

## **Second day of Christmas - December 26th, 2021 Monika Berezcki-Farkas**

For some this Sunday is the first Sunday after Christmas, for some, this is still Christmas, the second day of Christmas, as it is in my country. For some, it is Boxing Day. How do you feel about this? Do you feel that Christmas is over? There is not much excitement anymore, families were together, everybody got the gifts and that's all. Now we can focus on the end of the year then the New Year's services. Or not. Or we should stop and believe that Christmas is not only on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day and it's not only about family gatherings and gifts, but we should remember what we got on those Advent Sundays: hope, peace, joy and love. We learned that these are staying with us, because Jesus brought them to us.

Friends, please come with me and hear the Christmas story. I can tell you that I love this season. It's so good to come to church and see all these decorations, and sometimes I feel it would be nice to keep them up for the whole year. But that way Christmas won't be special. We need these special occasions during the year when we can stop and think about God's great love toward us.

What was the good news the angel proclaimed to the shepherds on that dark night in Bethlehem: A saviour has been born to you.

Who were these "you"? So the angel said that to the shepherds, who were not there accidentally, but lived there. They lived in darkness. During the night, they were outside watching their sheep. Being in the dark is hard, but that was their life. At that time shepherds were at the bottom of the hierarchy in society. At the bottom there were the sinners, then the tax collectors, then the shepherds.

It always amazes me how Jesus said that He is the good shepherd. That he didn't care about the hierarchy or what people thought of shepherds. But if we think of the Old Testament, many of the people of God were actually shepherds. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and even David the great king. God called David when he was a shepherd.

And on that night in Bethlehem shepherds were the ones who heard this amazing news: A saviour has been born to you.

And we know that "to you" covers everyone. Since our God loved the world that ... all those who believe... The good news is for all those who believe.

What an interesting thing that before the angel's story we heard about Caesar Augustus and the census to know how many people lived in the entire Roman Empire, which was the known world. He wanted to know about everybody so he could get taxes from everybody. See, he had

a plan for the people, he wanted them to give more money to Caesar. God also had a plan at the exact same time, he prepared the best gift for everyone. He sent Jesus to all and those who believe ...

And as Caesar sent his messenger to tell people what was coming. God sent his angel to tell those who were in darkness, that there is good news, the Saviour has been born to you. Augustus wanted to get, God wanted to give.

God's perfect gift arrived as a tiny baby. Those who saw him knew that he was the Messiah who came as a helpless babe. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. But oh how he came. The word became flesh through his birth.

When I studied at Knox College I also took a course at Regis College which was about early childhood development. And I remember a study about memories and birth. Newborn babies have the ability to remember their early lives, but birth is such a trauma that they cannot remember. Birth is the first trauma we all had to go through. Being in a safe place in the mother's womb then the big transition and separation from the womb to the outside world is so traumatizing. And what we usually think is that birth is painful for the mother and then, oh what a cute baby. No, that baby you see went through the first, and as some researchers say, the biggest trauma in life.

And our God chose that way for his son, going through that trauma for us. God wanted us to know He is fully for us. He did not only send messages that he is with us, He came through birth and lived among us and carried our burdens, and then all the sins of the world to the cross. And paid the price for our debts.

Why he chose this way, I can share a story with you: the story about the geese. Look at the attachment for the story.

Every part of the Christmas message is so precisely measured. There are no missing parts or unnecessary additions. When we are planning for something, let's say for an event, we have a team who tries to figure out the best way to do it. Have plan A, then plan B, C and if something happens at the end, there is always time for a change. Sometimes at least. But not with God.

Prophecies from the beginning pointed to Jesus and everything happened the way it was written. There is no mistake in his plan. There was no mistake when he formed you. No mistake that he knew one day you would be here and hear the message about his great love.

Don't think that Christmas is over. Treasure the great message about his love and ponder it in your heart, as Mary did. Amen