

## Here's The Point!

Life Lessons from Mother Lynn

### "A Christmas Light"

Originally delivered December 24, 2009

Luke 2: 1-14

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In every Christmas bulletin, I put a “Did you know?” blurb. Its purpose is to communicate how we share the gift of Christ’s presence with others in the Christmas season.

In case you didn’t read it: we shared the light of Christ with the hungry, with special needs children, with hospice patients and with children suffering from life-threatening illnesses. (And that’s just in December!)

*Sharing is a good and holy thing.* It doesn’t remove difficulty, *but it makes it lighter - easier to bear.* Some scholars believe it was *the shepherds - not the innkeeper* - who made Joseph and Mary’s journey easier. They argue that it was likely the shepherds who owned the stall Jesus was born in.

Some essential Middle Eastern trivia that needs reviewing: in Palestine, caves regularly served as stalls for animals. They were the Middle Eastern version of our stables. Local Bethlehem tradition points to a cave as the place of Christ’s birth – a cave probably owned by a shepherd!

More about shepherds -- they weren’t the adorable children in our pageant. Instead, because their occupation made it impossible for them to keep Jewish dietary law, *shepherds were considered outcasts.* Yet, when Mary and Joseph showed up in Bethlehem – guess who took them in?

Scholars believe that when the innkeeper, who was inundated with guests, turned the Holy Family away, they chanced on some shepherds, told their sad tale -- and were offered shelter in one of the shepherd’s cattle caves. And the rest, as they say...is history.

By now you’re saying, enough with the shepherds! So they let the Holy couple stay in their cave – so what? Well here’s what...the shepherds didn’t have much - *but they shared what they had - and that seemingly small act changed the cosmos!* Through the shepherds' sharing --- the Holy Child had a place to be born.

I’ve talked about sharing a lot recently because it’s at the heart of Christmas. It’s a word we usually equate with kindergarten or pop psychology. “*Share your toys...let’s share our feelings.*”

Unfortunately, the word “*sharing*” can bring out the two year old in us. One who says, “*I don’t want to share.*” When we rebel, as two year olds or fifty-two year olds – we are a people who

*walk in darkness...who live in deep darkness... and often we are that. There's a lot of darkness in our world.*

Yet, Isaiah the prophet says, "*The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.*" Of course, the light we have seen is Jesus Christ. St. John says, "*Jesus is the true light that enlightens everyone.*"

Here's the Christmas news and the point: we who sat in darkness -- are now filled with God's heavenly light. *Now, WE are the light of the world!*

We are the light of the world because in Jesus, God shared our humanity - and by that sharing, we now share God's divinity. This cosmic sharing is what caused angels to sing!

So in any dark time – remember – you're filled with heavenly light. Due to the Holy Child, Jesus - NOW - you're the light of the world. So - share the light!

Remember that the smallest match will light up a room. Remember the shepherds, and know that the simplest gesture of hospitality, kindness or mercy can change the world.

Here's a story about my daughter, Denise and her gesture of kindness. I know you each have your own family story about sharing. This is mine:

Denise was going on a Midnight Run this week and asked her Dad to donate some of his unused winter jackets (*I've been asking for years for our Midnight Run - with no results - but she got through!*). Denis dutifully went through his closets and came up with some nice warm fare.

Denise put them in her car and drove to White Plains to shop. Standing on the corner was a Salvation Army worker ringing the familiar bell and wearing a paper thin jacket.

He was my husband's size. So Denise went up to him and said:

*"No offense, but your jacket doesn't look warm - would you like a warmer one? I have one in the car and it's your size."*

She put the jacket on him, zipped it up and left him a very happy and warm man. When Denise called to tell her Dad, he said, "*How great!!*" Then he added, "*It gets even better- I put \$5 in the pocket of that jacket with a note that said - 'Enjoy!'*" Which I suspect the man did...

Here's what you need to remember: *imitate the shepherds and share what you have. Share someone's hurt. Share yourself. The Nativity story shows us that the smallest gesture will light up the cosmos.*

*So don't just **sing** "Joy to the World" - **bring** joy to the world.*

*Be a Christmas light. It will cause angels to sing. Amen.*

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