

FOR GOD
SO LOVED
THE WORLD



*For God so loved the world
that he gave his only Son,
that whoever believes in him
should not perish but have
eternal life.* John 3:16 RSV

Bethlehem. What does the name mean to you? For many, it touches a chord in the heart, Bethlehem having gone down in history as the place where the Son of God entered this world as a little child. Having assumed human flesh to be our Saviour, Jesus is now inseparably linked with this earth, which heard His infant cries, saw His tears in Gethsemane and was stained by His blood at Calvary. He has sacrificed too much for this world ever to forget it. Its pain has become His; and to this day He loves this world, even though it is full of evil, often responding with intense hatred to His loving sacrifice.

He sees the misery caused by sin, and His heart goes out especially to all those who suffer as a consequence. As Love eternal He calls: 'Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest' (Matthew 11:28 RSV). Yes, He longs to show us kindness, to ease the pains of body and soul.

So let us turn our eyes and thoughts away from whatever may be depressing us at home, at work or in the world in general. Let us look to Him. Let us praise and worship the Child in the manger. Let us trust in His love. Then we will find that Jesus' love contains the greatest power of all. Nothing is impossible for His love. His all-sufficient sacrifice at Calvary

means that the power to overcome Satan and sin is His.

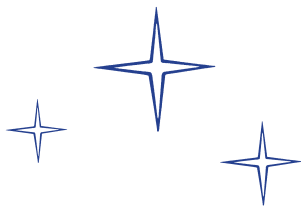
Just one condition needs to be met if the love of Jesus is to be poured out upon us this Christmas, refreshing, comforting and filling with heavenly joy: we are to look to Him for everything. Jesus, Love eternal, is our one hope in this dark world of ours. He is the guarantee that the love of God will triumph in the end. And nothing, absolutely nothing, can separate us from His love, as the apostle Paul writes:

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?...

For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:35,38,39 RSV

With this love surrounding us, suffering cannot ultimately harm us. His love is stronger than hatred and death, stronger than the powers of darkness. We may rest in the assurance that the love of God will never let us down. The greater the distress, the greater His love will prove to be.



Oh, Love comes down from heav - en To
 heal and love a - way The power of sin and
 e - vil, Which holds earth in its - sway.

The image shows a three-staff musical score. The first staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The second and third staves are in bass clef. The music consists of a vocal line and two piano accompaniment lines. The lyrics are written below the staves, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across bar lines.

He lies there weak and helpless,
 The holy Son of God,
 Yet power divine possessing
 To save us by His blood.

O Love Divine, in giving
 Your life, Your all, for us,
 You bring the whole world blessing
 And lasting happiness.

In search of help and healing
 The poor in spirit come
 And go away by love restored,
 Each one a child of God.

What power is Yours, Lord Jesus,
 The power of love divine,
 Forgiving sin and healing,
 O Saviour of mankind!

M. Basilea Schlink

© Evangelical Sisterhood of Mary, P.O.B. 13 01 29, Darmstadt, Germany
www.kanaan.org

Branch address for Australia:

Evangelical Sisterhood of Mary, P.O.Box 430, Camden NSW 2570

Printed in Australia

WB3e