

Christmas 2009 • Christ the King

It seems like everything carries a warning label these days. Medications, tools, cars and even toys, so does Christmas need a warning label? Remember the classic movie, *A Christmas Story*? Ralphie wants “An Official Red Ryder Carbine-Action Two-hundred-shot range model air rifle. And what warning label does every one tell him, “You’ll shoot your eye out.”

So, what was your favorite Christmas present? Maybe it was a football or a doll, a truck or easy bake oven. ~~But what happened to that present, where is it now?~~ Did it need a warning label?

Tonight we celebrate another present, the gift of our God made man; the gift of the presence of our all loving and welcoming creator. Surely this a safe enough gift, surely it doesn’t need a warning label, or does it?

It might be easy for us to keep Jesus as that Babe in the manger, tucked away in swaddling clothes, safe and sound. But Christmas does not merely tell the story of a Jewish infant. Rather it points to an adult man, a challenging man, named Jesus who came to show us just how much our God loves us and how much our God wants to be a part of our lives. A man who calls us to be, to live and to act as He did. He healed the sick, He gave sight to the blind, He welcomed all, and He raised the dead to life.

This is the gift that we receive: Our God made flesh. This is an awesome gift and it carries an awesome responsibility. **It should a warning label: “BE WARE if you accept this gift, it will change your life. It will change the world.”**

Thomas Merton puts this way. "Christ is born to us today so that He may appear to the whole world through us. This one day is the day of His birth, but every day of our mortal lives must be His manifestation."

We call ourselves Christians, by that very name; we are called to be Christ, not just like Christ. We are to be Christ to one another. This means that we are called to do what Jesus does. We are called to be

God's presence in our world. We are called to heal the sick, we are called to give sight to the blind, we are called to welcome all, and we are called to give life.

Or as Teresa of Aliva said:

Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are his body.
Christ has no body now but yours,

Wow, you may say, 'I can't do that.' I told you there should be a warning label. But remember, you are never alone and it isn't you who does it, it is Christ who does it through you. And you also have the presence and support of the community.

So, what will you do? Will you accept this gift, this invitation, this responsibility? Or will you leave it wrapped in swaddling clothes?