

GOSPEL MESSAGE

December 24, 2021

NATIVITY OF OUR LORD, CHRISTMAS EVE

Unplanned, but Filled with Peace

Although many of us spend a great deal of time and energy preparing for Christmas, most of us have learned that things don't always go according to plan. Whether due to a sick parent, a gift that cannot be found, or an unexpected guest, pivots of one kind or another often need to be made as Christmas draws near.

This reality directly relates to the Christmas story. In more than one way, the birth of Jesus did not go the way Mary and Joseph likely planned. Yet perhaps this is part of the point: after all, there is nothing routine about God coming to us as a baby. Similarly, it is nothing short of incredible that this one would come to dwell among us in order to show us God's love, set us free from sin, and make possible a life that is whole and abundant.

On this Christmas Eve, we are reminded that nothing can separate us from the love of God made known to us in Jesus, Emmanuel. The birth of Jesus reveals that God has come not for perfect people or those who think they have it all figured out, but rather for people whose lives are messy and noisy, who do not always feel filled with hope, who have worked long hours, who feel the ever-present tension between the already and the not yet. The promise that endures is that the light of Jesus has come into the world for the sake of the *whole* world, and nothing can overcome it. This promise sustains us through the unexpected and sometimes surprising events that come our way. May the goodness of this truth fill us with both wonder and peace.

From sundaysandseasons.com.

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