



## *What Child Is This*

★ What Child is this, who, laid to rest on Mary's lap, is sleeping? Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,  
while shepherds watch are keeping? This, this is Christ, the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing:  
★ Haste, haste to bring Him laud, The Babe, the Son of Mary!

Christmas 2017

My Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Our Advent preparations have come full term as we expect the Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Many of you may still be fixated with physical, financial or social planning, but beaming with excitement over the beautifully decorated homes and the like. On the contrary, you may be overwhelmed and tired of the sales gimmicks, the crowds and queues in the malls, navigating traffic and seeking parking spaces as you travel with the many bags of goodies. Have you paused to think about the significance of Christmas?

As we began to journey closer to Christmas, I became increasingly focused on Mary and Joseph, the Holy Family. An expecting couple leaves the comforts of their home in Nazareth, traveling to Bethlehem to pay taxes and be counted for the yearly census. Unfortunately, they were met with those words of “no room in the inn.” This resulted in Mary and Joseph taking refuge in a stable with the animals. Luke tells us in Chapter 2 vs. 7, “And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.” On reflection on this birth story, many may be wondering how was the Savior of the world, the Prince of Peace, allowed to be born in such conditions. If we were to assess this closely, both Mary and Joseph looked beyond their circumstances to embrace the blessing they received of a first-born son. How much do we embrace this great gift of Christ at Christmas?

In our own context, we see many families are homeless or displaced, due to loss of jobs, income, and foreclosure, resulting in their taking refuge in shelters or limited conditions. Although, the plight of our sisters and brothers may be heart wrenching and saddening, it is our duty to be blessings to families, reminding them of the greatest gift of Christmas – Jesus Christ. Jesus’ coming as the babe in the manger, signaled an aura of enlightenment to a world which too often seems lacking hope, compassion and peace. As Christ’s witnesses in this modern era, the challenge for us is to be consistent and effective as we embody Christ’s presence in the world.

Many people bask in the company of family, friends and loved ones now, as they celebrate the Christmas season. It is my hope and prayer, that like Mary and Joseph, regardless of the circumstance, we celebrate and embrace because of the season – Jesus, the Hope of the world.

From my family, to yours – A Blessed and Merry Christmas and a Hope-filled New Year.