

## ***An Invitation to Humanity***

Christmas is a magical whirlwind of activity, but its essence takes place in the humblest of ways. The Christ child, the long awaited Savior, is born. Christmas resides at the heart of the salvation mystery, a powerful statement that God does not enter the world by golden chariot or winged horses. There is no parade or proclamation. There is only the birth of a child who sleeps in the manger. God chose to become one of us, the greatest gift of all. In the Christ child, we see the richness of God's love and we understand what it means to be human.

From the beginning, humankind was made in the image and likeness of God. It is a totally new thing for God to become one of us and to experience all that is involved in being human. It means that, through Jesus, God understands our reality in intimate ways—hopes and dreams, fears and foibles, joys and ecstasies, trials and tribulations. Jesus invites us to enter more fully into our own humanity, and Christmas is the beginning of our salvation history.

Each of us carries the divine spark within us, and with it comes the responsibility to live life fully. How often do we desire to be something other than we are, to disassociate ourselves from our flawed bodies or troubling emotions? How often do we avoid situations that are uncomfortable or difficult? How often do we wish that sickness would not touch our lives? By becoming one of us, God redeems all that we are, and we are invited to enter into our own humanity more deeply. Our task while we are here, is to flourish and to completely become the persons we are called to be.

Christmas invites us to enter into the story of the Nativity, and also the story of our own lives, as fully as possible. Joy, love, sorrow and tribulation are part and parcel of life. As we celebrate this Christmas season, let us remember that God became one of us and taught us what it means to be human.