

## COME LORD JESUS, COME AND BE BORN IN OUR HEARTS

There's nothing quite like a baby. The miracle of new life takes one's breath away. The responsibility of feeding and caring for it saps one's energy. But there's the sense of being a part of something wonderful and sleepless nights seem like a small price for the smiles and coo's and reaching out for you that follows. A baby changes one's life forever. Maybe that's why God chose to come as a helpless infant, needing love and nurture as any baby does, and vulnerable to our human flaws and failures in caring for him.

God becoming human, taking on our flesh and human needs--that's what we celebrate at Christmas. John says "the word became flesh and pitched his tent among us." God wants to be with us where we are right now. The magnitude of this event tends to get lost in the carols and pretty nativity scenes of the season, but if we take time to sit quietly with this reality, it is truly mind-blowing!

Here's another hard-to-grasp reality--God couldn't become human without our cooperation. Mary's "Yes" to the unknown life growing inside her was essential for the plan of redemption to unfold. Maybe that's why the Annunciation gospel is read several times during Advent--it's that important.

And just as God could not become human without Mary's "Yes," so God needs our "yes" to "pitch his tent among us" today. In a very real sense, God invites each one of us to say "Yes" to enfleshing Jesus in our lives. But how will we recognize it when God sends our own Gabriels to ask us to go with God into unknown territories often far beyond our comfort zones? Making time for daily connection with God through prayer is a first step in stilling our spirits and tending to the ways of God.

What might God be inviting us to bring to life?

--Maybe it's a reconciliation in the family, swallowing our pride and sense of entitlement to begin the conversation of forgiveness. Peace in the world begins with small steps like this.

--Maybe it's taking time to think about a lonely neighbor and include them in our Christmas festivities. God's entering into our lives becomes visible as we share fellowship and memories together.

--Maybe God is asking us to see the face of Jesus in our everyday encounters at the grocery store, in traffic, in line at a holiday sale. As we see these people as Jesus, we become more patient, kind, and respectful. Search your own heart and see what God might be asking.

When I was young I used to think that God would demand great sacrifice, like going to a foreign country as a missionary. Now I believe that living out the every-day with a sense of God's presence and action in and through us is even more difficult.

Just like in pregnancy, there is discomfort in bringing this new life to fruition. There's the soul-sickness of letting go of my old patterns, the patience with my struggles with nurturing this new life within me, the labor pains of becoming the kind of person God invites me to become. But Oh the miracle of this new life -- Oh the privilege of letting Jesus come alive in me!

Come, Lord Jesus, come. Come and be born in my heart.

-Angela Anno, Pastoral Associate

