



Chapter – Christmas 2025

Emmanuel – A Season of Joyful Renewal and Peace (Luke 2:1-20)



Very dear Sisters and Friends,

Christmas comes to us surrounded by familiar images – glittering lights, carols, cribs, Christmas trees, Santa Claus, and festive gatherings. But beneath these outward scenes lies the profound truth we truly celebrate: the birth of Jesus, Emmanuel – God with us, the celebration of God’s joyful renewal and redemption of the world.

As we bring this Jubilee year to a close, and in keeping with its theme of renewal, I have chosen, for our reflection, Luke 2:1–20, the Gospel for this year’s Vigil Mass. Let us reflect on



this text together, as communities and families, and attune our hearts to the promptings of the Spirit, who reveals to us the deeper meaning of Christmas this year. In the reflections that follow, I offer the fruit of my own prayerful reading of this biblical story.

First, we realise that we find ordinary people—Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds—facing ordinary hardships: a long journey, crowded towns, no room at the inn, and the quiet work of daily living. Nothing in their circumstances suggested glory or promise. And yet, it is within such simplicity, poverty, and human limitation that God chooses to break into our world, bringing renewal and new life.

The Lukan Christmas story teaches us that God’s work starts in unexpected places and often takes root in the hidden, humble spaces of our lives. Jesus was not born in a palace or a temple, but in a simple manger; he was born on the road, and those who came to see Jesus were shepherds, not kings. In this humble beginning, God gently tells us: I am near; change is possible; new life begins right where you are. Wherever we feel small, burdened, or unnoticed, God comes with quiet strength. In Luke’s story, there is a special place for the simple, unassuming, homeless, and powerless. It brings hope for all those who are marginalised, displaced, and suffering in today’s world.

The second thing that captures my heart is the message of the angels: *“Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy for all people.”* How comforting it is to realise that joy is God’s first word to a broken world. Before God asks anything of us, he gives joy—not the light happiness that fades, but a deep assurance that God is with us and that things will not remain as they are. Christmas joy does not mean the absence of difficulty—it implies the presence of Christ within it. Each time we welcome Christ into our hearts, our decisions, and our relationships, renewal quietly unfolds, and joy finds its place in our daily lives.

The third thing that moves my heart is the song of the angels: *“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to those on whom His favour rests.”* Their proclamation transcends boundaries, bringing heaven and earth together into a single reality. The good news of Christmas is about God drawing near to humanity, God’s glory touching the soil of our lives, and peace being offered to the world. In the birth of Jesus, these distances and divisions disappear, and communion is restored.

Throughout Scripture, God’s “glory” is not an abstract idea but the radiant sign of God’s presence among us. For the people of Israel, it was a powerful assurance that God was near and journeyed with them. In John’s Gospel, this same glory becomes flesh in Jesus—God’s presence, taking on a face, a voice, and a life that we can behold.

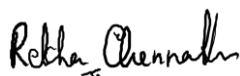
God’s glory, shining from the newborn Christ, does more than inspire us; it changes us. It brings peace—*shalom*—a profound, life-giving wholeness that renews us from within. The peace announced by the angels is God’s gracious gift, offered to all who open themselves to the presence of Christ. Through Him, heaven’s peace settles on the earth and into our hearts. May our renewed hearts become instruments of peace in our communities, schools, parishes, places of ministry, and families.

Finally, the missionary aspect of the story. After encountering Christ, the shepherds became messengers of joy and peace. The encounter with Christ transforms their lives; they become the first to proclaim God’s renewing grace. Christmas invites us to do the same: having received joy and peace, we are now called to share them with others.

Christmas is more than a memory of the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem; it is a celebration of God’s glory, God’s transforming presence in our lives today. Each act of kindness, patience, forgiveness, and generosity becomes a tiny manger where Christ is reborn in today’s world.

During this Christmas season, let Christ be born into our communities and families, into our efforts and struggles, and into our hopes and fears. Let the glory of God – the grace of God’s love – flow into our hearts, renewing our lives, transforming our interpersonal relationships, and rekindling our passion for mission. Let us cherish every ordinary moment of our lives, recognise the needs and hidden suffering of others, and embody the spirit of compassion and service, revealing God’s loving presence with us – Emmanuel.

With every prayer for a joyful Christmas and a peaceful New Year, 2026!



Sister Rekha Chennattu, RA
Superior General

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