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The Why of the Incarnation – A Christmas Parable



Once upon a time there was a man who looked upon Christmas as a lot of humbug. He wasn't a Scrooge. He was a kind and decent person, generous to his family, upright in all his dealings with other people. But he didn't believe all that stuff about Incarnation which the Churches proclaim at Christmas. And he was too honest to pretend that he did. 'I am truly sorry to distress you,' he told his wife, who was a faithful churchgoer, 'but I simply cannot understand this claim that God becomes a person. It doesn't make any sense to me.'

On Christmas Eve his wife and children went to church for the midnight service. He declined to accompany them. 'I'd feel like a hypocrite,' he explained. 'I'd rather stay at home. But I'll wait up for you.'

Shortly after his family drove away in the car, snow began to fall. He went to the window and watched the flurries getting heavier and heavier. 'If we must have Christmas,' he thought, 'it's nice to have a white

one.' He went back to his chair by the fireside and began to read his newspaper. A few minutes later he was startled by a thudding sound. It was quickly followed by another, then another.

He thought that someone must be throwing snowballs at his living-room window. When he went to the front door to investigate, he found a flock of birds huddled miserably by the door. They had been caught in the storm and in a desperate search for shelter had tried to fly through his window. 'I can't let these poor creatures lie there and freeze,' he thought. 'But how can I help them?' Then he remembered the barn where the children's pony was stabled. It would provide a warm shelter.

He put on his coat and galoshes and tramped through the deepening snow to the barn. He opened the door wide and turned on a light. But the birds didn't come in. 'Food will lure them in,' he thought. So he hurried back to the house for breadcrumbs, which he sprinkled on the snow to make a trail into the barn. To his dismay, the birds ignored the breadcrumbs and continued to flop around helplessly in the snow. He tried shooing them into the barn by walking around and waving his arms. They scattered in every direction – except into the warm, lighted barn.

'They find me a strange and terrifying creature,' he said to himself, 'and I can't seem to think of any way to let them know they can trust me. If only I could be a bird myself for a few minutes, perhaps I could lead them to safety...'

Just at that moment the church bells began to ring. He stood silent for a while, listening to the bells pealing the glad tidings of Christmas. Then he sank to his knees in the snow. 'Now I understand,' he whispered. 'Now I see why You had to do it.'

Source: Amalee Meehan: *Joining the Dots*

REFLECTION

- > How do you understand the incarnation?
- > What does this story add to your understanding of the Christmas story?