

Christmas Message 2006

Whether you are a Christian or not, whether or not you regularly attend church services, I suspect that one of the Biblical texts that most people in North America can recite almost from heart is the story of the birth of Christ from Luke's Gospel (probably in the King James translation!). No holiday has a greater impact on the Western world than Christmas does, and at the heart of Christmas is the simple--but still absolutely mind-boggling--reality that, in this child born in the manger, God chose to come into our world in human form. Quite apart from the "tinsel and trappings," there is the message of a powerful, transforming Love, of Love itself made flesh, to provide us with a new and radiant vision of what love *could be*. It is a love of inclusion and outreach, a love of generosity and forgiveness, a love that calls into question the standards and criteria of much of our world.

Despite all of society's efforts to pretend otherwise, Christmas remains centered on Jesus Christ, and we return, year after year, to the stories of His birth and infancy, to rediscover the mystery of God's interaction with humanity, to be awed by its simplicity and its profundity. Each December brings us back to the magnificent texts of Matthew and Luke, and to the dramatic poetry of the Prologue to John, which are as familiar as the words to our favorite Christmas carols. And yet, despite the passage of more than 2000 years, those stories have never lost their power to inspire and renew and change us. As children or adults, Christmas remains a time when wonder and joy sparkle like stars in the mid-winter skies.

This year, the Catholic Biblical Association of Canada is pleased to offer you a special online Advent-Christmas edition of our journal, ***The Word is Life***. It contains a series of seasonal reflections on the coming of Christ and its significance, on the towns of Bethlehem and Nazareth that Jesus called home. There are articles from our President, Sister Elizabeth Davis, and from the Sisters of Sion in Jerusalem. And there are some poems and prayers to accompany your prayer in these days when we recall the entrance onto the stage of the One who was--and is--***Emmanuel***, the God who is with us. May your Christmas celebrations be filled with joy, peace and gratitude, and may 2007 lead us all closer to this Child, whose story is ever ancient, yet ever new.

Father Murray Watson
Editor, "The Word is Life"
Dublin, Ireland

