

THURSDAY, THE SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT

Born in Us

And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Galatians 2:20

*It is not enough to try to imitate Christ as much as possible; it is not enough to remind others of Jesus; it is not even enough to be inspired by the words and actions of Jesus Christ. No, the spiritual life presents us with a far more radical demand: to be living Christs here and now, in time and history. (Henri J. M. Nouwen, *The Selfless Way of Christ*, 20)*

As sure as Jesus is born of Mary and laid in a manger, he is born in us too and laid in the manger of our hearts. Christmas is a great celebration and a powerful reminder of the fact that Jesus is born continually in each of us—not so we may keep Jesus to ourselves, but so we may share him with the world like Mary did.

St. Paul truly believed that Christ lived in him—born in him daily, shared with the world. If Christ is born in us, if Christ lives in us, then we live as Christ—animated by his Spirit, bearing witness to his truth. In this way Christ is still present in this world—healing, teaching and accompanying saints and sinners alike.

Come, Lord Jesus, be born in me this Christmas so I may share you with the world. Amen.

FRIDAY, THE SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT

Here at This Table

For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven ...

Colossians 1:19-20

*God not only became flesh for us years ago in a country far away. God also becomes food and drink for us now at this moment of the Eucharistic celebration, right where we are together around the table. God does not hold back. God gives all. That is the mystery of the Incarnation. (Henri J. M. Nouwen, *With Burning Hearts*, 68)*

In the Eucharist, Christ is still Emmanuel, God-with-us. The Eucharist both satisfies our yearning for Christ and instills in us a deeper yearning for him. In the Eucharist, Christ is truly present. And yet the Eucharistic feast increases our desire for his Second Coming, when there will no longer be signs or symbols or sacraments, but only God, who will be all in all. Until that time, we wait patiently to be united with the incarnate, crucified and risen Christ in the Eucharist. Gathered with our brothers and sisters, we anticipate his coming even as we receive him into our hearts and bodies, the food and drink that sustain us until his return.

Jesus, Emmanuel, you feed us with the Bread of Life. May our Eucharistic celebrations be bold and gentle reminders that as we gather at your table, you are already with us. Amen.