

Immanuel: God with Us

“Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel’ (which means, God with us.)” [Matthew 1:23, ESV]

REFLECTION

My family love Christmas markets in Europe. We like the cold winter weather, the handicrafts, the (mild) mulled wine and the festivity. Over the years we have been to the markets at Prague, Vienna and Budapest. If given the opportunity, we'd happily head towards those cities in winter. But not this year. This is an odd year. The Christmas markets will not be open. People are discouraged from travelling. In any case, there is hardly any commercial flight for non-essential travel. Christmas 2020 will be remembered as a rather quiet event, one of the quietest since the birth of Christ.

Perhaps the world has been too busy and noisy for too long. It has spun out of control. This may sound insensitive, but it has taken an outbreak of COVID-19 to force us to reconnect with our silent moments and to be more reflective about life and what it means to live a life of peace, hope and joy, instead of constantly chasing after acquiring and accumulating more things - a futile exercise which the Preacher in Ecclesiastes refers to as “chasing after the wind.” We must not let this quiet moments pass us by without spending time contemplating about God, the teachings of His Kingdom and renewing our commitment to be a holy people who carry the name of Christ. There is no excuse not to make time, this Christmas, to enjoy God's presence in our midst. And there is nothing better than to know and to be thankful that He is Immanuel; our God who is with us.

PRAYER

“Our heavenly Father, in the fullness of time you sent us your Son, Jesus Christ, born in a manger, in the small town of Bethlehem to fulfil an Old Testament promise. Thank you for Jesus who entered the world to be our Lord and Saviour. Thank you that in and through Him, we can receive your gift of salvation and become your children. In the name of Christ. Amen.”

SUPPLICATION

- Lord, help us to keep “Christ” in CHRISTmas, and let this be shown in our commitment to follow you, not just during the season of Christmastide, but in our daily walk with you. Help us to keep “Christ” in CHRISTmas evidenced in our transformed life, seen in our love for you and care for those who are our neighbours.
- Give us courage and wisdom to share, sensibly and with humility, the Good News of Christmas with people who have yet to receive the Gospel. Forgive us if we have been reluctant or too slow in introducing Jesus to our friends and family members. We want to be your channel of blessings directing people to Christ.
- In a world which has been marred by racial conflicts, social turmoil and political upheavals, we pray for leaders to work for peace with justice instead of being embroiled in unending cycles of violence and killing. Dear Lord, let there be “peace on earth and goodwill to all.”
- Almighty God, guide and equip your Church to be true to our identity as a Community of Believers; people loved by God, our Father, redeemed by Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Protect your people from the godless forces of this world which often undermine us from following you and luring us to a wasteful preoccupation with trivial pursuit. Teach us, we pray, to be obedient followers of Christ and responsible members of the Church.

*“Thou didst leave Thy throne and Thy kingly crown
When Thou camest to earth for me.
But in Bethlehem's home
was there found no room
For Thy holy nativity.
O come to my heart, Lord Jesus,
There is room in my heart for Thee.”
(E. S. Elliot)*

**If you need any prayer or pastoral care support,
kindly contact the pastoral care team via:**

Email: wecare@brmc.org.sg

Contact: 6592 4011 or 6592 4012