

Christmas Prayer Guide

Opening Song: [May Peace Prevail on Earth \(in 101 languages of the world\)](#)



A blessed day has dawned upon us. Come, you nations, worship the Lord, For today a great light has shone down upon the earth.

Alleluia!

"Your light will be recognized by its gentleness, its compassion and its humility."

(Closing Conference, 1997-98 Probation)

Meaning of Christmas

There is a "law" that "runs through the universe, "nothing ever mounts to a higher level except the higher thing comes down to it." One way to look at the hierarchy of creation is to simply see it as the Great Chain of Being.

Great Chain of Being Levels:	
God	- Existence + life + will + reason + immortality + omniscience + omnipotence
Angels	- Existence + life + will + reason + immortality
Humanity	- Existence + life + will + reason
Animals	- Existence + life + will
Plants	- Existence + life
Matter	- Existence
Nothingness	

Each level in the hierarchy of creation can only "live a higher life" if it dies to its lower existence and is in some way brought into communion with the higher being. But for that to happen, the higher being must come down to it. The process does not stop at humanity, a higher life exists above humanity and that is the Angels and God.

"If humanity is ever to be lifted up," "God, in some way, must come down to humanity." This is what God did - At the annunciation, God sent the archangel Gabriel to Mary, and marveled over the mystery of divine omnipotence existing as a babe in the manger. This is the true meaning of Christmas that already and not only happened over two thousand years ago but the Christ that was, is and forever being born in the human soul and into history.

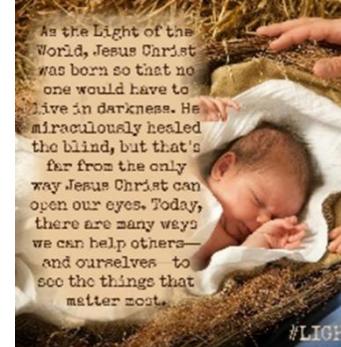
Celebrating Christmas: God who became flesh and lived among us evokes in us two ways to celebrate Christmas.

1. Christmas for all – Boundless God!

"The mystery of a newborn God must open ALL hearts to joy and love."

-St. Madeleine Sophie.

We are celebrating the birth of a man who taught us how to build a cohesive society, which he called the kingdom of heaven. We're forever welcoming the Universal Christ, the Cosmic Christ, the Christ that is boundless, uncontrollable, untameable and yet ours, yours and everyone's. This simply means building a society that is free from arrogance, hate, malice, prejudice and insecurities, firmly built with love and forgiveness, the remedy to the conflicts we face today among families, nations, especially nations at war, religions, cultures, ethnicity or sexual orientation.



Christmas is about celebrating the birth of Jesus who emphasized those values that are dear to each one of us, regardless of our faith traditions, cultures, and differences. One of the most frequently used words during Christmas season is peace. Indeed, it is a reflection of the innermost need, want and desire within each one of us as we cannot ignore the five global crises the world faced in 2022 – hunger, climate change, conflict, covid-19 and child abuse (*World Vision International*). To live in peace with oneself will inevitably give us the energy to move out of ourselves, to live with fellow beings without feeling apprehension, discomfort, or the fear of the other. Christmas evokes kindness, empathy and goodness toward fellow beings; it's a euphoric feeling of renewal that Jesus taught to the world, it is a sense of completion one feels when he or she finds in tune with humanity. We can find true peace when we connect with each other's humanity.

Jesus our example of the embodiment of peace shows us how to welcome all alike, the shepherds – those who know they know nothing and wise men those who know they do not know everything. Christmas is a celebration of that refreshed feeling of peace and welcome that only the Lord can give us.

For Reflection: Who is the Christ that I welcome today? What does His face look like? Look at the people who He welcomes...and spend time with them, celebrate the day with them. Share your peace received from Jesus at the manger.

2. Care – an open-ended process - In his message for the 54th World Day for Peace in 2021, Pope Francis in point no. 9 says, *“There can be no peace without a culture of care. The culture of care thus calls for a common, supportive, and inclusive commitment to protecting and promoting the dignity and good of all, a willingness to show care and compassion, to work for reconciliation and healing, and to advance mutual respect and acceptance. As such, it represents a privileged path to peace. In many parts of the world, there is a need for paths of peace to heal open wounds. There is also a need for peacemakers, men and women prepared to work boldly and creatively to initiate processes of healing and renewed encounter.”*



Pope Francis, pictured on Oct. 15, 2014. | Mazur/catholicnews.org.uk.

It was at Christmas that our Lord, as it were, took His first plunge into the heart of our troubles, of our difficulties, of our experiences, into the heart of the life we are leading. And that, not as someone standing at a distance, but as thrown into the stream feeling the shock, the human astonishment at what took place around Him-feeling the poverty, the pain, the isolation in which He was left. He loves that we should sympathize with Him in it. (Janet Stuart)

Jesus showed the way by embracing and caring for the whole of humanity regardless of who they were. The babe in the manger awakens in us four ethical elements in the dynamics of care- Attentiveness (to care about); responsibility (to care for); competence (taking care of); the fourth, however, responsiveness (receiving care). A care relationship is an open, dynamic process between God and humanity. It has a hopeful scenario, in which the one who cares intends to contribute to the strength for life of the one cared for, enhance the power to live a life of one's own. A care relationship, at the same time, has a dynamic structure; it entails a going through good and bad times together. “Care makes human beings really human.” (Leonard Boff)

God became flesh and dwelt among us – not only that God cares for us, and we care for ourselves and others, but that we also care for and take care of God. That God also is vulnerable and dependent on love, seeking our love. That God not only takes responsibility for us, but that we become also responsible for God, take care of God in ourselves and in each other.

One day the angel was asked how she got her wings – the angel answered, “I am not going to tell you how I got my wings but I will tell you how a bird got its wings – God gave birds plumage and song but no wings and on each side God put cares and said, love these cares and the birds loved them not through commandment but with their heart and they pressed these cares to their heart and the cares became wings and the birds began to fly and the angel said, that’s how I got my wings – I learnt to press the cares to my heart – I learnt to care.” (Audio Library - Bishop Fulton J. Sheen)

For Reflection: How do I care about, care for, take care of and receive care? In what concrete ways do I take care of God? How do I feel in tune with humanity? What are the cares that I press to my heart?



What are we waiting for?

If from all eternity God is alive and becomes incarnate in Jesus, boundless, giving us his peace and lifting us up with care what are we waiting for? Go to the whole world – “our world, our provinces, our communities need committed women, women who are ready to Proclaim the tender mercy of our God by their ability to create communion, live compassion and to learn of Jesus who is gentle and humble of heart.”

- Name and Devise of 1997-98 Probation – Patricia Garcia de Quevedo).

© <https://www.rescue.org/article/crisis-somalia-aid-workers-hampered-needs-ris>

Gerardette Philips rscj
Indonesia