



## The Christmas Story

Each year as this wonderful feast comes round, we retell one of the most important stories of all history. We all know how children love stories. I recall when I was growing up, how stories of Hans Christian Anderson was one of my favourite books. We know that parents tell stories to their children, usually before bedtime, and of course we all love to hear stories of our family history and of how we came to be where we are today. We know how the study of the League and its history helps us to recognize our work and direction. The stories are more than remembrances in history, they are real and alive for us, they are a part of who we are.

As we recall the Christmas story and the birth of Jesus, the Son of God, into our world, we know that this is more than a story. It is a sign of the outpouring of love that God has for us, for all humankind. We know that the birth of a child into the world, even in sometimes harsh circumstances, is still a story of joy and thanksgiving. As we recall the day Jesus was born in Bethlehem, and as we note the details of the story - with the angels, the shepherds, the lack of space in the inn, the arrival of the wise men - let us remember that this story is also about us. Jesus came into the world, not just to give us a joyful story to recall, but to teach us of the great love that God has for us, so that we in turn can share that love with one another.

The Nativity Story is also a story of peace. We know that each year we pray for peace in our world, peace in our families and peace in our hearts. With the tumult that we see around us in the world today, it is wonderful for us to reflect on a message of peace that comes directly from God. We know that for many in our world, the peace of Christmas will not be felt. We pray for them in a special way that the Lord can touch their hearts with peace.

St Luke, in his account of the birth of Jesus, asks us to look at the details, to imagine the scene, to place ourselves in the story, not just as observers, but like the shepherds, to be filled with excitement since the glory of God surrounded them. It is a reassuring story for us, since St Paul reminds us that "the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all" and the prophet Isaiah reminds us of the great light that has come into our world.

As you celebrate Christmas this year, take a moment to reflect on the story of the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. Remember that he came into our world to teach us of God's love, and to show us how to love unconditionally. As we follow his example, let us show that same kind of love and concern to our families, our friends, and especially to our sisters and brothers in need. By doing so, we relive the story of Christmas again and again, since it is a story with a message that endures all year long. As members of the Catholic Women's League, let us live that story with generosity and love. A Merry and Holy Christmas to all.

Most Rev. Fred J. Colli  
Bishop of Thunder Bay  
Provincial Spiritual Advisor