

Christmas, 2025

Reflection

*...rather than look for Jesus in the crib or even the tabernacle,
we should listen to what he told John's disciples.
Where do we find Christ active today?*

Sr. Mary M. McGlone, *NCR*, December 13th, 2025

When I read this advice and question from Sr. Mary McGlone in *National Catholic Reporter* it really struck me. I'd been thinking along similar lines, since Christmas for us is really a celebration of Christ re-born, hopefully, in us. How better to celebrate Christmas than to gift Christ with our own Christ-like actions! After all, it is His birthday, and I'm quite sure he doesn't need a new pair of socks or a tie. Mind you, there's nothing wrong with those gifts if the recipient really wants them or needs them, but I'm talking about Christ now.

I think we all love to hear the original Christmas story at this time, but let's face it, if we get stuck there, we're taking the easy way out, even though it was never really easy for Mary, Joseph, or Jesus. Angels, shepherds, and magi present a pretty picture, but being born in a manger because there was no room anywhere else after a long journey by foot and on a donkey with Mary nine months pregnant couldn't have been pleasant. Poor, supposedly with no family nearby, possibly cold, certainly no running water, no medical care, probably dirty, responding to an edict from a ruthless foreign occupier—hardly “silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright.” “Sleep in heavenly peace?” Only with difficulty.

I don't mean to ruin the image of a “holly, jolly Christmas” for you, but I do mean to recognize that Christmas is more attuned to what Howard Thurman wrote 40 years ago:

When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among others,
To make music in the heart.

And it is there that we find Christ active today. It is then that Christ is re-born in us

Yes, there is much to be celebrated at Christmas, much to bring joy to the world, and Christ is at the heart of it all because He came to bring the work of Christmas forward. He is the gift of Christmas to be celebrated and to be re-gifted by us.

May we be bearers of Christ, sharing in His work now and throughout the New Year, for there continue to be far too many people today experiencing what Mary, Joseph, and Jesus experienced on that first Christmas day.

God bless us all, everyone!

A Christmas prayer for (nearly) everyone by Fr. James Martin, SJ

Dear God, I know that it is Christmas and I am supposed to be focused on the birth of Jesus, but once again Advent came and went and all I did was focus on so many other things.

So, this Christmas, please help me remember a few simple things, even if I am stressed from shopping and travel, lonely from a lack of friends and family, sick from a difficult illness or poor from the lack of work or a living wage.

This Christmas, please help me remember a few simple things.

Help me remember that when you became human, you came into the world in the most vulnerable way possible—as an infant. That meant that you were totally dependent on Mary and Joseph to care for you. And when you left this world, naked on a cross, you were vulnerable, too. That shows what you were willing to do just to love me.

You were vulnerable for me.

Help me remember that when you came into this world, it was not into some powerful clan in Galilee, not into some great ruling family of Judea and certainly not into a royal dynasty in Rome. You could have come in power and exercised that power as a scholar, a soldier, a king or an emperor. Instead, you came with no earthly power at all.

You were powerless for me.

Help me remember that you could have entered the world in a wealthy family. There was no need for you to be born to a young, probably illiterate woman who was married to a simple carpenter and who lived in a town so insignificant that one of your disciples would make a joke about it. But you chose not only to enter a poor family but to toil for many years as a laborer yourself.

You were poor for me.

Help me remember that you spent most of your life in obscurity in Nazareth, living an everyday life and working as a carpenter alongside Joseph. You were not well known. You did not set out to make a big name for yourself. In fact, the Gospels barely mention your hidden life in Nazareth, the place you spent your first 30 years. That is how simple, obscure and uneventful most of your life was.

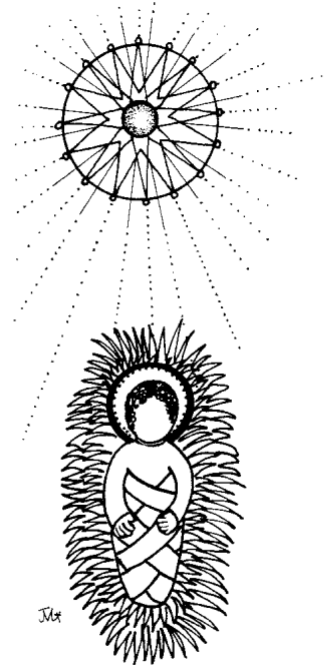
You were unknown for me.

Help me remember that when you became human you took on a human body. That means that you experienced everything that anybody does. You had stomachaches and headaches, got colds and the flu, experienced hunger and thirst, and grew weary at the end of a long day. It also means that you experienced joy and sadness, frustration and anger, and all the emotions that any human being does, even in your divinity.

You were human for me.

Help me remember that your entire life, from your birth to your death on a cross, was spent in love. You loved Mary and Joseph and your whole extended family. Later, you loved your friends, disciples and followers. You loved even your enemies and persecutors. And you had a special love for anyone who was poor, sick, lonely, misunderstood or marginalized in any way. Your entire life was poured out as one great offering of love.

You were love for me.



Help me remember that you offered yourself without counting the cost. You preached the good news to the poor, healed the sick and shared the coming of the reign of God with everyone. Not everyone wanted to hear your message, but you kept proclaiming it until your death. You gave your whole self for humanity, even when we rejected you. You gave up even your body and spirit on the cross.

You were everything for me.

Help me remember that Christmas is only the beginning of the story. After your death, you returned as the Risen One, never again to die, offering hope in the face of despair, love in the face of hate and life in the face of death. Your rising on Easter Sunday revealed the same message that the angel told your mother when he announced the coming Christmas: Nothing is impossible with God!

You are life for me.

Dear God, I know that I don't always remember these things at Christmas. There are so many emotions swirling in my head this time of year. But I want to remember them. And I trust that the desire to remember them is itself a good thing and comes from you.

This Christmas, give me the gift of memory,
And I will remember that you became love for me,
So that I can become love for others.

Suggested Actions

- ❖ Pray Fr. Martin's prayer above, perhaps focusing on just one paragraph each day throughout the Christmas season.
- ❖ Read Sr. Mary McGlone's full article at the *NCR* online website: <https://www.ncronline.org/dec-14-2025-third-sunday-advent>
- ❖ Also read the article, "The Nativity isn't cute or cozy. It should scandalize us," in *America Magazine*: https://www.americamagazine.org/faithinfocus/2025/12/09/_trashed/
- ❖ Find your own answers to the question, "Where do we find Christ active today?" Let those folks know you see and appreciate them.
- ❖ Then answer this follow-up question: How can I be Christ active today? Decide and commit to it. Let it be your New Year's resolution.
- ❖ And don't forget to celebrate Christmas with family and friends, bright lights, good food, and meaningful gifts.
- ❖ Check out the Upcoming Events page at this website for more things you can do, and also visit these other Pax Christi websites for more ways to pray, study, and act: www.paxchristiusa.org and www.nypaxchristi.org.
- ❖ Share this reflection with others.