

HOMILY FOR CHRISTMAS. A, B and C.

There is a story about a schoolboy in a nativity play who had his heart set on being Joseph but was assigned as he innkeeper. At the crucial moment instead of slamming the door behind the retreating figures of Mary and Joseph he ran after them shouting: 'It's alright you can have my room. Now that's the spirit of Christmas.'

Adults like to pretend that Christmas is only for children. Christmas is surely for those who need **to recover hope**...to find a Saviour.

A child still believes in salvation. Each of us needs a Saviour but for many the world may come across as a forsaken place.

If God has died on us the world is a wintry place but we recover a sense of hope **again in the eyes of a child.** It's painful to live without hope.

Many people in public life make promises but fail to deliver. Some conclude that they must **walk alone** not sure where they are going.

Others, however, persist in believing in better things. Christmas reassures them of this and their hope remains steadfast. Berries grow in winter.

Christmas celebrates the **birth of the newborn** which is full of mystery and promise – it's the mystery of the dawn, flush with possibilities.

The sad at heart can find in the newborn a re-birth of lost innocence. A dead candle is rekindled.

Because the baby is weak and defenceless we can identify with its condition. There's a crying child within the hearts of all of us. There is an ache which only God can satisfy.

The child is strong with promise and the magic of a new personality. Grown-ups saddened by too many sorrows, fall silent in the presence of the newborn. Something stirs – it is the dawn of new hope without which life has little meaning.

All human hopes converge on someone – someone who will save us from past follies and present fears. That 'someone' is the new-born - God made man whose coming into the world we celebrate today.

God promised a Saviour and the world waited **for a kind of super-hero.** But He sent His Son, a child of weakness and of winter.

At the crib the image of God as dread finally dies.

We see God as He is, not over us but **with us**, not against us but **for us.**