

“Glory to God in the highest and peace to his people on earth!” This was the message the angels sang to announce the birth of the saviour. But there was no human fanfare to welcome the infant Jesus. Rather, Mary and Joseph had to settle for a stable to give birth to their child. We have tended to romanticize this scene but in reality it was probably a smelly, damp and infested place. And those that did pay him homage were the riff-raff of society, or that was how the shepherds were looked upon in those times. In a highly materialist and consumerist society we tend to gloss over the sobering circumstances of Jesus' birth and turn it into a sentimental and marketable event.

Nevertheless the true meaning of Christmas somehow succeeds in getting through. Ultimately it is a message of love: a redeeming love that brings peace and joy to the world. This is the Christmas story: God's love breaking into the world in the shape of this vulnerable child. As we gaze with wonder and awe at this infant our lives are touched and transformed by a power from on high.

A wonderful example of putting the true Christmas spirit into action has been the Christmas appeal organized by the St Vincent de Paul and the many parishioners who gave generously of their time and money that enabled hampers and gifts to be distributed to those in need.

Finally, to all who have attended our Christmas Masses may your Christmas be filled with the love, peace and joy - the gift of the Christ-child.

***Peace & blessings,
Gerard***