

Today is where God is with us (Dec. 24, 2017)

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We ourselves engage with our own imperfect circumstances because today is where God is with us — Emmanuel. We are on a good path if our family celebrations of Christ's birth are connected to our uncertainty, vulnerability and difficulty. Advent prepares us for this "good news." Christ comes to those who need and welcome him.

Mark Twain once said that banks only lend to people who can prove that they do not need money. We must not think that Jesus comes only to the blessed. Jesus himself said that a physician does not come to serve the healthy (Mark 2:17).

Since 1966, every seminarian learns the first two sentences of the Second Vatican Council's statement on "The Church in the Modern World." "The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these too are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts."

This truth does not impede belief. Faith is impossible without expecting God in our own concrete history. He repeatedly wishes to be among us now. If we think that Christ cannot fit into the craziness of our own present moment, we deny him a place to be born, a place in the inn (Luke 2:7).

This Christmas, I entrust you to God's blessing that is his Son. Jesus comes to us amid our joys and hopes, among our griefs and anxieties. He has to take us as we are! Let us pray for one another and our Church.