't stop. Keep playing. Keep loving. Keep creating. Keep transforming.

**"I have not called you because you are equipped. I equip you because you are called."**

Let us remember that the God of Partnership joins us on the human journey to surround us with love.

**In the torment of the  
insufficiency of  
everything attainable  
we come to understand  
that here in this life,  
all symphonies remain**

## WE ARE CALLED ....

to bring hope

to show to the world what God looks like

A little girl drawing a picture was asked by her mother: "What are you drawing?" She replied, "A picture of God!" "But, we don't know what God looks like" her mother objected. "Well," replied the child, "you will, when I'm finished this!"

*"Our incarnational theology calls us to be women who are nourished by the Word which breaks open in us, gradually transforming us and our world."*

*Chapter Acts p.6*

The pattern, modelled by Mary of Nazareth, is the paradigm for God taking on actual flesh in the world. It is also the blueprint for how faith is born into our lives.

When we look at how Mary gave birth to Christ, we see that there are four moments to this process:

1. Impregnation by the Holy Spirit
2. Gestation of Christ within herself
3. The pangs of giving birth
4. Nurturing of an infant to adulthood

Against An Infinite Horizon Ronald Rolheiser

## Love

Love is born with a dark and troubled face  
When hope is dead  
And in the most unlikely place  
Love is born:  
Love is always born.

Michael Leunig: A Bunch of Poesy, Angus and Robertson, 1992 p.61

## WE ARE CALLED...

to relieve suffering



Extract from the Virtues of Mary MacKillop Paul Gardiner SJ

The mind and heart of this great lady were dominated by the power of the great eternal values, but nothing was too small to catch her eye as she looked at the needs of those around. God was her all, but she was immersed in the physical details of this world; though her head was in heaven, her hands were in the wash tub. She was as familiar with household chores as with the kneeler and the writing table ... cooking (with advice), doing the dishes, washing, sweeping, dusting, cleaning sewers, and gardening.

She did not lose touch with the people with whom the Institute was working. She did not govern from a height but from the kitchen, the wash-house, the chicken yard, the hospital bedside, the prison cell, the schoolroom, the playground, the slums, wherever her sisters or those dependent on them were to be found.



### Give the Christmas present of Presence

To someone who needs  
you

To one who lives in fear

To an older person

To one who is in pain

To a refugee

To a homeless person

To those who suffer  
substance abuse

To one who is lost

To a heart-broken  
mother



“Blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled.”

Luke 1: 45

All that I am sings of the God  
who brings his life to birth in me.  
My spirit soars on the wings of my Lord.

He has smiled on me  
and the blaze of his smile  
no woman or man shall ever forget.  
My God is a gentle strength  
who has caught me up and carried me to  
greatness.

His love, space cannot hold, nor time age  
and all quicken to his touch.

My God is a torrent of justice.  
He takes the straight paths in the minds of  
the proud  
and twists them to labyrinth.

The boot of the oppressor he pushes aside  
and raises the lowly, whom he loves, from  
the ground

With his own hands he sets a table for the  
hungry  
but the unfeeling rich suffer the cold eye of  
his judgement.

Our mothers and fathers he has held in his  
arms  
and the future grows like this child within  
me

For the God of whom I sing bears us his son.

John Shea

In unexpected and unimportant places in us, Christ will fulfil our dreams if we offer him hospitality and allow him to make:

*O marvellous!  
New Nazareths in us,  
Where she shall yet  
conceive  
Him, morning, noon  
and eve;  
New Bethlehems, and  
he be born  
There, evening, noon  
and morn.*

Gerard Manley Hopkins:  
“The Blessed Virgin Mary  
Compared to the Air We  
Breathe”



## WHATEVER WE DO....

we are called  
to let God's dream be born  
to share in the one mission of Jesus (Const 3)



### O COME O WISDOM

We ask that our hearts might be filled and our consciences formed so that we may walk in God's paths. Reflecting on what we truly desire from life we commit ourselves to discernment and dawning awareness. We try to put the brakes on compulsive buying as Christmas approaches.

### O COME SACRED ONE OF ISRAEL

We remember that the Sacred One is becoming human and, in so doing, breathes sacredness into every human life.

Our God is waiting for us to realise that the Messiah is among us in community, in our place of ministry, at the supermarket or at the meal table.

Let us make an inward bow to each person we meet today

### O COME FLOWER OF JESSE'S STEM

We can trace Jesus' genealogy back to Jesse the father of King David. Joseph, could trace his descent from King David. God's holy Word, however became enfleshed in the Virgin Mary through the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus Jesus is shown to be Son of God as well as son of David.

Jesus comes as a tiny baby with quite a 'dodgy' ancestry, not as a triumphant Messiah. It is a reminder to us to look at others with wonder and appreciation regardless of their background, status or power. When dealing with God, expect the unexpected!

### O COME KEY OF DAVID

We cry out our commitment to open doors and break down barriers. We are called to bring unity to a divided world. On a national scale Christ is waiting for us to find a place for the poor and the outcast. In community and ministry, Christ is waiting for love, respect and care for the fragile members. Let us try to unlock one door that is keeping someone out of our heart.

### O COME DAYSTAR

We invoke the Eternal Light and Sun of Justice to light up the darkness and reveal the path of enlightenment. We pray for those who are marginalized and have lost their way in darkness that they will lift their eyes and receive new sight. May new possibilities in science and technology lead to wise and moral choices May the light of God's glory shine through the darkness.

Light an Advent candle each day. As the flame is extinguished, send it to a place in human life where darkness seems to prevail at this time.

### O RULER OF ALL NATIONS

We implore God to break down the barriers between nations by the force of love in our hearts.

Christ is the cornerstone binding us all into a home for God.

Let us try to drive out any prejudice that rules our hearts and world-view.

Offer some financial or political support to someone who is in need of justice and compassion.

### O COME EMMANUEL

We rejoice that Christ came leaping from the eternal womb of God into the loving womb of Mary. In the form of a helpless infant Christ undertakes the human experience of weakness and littleness. His birth is proof that powerlessness is not weakness. Christ came amongst us urging us to enter the mystery of our own lives and live them out faithfully.

Adapted from 'In a High Spiritual Season' Joan Chittester