

## *Christmas 2021*

*In the beginning was the Word . . .  
And the Word became flesh . . .  
And pitched a tent among us . . .*

After an Advent of expectation and hope – a season of hard labor carving a highway through rugged and desolate terrain to welcome the One who would set us free from every ancient burden and fear – we now greet . . .

An infant.

*Really?*

A tent?

*Hadn't Isaiah promised so much more?*

And yet . . .

A baby . . .  
    vulnerable and fragile . . .  
        dependant, without speech . . .  
            hungry and thirsty . . .  
                threatened . . . born to a family on the run . . .  
                    sheltered in a tent . . .  
                        swaddled in tatters . . .

A baby . . . thrust into our arms – entrusted to our care.

Such is the fragile presence of our G-D among us.

This Feast of the Nativity captivated the imagination of Francis of Assisi. He reveled in all the fleshly images of the Christmas story with oxen and ass, manger and Magi, shepherds and straw. Meditation on the Nativity provoked in Francis a life-long fascination with the humility made manifest in the choice of the Most-High to become flesh – divinity forever wedded to the low, the vulnerable, the forgotten, the despised and shunned.

Such is the fragile presence of our G-D among us – a presence Francis faithfully tended in the margins of his time, among those who had been rendered invisible and mute by the structures of his day.

May these festival days of Christmas provoke in us renewed awe at the fragile presence of G-D in our midst. A baby thrust into our arms demanding the deepest care, compassion, tenderness and nurture of which we capable – gifts of divine origin destined to become flesh in us, through us and with us.

***We are left holding the baby.***

*What then will this child turn out to be?*

***Merry Christmas.***