

MICHAEL HOGAN

When I was growing up, Christmas was the most cherished time of the year for me. As far back as I can recall, our Christmas traditions involved spending Christmas Eve at my paternal grandparents' house, celebrating Christmas Day in our own home, and then heading over to my maternal grandparents' place. I eagerly anticipated this throughout the year, so much so that my favorite colors during childhood were, in fact, red and green because they signified Christmas. Even to this day, Christmas remains my favorite holiday.

As a child, my focus was primarily on the joy of receiving gifts, but it was also during this time that I was introduced to the concept of God and His ultimate gift to humanity in the form of His Son, who sacrificed His life for us, offering the promise of eternal life in Heaven. Although I strayed from my faith during my teenage years and throughout my twenties, my love for Christmas never changed. When I rediscovered my faith in my early thirties, this time in the Catholic Church (after growing up in a Baptist tradition), I realized the depth of spiritual richness I had been missing out on.

It was a profoundly moving experience when, during my first midnight Mass, I heard the cantor proclaim the Birth of Christ in the Kalenda Proclamation. The act of Christ humbling Himself to be born among us was an inconceivable act of humility, all for our sake. Becoming a Catholic has allowed me to develop a deeper love for Christ that enriches my life as a husband and father. I hope as I start my own Christmas traditions throughout the coming years that my children come to know Christ's gift for them and that they come to love Christ ever more deeply.



LINO DEFACENDIS

As I take a moment to reflect on our Lord's coming this Christmas, I can't help but think about His actual coming among us as a vulnerable, innocent baby just over 2,000 years ago.

When He was born with nothing but total meekness and humility in a cold and dirty stable, His Jewish people were under the rule of the tyrannical Roman empire, most of humanity was engulfed in paganism, human sacrifice was a prevalent, harsh reality, and the lives of the common people were deemed worthless and expendable by the narcissistic tyrant rulers of the day.

Fast forward to 2023, and I shudder to see the striking resemblance in our broken world. Here we witness the relentless power grab of the global elite, the expanding 'religions' of atheism and consumerism that continue to cunningly attract so many souls away from Truth, millions of innocent lives mercilessly killed by abortion and euthanasia in the names of convenience and dignity, and where the majority of people are sacrifices offered up for big pharma profits, the war machine, and whatever else it takes for billionaire globalists to maintain and grow their power hold on humanity.

And yet despite how dark things may appear right here and now, our dear Lord Jesus comes once again to renew our hope in all that is Good, for He is our Way, Truth and Life!

Thankfully, we have Him and the gift of His never-ending salvific grace. I know that you understand and accept there is no human solution (especially political!) to our many cultural and societal woes, for the Lord assured us that His "kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36).

As we prepare to celebrate the great feast of Christmas once again, let us faithfully and courageously continue the journey towards the fulfilment of His kingdom "on earth as it is in heaven" as our dear Lord commanded. We will walk with complete trust in Him, no matter how difficult or hopeless things may seem from our feeble human perspective, for "My ways are not your ways" (Isaiah 55:8) and Truth will ultimately prevail!

DOUG MAINWARING

I'll never forget our Christmas miracle three decades ago. After 8 years of marriage — after my wife and I had given up all hope of having children — out of the blue God showed His love toward us. He sent us a newborn son.

It was wonderful to witness the pure joy, peace, and hope return to my wife's soul after having steeled herself against the pain of childlessness. Our celebration of the birth of the Christ Child that year took on new meaning as we at last could enter into the joy and anticipation of Mary and Joseph in a way that we hadn't been privy to previously.

Just two years later, we adopted Michael's brother, Christopher.

This December, our Christmas miracle will turn 30 years old.

When we were completely unable to give each other children — after every path to conception and adoption had been blocked — God displayed his munificence toward us. Not once, but twice.



PAUL SMEATON

Christmas this year will be like never before for my wife and me. The whole idea of Christmas, like everything else, has taken on a new meaning for us since we became parents in April this year.

The nine months of my wife's pregnancy seemed to go on forever. We just couldn't wait to see our little girl face to face. Our daughter was due to be born on Easter Sunday, but she didn't arrive until 11 days later. Those 11 days were the longest of our lives. We had to keep ourselves constantly busy. If we didn't keep busy then all we could think about was our wish that our little girl would arrive, or our fears that something might go wrong. In the end our daughter arrived safely and with much joy. I think those periods of waiting have helped us to cherish our little girl even more.

Looking at my little daughter, I'm overwhelmed by the goodness of God. Overwhelmed that He created, from nothing, this tiny, beautiful, charming little creature. And it is wonderful to see how much joy she gives to all our friends and family, most especially to her four grandparents.

Christmas will be different for our family this year because it will be filled with our daughter's smiles, her sweet sounds, and all her little delightful ways. How must Our Lady and Saint Joseph have awaited the birth of Our Lord? Not just the birth of a child, but of their Savior too. How attentive they must have been to every little smile of His, to every new sound and movement.

Our little daughter is a living image of Christ, and her presence this year brings His joy into our home in a way we have never known before.



MYLES VOSYLIUS

As a kid, I was always taught that the 'true meaning' of Christmas is the birth of Jesus Christ. I accepted that as a good kid of Catholic parents should do.

However, it wasn't until my reversion back into the Catholic faith when I was around 16 years old that I truly accepted and understood it to be just that. My heart began to flood with a deep sense of God's humble love for humanity, a love so great that He took on our own flesh and was born. This realization was the greatest Christmas gift I have ever received to this day. Likewise, every year I still look forward to the gifts God has in store for me, and this year it is marriage and beginning a family with my beautiful fiancée. We will be married in the Catholic Church in March 2024.

I hope and pray I make time for the adoration of Jesus Christ this Advent and Christmas, to prepare myself for what God will give me in my future marriage ceremony. God has many great gifts for all of us this year, as is the case every year. Christmas brings out the extra-generous side of God through Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit.

Merry Christmas to all LifeSiteNews viewers and supporters!

