

*The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; Upon those who lived in a land of gloom a light has shone.*

*Isaiah 9:1*

A holy day has dawned. A glorious light shines in our world. It is Christmas! What we have prepared for and longed for has finally arrived. The packages have been wrapped and unwrapped, the delicacies baked and enjoyed. The world comes to a wonderful pause as we stop to savor this height of the holiday season. The manger no longer sits empty. The baby Jesus lies on the straw and in our hearts, replacing our longings with hope. We feel a gentleness about the world and in ourselves.

As quickly as Christmas comes, for many it is over. Wrappings go in the trash, crumbs are swept away and the decorations come down. It is back to work, back to bills to be paid and life as normal. It is no wonder that January heralds the blues of winter. But Christmas is not over, it has just begun!

The incarnation of Jesus is a grace we get to experience over and over. Here is the hope that we need to be able to overcome the many challenges life throws at us. That hope is ours through Christ. Jesus comes into our world with every prayer we breathe. The celebrations do end, and the decorations get put away, but the life of the party remains.

May the light of Jesus shine within us and illumine the lives of those around us. May we experience the goodness of God's grace reborn in every kind word and every helping hand, not just today, but every day. May the light, the hope, the joy of Christmas remain with us always.