

A Light in the Darkness

In our current global pandemic crisis, many people are riven with fear and anxiety. Suddenly life has become very fragile and we have come to realise that anything can happen to us from one minute to the next. Economics, policies, health care systems, religion, institutions of family and community life all have become abruptly insecure. In such circumstances, our normal certainties of life can quickly fade away leaving us doubting our ability to cope. Now, more than ever, we are being called to understand something of the true meaning of Christmas and the Incarnation story.

Through the lens of the Incarnation we get a deeper understanding of the intimate closeness of God. When God became human in Jesus our lives were radically changed forever. Through the healing presence of Jesus and his encounter with people, it is now possible for us to believe that the God who carefully fashioned us, who loves us unconditionally, who delights in us at every moment, holds us in our weakness, in our powerlessness and in our constant fear and anxiety.

The humanness of Jesus helps us to realise that God's presence comes to us through our encounters with each other. This awareness was brought home to me some years ago. It happened I was visiting a Special School in the Diocese of Waterford and Lismore when PJ, a disabled, ten year old, said to me, "Sister, I have something to tell you," with a beaming smile he announced in full voice, "God is holding your heart." The teacher was left stunned and I without knowing what I was saying, simply added, "I believe this is a message for me in the coming months." Three weeks later, when my mother died suddenly, I was shocked and devastated. In the painful hours that followed, PJ's words came back to me, "God is holding your heart." These profound words brought a ray of light into my darkness and consolation to my broken heart. Through PJ's message, God was trying to keep me from suffering more than I could bear. I have reflected many times on this special moment, and it continuously heightens my awareness that God is forever healing us, consoling us, and holding us through each other.

The late Daniel O'Leary reminds us, "The Incarnation of God means that our deep need for being comforted can now only come in a human way." He goes on to say that "we can scarcely believe how intimately God is present to us, in every one of our words, smiles and tears." God in becoming human at Christmas, takes up residence in our hearts and comes to birth in the core of our being. This inner divine love transforms us and leads us to give generously to everyone in our lives. People like PJ are the real messengers of God's love and care. How aware are we of the many messengers who come into our lives? These hidden blessings, are a constant reminder of our gracious God who loves each one of us intensely, who follows every move we make, is living and working in and through us and is hiding below the surface of our lives. God is found in the ordinary and grace filled moments of every day.

We are created to love and be loved. God needs us to incarnate his love and to be his tangible presence. Each one of us is permeated with God's love and shining with divinity. We are a light in the dark, illuminating and transforming all of life.

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