



The Christmas Message

Le message de Noël.

Many of us make annual pilgrimage this time of year to events such as this one:

a Christmas Carol Service where we can for an hour or so, put aside the wrapping paper, the menus, the travel plans, and reconnect with “the Message” of Christmas.

For an hour we can immerse ourselves in the innocent faithfulness of Angels and Shepherds, or the grandeur of Handel’s Messiah choruses.

For an hour we can be transported once again into the midst of this strange story of God coming near to us in the birth of a little boy.

Pendant une heure, nous pouvons nous immerger dans la foi innocente des anges et des bergers, et nous pouvons nous laisser transporter au plein milieu de cette histoire si étrange de Dieu qui est venu tout près par la naissance d’un petit garçon.

C’est vraiment bizarre, cette histoire, non? It is a strange story isn’t it?

Does it really make much difference if we’ve heard it only a few times, or eighty times?

It’s still strange, unfathomable, mysterious, and unexpected.

The story of God choosing to come close to our human experience
by being born to the most ordinary of people,
a young Middle eastern woman,
in an ordinary lean-to barn on the side of an ordinary wayside inn,
has become one of those extra-ordinary
“long ago and far away” stories of strangeness,
perfect for a winter’s evening,
with children tucked and ready for a bed-time story.

Mais cette année à Noël, peut-être, quand vous regardez ces enfants

When you look at your Children this Christmas,
when you wrap those presents, when you prepare that meal,
or put on your coat to visit that oh so-ordinary family
complete with its typical dysfunctions,
vous pouvez vous arrêter une seconde, you can pause for a second,
enter into the strange mystery of this story, and say,
as Mary did, as those Shepherds did, as Joseph did,
vous pouvez dire, comme Marie, comme les bergers :

‘Dieu, tu es venu tout près de nous, ici?

Tout près de moi?

“God, you come close to **us**, here? Close to me?

God, Holiness, Divine Mystery,

you come so close I can touch your newborn head,

or see you in the delighted laughter of a grandmother,

or in the tear of relief of an immigrant,

who this winter, because of your gifts tonight, will share food and shelter with his
family, after all.

Dieu, tu viens si près de nous que nous
ne te reconnaissons à peine
dans le cadre si ordinaire de ton arrivée.

Mais tu es bien ici, avec nous.

We barely recognize you in the ordinariness of your coming close,
into the mystery of our own lives.

But truly, wonderfully, you are here with us.

For that is, after all, the Message of Christmas.

Voici ce qu'est, après tout, le message de Noël.

God is with us, we are not alone.

Dieu est avec nous, nous ne sommes pas seuls.

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