

A Christmas Greeting from the Dominican Sisters of Peace

Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over their flock.

The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone 'round them, and they were struck with great fear.

The angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you Good News of great joy that will be for all the people.

For today in the city of David, a Savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord.

And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger."

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest and on Earth peace to those on whom God's favor rests." (Luke 2:8-14)

This Christmas is going to be most significant for us. We know perhaps more deeply than we have ever known before, that we need a Savior. When our hands are full and we can't hold another thing in them, we feel no need. We feel full, satisfied, complete, independent. But this Christmas, we are missing friends, family and human contact. We feel a little empty, and hope for the fulfilling love of Christ.

Recently I was speaking with a friend who was diagnosed with Covid. I asked her, "How are you feeling?" She said, "Physically lousy, but I think I am more bummed by the fact that I got this virus, because it makes me feel weak."

Her honest response brought home to me the realization that we are all weak, and we need each other. While we profess belief in Jesus, the Christ, as our Savior, do we really recognize how much we need God's saving love and presence in our lives?

And how like our God of paradox, to be a Savior who shares our human condition, our frailty, our physical vulnerability, and who fills our hearts with love. This same Savior invites us also to share this saving love with others—we become "ambassadors of salvation."

More people are in need right now than ever before. Families have lost loved ones, there is much isolation, sickness, worry and stress. The pandemic has turned our lives upside down. On the news we see long lines of cars driving up to distribution centers to receive food. Many recipients are people who never before in their lives were in such a needy position. We also see countless others sharing what they have—like the widow's mite.

We can find ourselves on either side of this equation in different ways, at different times. It may not be food we need, but something else. What do you need right now? Our saving and liberating God who took our flesh, who embraced our chaotic human existence, desires to come into our hearts today as Savior. Let's receive this Light into the darkness.

Let us rejoice with the shepherds and angels.

Can you hear the angel's voice, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you Good News of great joy...For today, in the city of David, a Savior has been born for you who is Christ, the Lord."

Merry Christmas!

Sister Pat Twohill, OP
Prioress, Dominican Sisters of Peace