

Christmas John 1:1-14

Christmas is again surrounded by fears and caution, trying to keep safe and well and see others, while wondering what restrictions the next few weeks will bring.

Our Christmas readings may be able to help us. The traditional and famous reading from John 1 tells us that God sent Jesus, as a **light in the darkness**, a bright light in the gloom. *'his life was the **light** of all people. The **light shines** in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it' (v4-5).* The world Jesus came into could be characterised as a dark world, of oppression, poverty, violence and economic problems, as a lot of the world today. Light in darkness symbolises joy amidst adversity. Someone said, *'true joy glows in the dark'.*

What would bring a glowing light into the darkness of our pandemic ridden world this Christmas time?

Perhaps to remember that there is more to life than the richness of our celebrations, more than the troubles we face, that if all else falls apart then there is someone we can rely on, that God cares for us and is with us? All of these Jesus came to show us.

What is it above all that makes life worth living? I would suggest it is **Love**.

John tells us, *'God so **loved** the world that he gave his only Son.'*

Jesus came into our world to show us how much God loves us.

God didn't send a letter, or a cheque, or an army, but came among us as a baby, a human being, because real love can only be known through relationships.

'The Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, full of grace and truth.' (v14) Jesus came to offer us a way back into a relationship with God as our Father.

'To all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God'. (v12) This relationship is something that is reliable and can be trusted for ever.

Once we know God as our Father, we are always his children.

Christmas is a time when we are reminded of God's presence among us and his desire for relationship with us. We sense this in many ways, in the words of carols, in the Christmas readings, in our celebrating, in being remembered by others with a card or a gift.

In all these things God whispers his love, and calls us back to the one who created us and came into our world to show us his love.

The Christmas story is one of the abundance of God's love, which knows no bounds.

God has done all he can to convince us of his love for us. He gave his only Son, to live among us, to die for us, to rise again to reveal new life to us.

Now God gives us his Holy Spirit, so that we might experience his love as real, warm, life-changing. He has given everything for us, holding nothing back.

So, we can celebrate with joy, feast and rejoice and be generous, and be thankful to God and all who show us his love.

This does not mean forgetting our troubles, but trusting God to care for us and to be with us in all that we face, and in all that 2022 will bring.

Our generosity can extend to the poor and homeless, the suffering and oppressed, remembering that God cares for all people. Celebrating and generosity need not cost a fortune. The giving of our time, the human touch of speaking to others, to put into words our appreciation of others, to share what we do have, and not to bemoan what we don't, all goes to make Christmas a time of joy and celebration.

Jesus' birth was greeted with great joy, that truly glows in the dark:

Mary sang, *'My spirit **rejoices** in God my Saviour'.* The angel said, *'I am bringing you good news of great **joy** for all the people'.* The shepherds returned from the manger, *'glorifying and praising God'.* The wise men *'were overwhelmed with **joy**,.. and they knelt down and paid him homage'.*

They all glimpsed something very special, as the light dawned. So let us celebrate and rejoice this Christmas time for Jesus Christ is born, the light of the world has come. Amen.