

realpeople

the gospel in everyday language



In today's readings:

Emmanuel: God-is-with-us. Isaiah 7:10-14
God's promise is fulfilled. Romans 1:1-7
The power of the dream. Matthew 1:18-24

Next week:

Holy Family.
Sirach 3:2-6,12-14; Colossians 3:12-21; Matthew 2:13-15,19-23.

In a nutshell

Today's Gospel emphasises Jesus' identity and vocation. The scriptures tell of Jesus' entry into the world in a simple story containing profound theological meaning: Jesus is the Messiah, the fulfilment of God's promise to Israel. He comes to humanity through the hand of God and is the one destined to save us.



The spirit of Christmas

For many years, Nativity House at Horsley Park (NSW) displayed scenes depicting the Christ child from all over the world. What began as one family's Christmas tradition brought the spirit of Christ to countless others. Speaking in 1998, the founder of Nativity House said:

My name is Elisabeth, a Hungarian born mother of six. With my Dutch husband I raised my family in Holland. With the Hungarian and Dutch traditions, Christmas was a very special time for us. We always had a Nativity scene and every year it was put up in different ways.

From Christmas 1977 I started my Nativity collection - handcrafted scenes of all different styles and ethnic origins. My first public exhibition was in Holland and I saw how many people were interested. In 1983 we emigrated to Australia and took the Nativity scenes with us.

In 1990, my greatest dream came true. My husband and I opened a Christmas museum gallery called Nativity House and it is our way of

encouraging people to think about the true reason for Christmas. The interest is tremendous.

Nativity House displays nearly 600 Nativity scenes from 55 countries. The materials used are unique to each country. Silk, gold, wood, ebony, maize leaves, straw, woodshavings, embroideries, clay and turtle shell are just some of the materials used to carve or create beautiful scenes that portray a love for the Christ child.

We have many people visit Nativity House around the Christmas season. It brings beauty to the heart and creates a wonderful Christmas! (EVM)

- *Do you have a nativity scene in your home? Make one, or find a fresh way of presenting your existing one.*
- *Pray with your children around the Christmas Nativity scene. Jesus, touch us with your peace.'*

An Advent prayer

I was dragging my feet through the crowded shopping mall. 'You find it difficult to enjoy Christmas, don't you.' It was my companion, Angela, reading my body language all too well. 'I just get discouraged by all the commercialisation. It trivialises the Christmas message,' I replied. As usual, Angela put a different spin on things. 'When I'm struggling through the crowds,' she said, 'I imagine what Mary must have felt as she and Joseph walked a crowded town looking for somewhere to have her child.' (JJ)



church below the rooftops

Celebrating Jesus

A Christmas tradition in our neighbourhood is the 'Jesus Birthday Party'. It's organised at my mother's place and it is an afternoon of play, friendship and great food for all the little ones in the street.

The children sing 'Happy Birthday' to Jesus around a cake and each child brings a birthday gift which is later passed on to the Smith Family Toy Appeal (to assist families who cannot afford toys and festive goods at Christmas).

My sister introduced this custom to us. She experienced it while living overseas. (JF)

Think...Talk

What is one of your most lifegiving Christmas memories?

What is the greatest gift I can give?

Plan

On our Church calendar, Christmas is a season, not just a day. Make the most of the whole season. Plan for time well spent with loved ones.



RealPeople offers faith reflections from the saints and prophets of everyday life.

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