

Christmas Vigil- C
Deacon Pat Hall

[Isaiah 62:1-5; Acts 13:16-17, 22-25; Matthew 1:18-25](#)

Homilies are vehicles for breaking open the Word of God. First read the Sunday readings at <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/122512-vigil-mass.cfm>

Merry Christmas.

I'm so excited about tonight and tomorrow.

As a grampa, I am looking forward to seeing the excitement in my granddaughters' eyes.

But I have to confess that most of the excitement I feel is how I felt as a grandson at **my** gramma's house so many years ago.

The people, the music, the smells, the food, kids running around, Christmas trees and of course ... wrapped packages.

It is fun to bask in the light of Christmas.

In our happiness, we should always remember the source of our joy.

Spend some time with our nativity display here to soak in that source of our joy, to just look... and look with love upon Baby Jesus.

It never fails to amaze me that whenever I see a nativity scene, whether on a table top, or life-size in a park, I always search first for Baby Jesus.

When I find him, I kind of relax and settle-in with Mary and Joseph, the animals, the angels and shepherds.

But first, I'm anxious to find Baby Jesus.

If we search for Jesus day after day, we will find him day after day.

Our world has always searched for God.

Back in ancient times the prophet said:

*Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means "God is with us."*

That prophecy was fulfilled on that first Christmas day in a stable, when Jesus, the Word who was with God from the beginning,

became flesh and dwelt among us... with us in the flesh. (Jn 1: 14)

We never need to fear because God is with us.

I do remember, though, some scary times.

When I was little, I used to be afraid of thunderstorms.

My dogs still are ...

and will scramble to get behind the couch whenever they hear a storm.

There was a young child I'll call Billy.
One night Billy was woken up by a scary crash from lightning and so ran into Mom & Dad's room.
Mom quieted him and said,
"Don't be afraid. Jesus loves you. He will keep you safe."
So Billy went back to bed.

A minute later there was another crash of thunder and Billy ran into Mom and Dad's room crying.
Again he was told,
"Don't be afraid. Jesus loves you. He will keep you safe."

Still sniffing a bit, Billy went back to bed, but within seconds came a crash that shook the room.
He ran shaking into Mom and Dad's.
Mom and Dad tried to comfort him and asked didn't he believe that Jesus loved him and would keep him safe?

Billy replied through his sniffles,
"Yes, but I want Jesus with some skin on."
Jesus with some skin on.

Mom and Dad had Billy jump into their bed until the storm was over.
They were able to love him with Jesus' love.
They were able to keep him safe with Jesus' love.
They were Jesus' love "with skin on".

2000 years ago Jesus came to be with us in the flesh at a stable...with some skin on.
Jesus came to say he would be with us always. (Mt 28: 20)

We find Jesus when we come to church, when we come to this altar.

We find Jesus in those who need our help as Jesus told us that we could find him in the hungry, the thirsty, and the stranger (Mt 25: 35).

And we can be Jesus' help and healing, when we as Church, as the Body of Christ, reach out with Jesus' love and joy... "with skin on".

Emmanuel—God is with us.