

PASTOR'S COLUMN

A Blessed Christmas

There is a story of a man who saw a car hit a dog in front of his house one Christmas Eve night. The driver of the car, also a man, stopped to check on the animal. The dog, which was bleeding, hobbled from the street onto the sidewalk. As the two men approached the dog to help him, the dog took off and crawled into a space underneath the man's house, moaning all the while. The men knew they needed to get the dog to a veterinarian quickly if the dog was going to survive the injury. They tried to coax the dog out from under the house by calling after it and offering it food and water, but the dog wouldn't budge. Besides being wounded, the dog was traumatized and afraid. The men called the local Animal Shelter for help, but got a recording that the shelter was closed until after Christmas.

The man who owned the home said a short prayer and then thought to go inside his house and get his own dog. When he brought his dog outside, he pointed to the opening under the house and said, "There is a hurt dog under the house who needs your help. Help him." As if the dog understood exactly what was being asked of him, the man's dog crawled under the house. The two men heard the sound of whimpers and soft barks. After about fifteen minutes, the injured dog crawled out from under the house in great pain with the man's dog behind him, coaxing him and encouraging him. The two men took the dog to a veterinary hospital. A kindly veterinarian agreed to do emergency surgery which saved the dog's life. The dog was reunited with his owner on Christmas Day.

The homeowner gave his dog a lot of hugs and treats for his service in saving the life of the injured dog. When the man went to Church on Christmas Day, he suddenly understood better than ever why Jesus became human. It took a dog to coax a wounded dog from hiding to healing. It took God-made-man to relate to men and women and bring healing to a broken and wounded world.

At Christmas, we celebrate the wonder that the God who created us humbled himself to become human in order to manifest his great love for us and initiate the plan for our redemption. When all the Christmas gifts are opened and all the Christmas parties complete, we are left with the true Reason for the Season: Jesus, Immanuel, God-with-us forever.

On behalf of myself, Fr. Thien, our deacons, Parish Staff and School Staff, we wish you a deeper understanding and embrace of the wonder of God becoming human and the love of God that underlies it. We wish you and yours a very Blessed and Merry Christmas.

God bless,

Fr. Joe