



Picture Credit: Amanda Carden / Shutterstock.com

Dear Friends,

Who is it lying there in the manger? The loveliest, dearest Child of all, as we sing in our Christmas carols year after year. For this is the divine Child, the Son of the Father in heaven, who entered this world as a babe. Yet for the Son of the eternal God no shelter had been prepared. Only in a feeding trough for animals did He find a place in which to lie. Thus from His birth the Christ Child was acquainted with sacrifice; as our sacrificial Lamb, He was destined to lay down His life as an offering for us.

This Child is Eternal Love, who came down to us from heaven. And divine love desires to make sacrifices for others in order to bless them and enrich their lives. Above in heaven Jesus would have talked with His Father of His desire to tread this path of sacrifice from the manger to the cross. He wanted to go this way of sacrifice in order to save us, the sons of men, and make us happy.

He ransomed us from the powers of sin, which hold us captive, making us unhappy. Yes, He ransomed us from all depression and despair. This sacrificial Lamb can really save and deliver us, grant us forgiveness and cause peace to flow into our hearts. He took all our suffering upon Himself, that we might be comforted and filled with the everlasting joy to be found in Jesus - joy which none can rob us of.

At Christmas let us draw near to the manger and thank the Child Jesus that through His sacrificial life and death and glorious resurrection He has overcome Satan and shields us from the terrible onslaughts of the Evil One, who is steadily advancing and making his influence greatly felt in our times. Let us give thanks that through His sacrifice not only shall we partake of His redemption in this life, but the way is open for us to enter the heavenly glory for all eternity.

Seeing how the Child Jesus, the sacrificial Lamb, loved us and laid down His life for us, are we not kindled with a tender love for Him? Love will make us happy. At Christmas we are to experience the blessed joy that comes from loving Him, who loves us immeasurably.

Yes, we have Someone who we may love, who will not disappoint us, as we often experience in human relationships, when friends, relatives and others are unresponsive to our love. The love of Jesus never ceases. We are surrounded on all sides by this love, for He loves each one of us personally, bearing all our trials and hardships with us. His one concern is to free us from the bondage of sin and to bring us comfort in our suffering.

To the Child in the Manger let us bring our troubles and griefs, including our sins. When we do so with all our hearts, trusting that the Child Jesus will answer our prayers and forgive us, comfort us and bring about a transformation in our plight, we shall experience what we believe.

Jesus sacrificial path began the moment He parted from the Father and entered the world as an infant. For our sakes He made this sacrifice, emptying Himself and becoming poor. The Child Jesus lay not in a crib but in a feeding trough amid animals.

He had none of the things a new-born babe would normally have. Hardly had He been born when the perilous flight through the desert began. For an infant the chances of survival were small.

*A little Child in cradle lies,  
A holy Lamb for sacrifice -  
Who can the mystery fathom?  
In order to redeem the lost  
He chose the manger, bore the cross,  
And all because He loved us.*

This Christmas as we draw near to the manger in spirit, and as He reveals Himself to us as the "Word became flesh" - we discover He was sent as the perfect sacrificial Lamb. Who can resist His love? Even as a child He was ready to sacrifice Himself - all for love of us. How we need such sacrificial love today! In these dark times many of us are plagued with fears, troubles and great suffering. We need Someone to suffer for us, that we might be comforted - Someone who enters misery for us, that we might be delivered from our misery.

In an age characterised by sin and vice to a horrifying and previously unknown extent, we need more than ever Someone to take these sins upon Himself and make an atoning sacrifice for them. Jesus assumed human flesh and sacrificed His life on the cross to deliver all mankind from sin. The full ransom that He paid is valid for us today. If we come to Him, confessing and repenting of our sins, He will set us free from every one of them.

Don't we feel this Christmas, perhaps more than ever, a longing to express our deepest thanks to the Child in the manger, who lies there as a sacrificial Lamb?



Picture Credit: Amazing Sanctuary

It is true: Christ the Saviour is here and waiting for us to come so that He can work in our hearts and deliver us from our troubles. And so Christmas is to be more than just a festival we celebrate yearly. It is to be a happening. Jesus, the sacrificial Lamb, is to enter our lives in a new and deeper way, bringing about a change in us.

Because He is the very essence of love, He will impart His love to us, enabling us to love those who make life hard for us, and this in turn will make us happy.

Never can we thank our Father in heaven enough for offering up His dearly beloved and only begotten Son and sending Him into the world as the Child in the manger, as our sacrificial Lamb, who loves us as no one on earth ever can. Let us therefore bring the Christ Child much adoration this Christmas and pray that His sacrifice will inspire us anew to bring Him our small sacrifices out of love and thanksgiving.

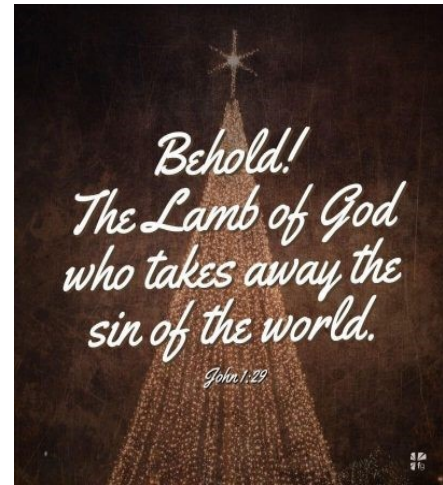
*Beloved Child, how can I thank You?  
No sacrifice You deemed too great.  
You parted with Your Heavenly Father,  
Earth's night You entered for my sake.*

*Such love my heart fills with amazement!  
In awe and wonder I would come  
And follow You along the pathway  
Of sacrifice, my dearest Lamb.*

**Taken from M. Basliea Schlink's Christmas Letter 1988**

Beyond the great food, beyond the gifts, beyond the lights and music, God reminds us of the most wonderful gift that has ever been given...this gift is Jesus. The babe in the manger. The Saviour of the world, who brought the promise of unconditional love, unending hope, and eternal life to every person who believes in Him.

Jesus is God's perfect, indescribable gift. And the amazing thing is that not only are we personally able to receive this gift that is too wonderful for words, but we have been commissioned to be messengers to share Him with others. More important than making our homes ready, we need to make sure our hearts are ready, both to receive Christ's love and to extend it to others. This is what Christmas is all about.



*The Evangelical Sisters of Mary*