

**December 24, 2015 - Christmas Vigil Mass**  
**Prepared by Sr. Ann Braudis, MM, Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns**

*Isaiah 62:1-5; Psalm: 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29; Acts 13: 16-17, 22-25; Matthew 1:1-25 or 1:18-25*

May this Christmas Eve be full of blessings for all people and may peace resound all over the Earth!

This evening's Gospel speaks of the *lineage* of Jesus as it paints a picture of the whole of human history awaiting its Savior. Tonight, in a sense, we join the *lineage* of Jesus, one with Mary, one with Joseph and one with David in anticipation and high hope. Indeed, we are one with the entire cosmos as it trembles before the arrival of the Holy One of God. The very darkness of the night is full of expectation; the dawn lies just ahead.

In our hearts we know the meaning of Christmas:

- In the affection we feel for those we love
- In the willingness to forget grudges
- In the warm smiles and greeting we share with strangers
- In our hope for peace and abundance for all people
- And in our reaching out to those in need.

This Christmas Eve, across our planet, people will join together in a myriad of expressions of what tonight means. In a small village high in the Andes of Bolivia, the community will gather to reenact the first Christmas. They will compress the details of the story in order to have everything present in one beautiful celebration. In the cold mountain darkness they will follow a lighted star moved by a pulley across the village plaza; Mary will be there riding a donkey, Joseph by her side. The shepherds will follow along with the Magi. All will go into the small church up to the sanctuary where the youngest baby of the village will become Jesus for the night. The other children will be angels singing the Christmas alleluia in their precious Quechua voices. Small crosses will be among the candles adorning the manger. By the door of the church, in the biting cold, they will drink hot cider. The night will be full of wonder and its joy will sustain everyone for a long time to come.

In a mystical sense we too hold everything present tonight; sequential time is not important. We rejoice in the birth of a baby with minds running ahead to Jesus, the adult, who will call us to live a generous and noble life. Even as we remember what happened two thousand years ago, we are pulled to the future where hope resides and the promise of the fullness of life beckons. The daylight always hovers just ahead and the chorus of angels forever announces a just and lasting peace.

May Jesus be born in you tonight as surely as he was born in Bethlehem all those long years ago.

May His promise be fulfilled in you, in those you love, and in the entire Earth community.

May the joy of this night sustain you for a long time to come.

Merry Christmas!

**Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns: Peace, social justice and integrity of creation**

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