



# Faith Matters

*Simple reflections on our faith*

by Marilyn Bergeron

## Christmas is Only the Beginning!

Advent sets the stage for the joy that begins Christmas Day.

### **The Journey to Bethlehem – Advent**

Before Jesus was born in Bethlehem, there had been much angst and preparation. Mary, a single woman had surrendered to the will of God and accepted to bear the child through the power of the Holy Spirit! Joseph had to struggle to accept what the angel told him.

Why them? I can't imagine the shock, the fear of being judged unfairly by the community, the worry of a very long hard journey with Mary pregnant to register in Bethlehem. How would they manage? Would they find a place to stay? What then? How could they raise the Messiah, the Saviour of the world?

### *The Image*

Our Christmas cards picture them as peacefully accepting everything. We imagine the stable with the animals, the shepherds appearing with their lambs, everything smooth and easy. Then, we see the three

wise men arriving on their camels and bowing down to honour and give gifts to this perfect baby in a manger. It's so sweet.

### *The Likely Reality*

The more likely scenario was a smelly bed of hay, cold, on a busy trail with people walking by. (And for those of us who have had children, birthing a child, while amazing, is painful and can be difficult.) Then they would have had to find a place to stay after the birth before they faced another long trip back to Nazareth.

The camels and wise men would also have had a very long difficult journey and probably didn't actually see Jesus in that crèche.

That was the season of Advent...the coming of our Saviour. It's our time to prepare our hearts, and our homes, to celebrate this amazing gift of the birth of our Saviour.

### **The Journey Continues – Christmas**

Christmas is the next part of the story. It begins with the birth of Jesus and continues for the next 12 days. We should not be in a

hurry to take down our trees, our decorations never mind starting to think about Valentine's day as the next big celebration.

The Christmas season stretches to the feast of the Epiphany on January 6th. The Epiphany celebrates the first revelation of Jesus' divinity to the Gentiles (the Magi) and His baptism. That's the end of the Christmas season.

Jesus' Call to Share the Good News  
We have been blessed to be able to share our faith openly in this country. Unfortunately, that gift is at risk in Canada today. Perhaps we should stand a little taller and be more open in Jesus came to the world to save each one of us.

sharing His love and peace with those who don't yet know our awesome God and His love for them.

Jesus came to the world to save each one of us.

He asked us to "Go, tell it on the mountain" (the good news of salvation). He wants us to "Go Out! Go Deep! Go Together" as Archbishop Dampousse has asked us. He wants us to draw the hungry, the hurting, the lonely, the broken-hearted, the needy and the oppressed into our hearts and our parishes. He wants us to bear His peace to the world, one person at a time.

***I wish you a happy and blessed Christmas and a happy New Year.  
May God bless each of you in some special way this year.***

