

## ***Fourth Sunday of Advent - 22 December 2024***



### ***What is it about Christmas?***

Christmas was born out of love, and carries on out of love. The spirit of Christmas is liberating and joyful.

1. As Christmas 1914 approached, German and English soldiers faced each other along the western front. But on Christmas Eve an extraordinary thing happened. At one point on the front, the firing stopped, soldiers came out of the trenches, and met in no man's land, where they exchanged greetings and gifts. *What is it about Christmas that can cause deadly enemies to reach out the hand in friendship to one another?*
2. One Christmas Day when the Irish writer, Frank O'Connor, was a little boy, his mother took him to visit the local convent. He brought along with him the only gift he got that Christmas (a toy engine) to show it to the nuns. While in the convent a nun took him to see the crib in the chapel. On looking into the crib, little Frank got very upset when he noticed that the child Jesus had got no gift for his birthday. Without a moment's hesitation, he climbed into the crib and gave the toy engine to baby Jesus. He even showed him how to wind it up. *What is it about Christmas that can cause a little boy to give away his only toy?*





3. The great Russian writer, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, spent four years in a Siberian prison. There he came into contact with some truly desperate men. Yet he tells us that on Christmas Day the mood of the prisoners changed. They felt that they were not altogether outcasts and lost souls. They felt like human beings and even the most frugal among them, thought it their duty to be open-handed on a day like this. *What is it about Christmas that could cause such desperate men to feel the way they do and want to share with others?*
  
4. Every Christmas lets loose a veritable army of volunteers – singing carols, collecting money for charity, visiting the sick and the prisoners, feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless..... *What is it about Christmas that causes people to put themselves out to help others without a thought for a reward?*

*Why is it that Christmas elicits such noble behaviour?*

It is because of the message announced by an angel to the shepherds: *'Behold, I bring you news of great joy. Today a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.'*

Christmas is a mystery of love. It is a feast of the heart. It reveals to us not only what the heart of God is like but also what the human heart is capable of.

**Flor McCarthy SDB**



**Merry Christmas!**