

# 'Persons are Gift'



In the words of Pope Francis, 'Live life as a gift, to give to others, not as a treasure to be kept for ourselves.' Homily of Holy Spirit 15<sup>th</sup> May 2013.

What stirs within us when we see a new born child that we are so drawn and even want to hold it? Does it awaken within us the memory of our own birth, or does it make us reflect on our own vulnerability?

The following extract from 'Persons are Gift', by George B. Nintemann OP may help us to reflect.

Persons are gifts which the Father sends me wrapped.  
Some are wrapped very beautifully;  
They are very attractive when I first see them.  
Some come in ordinary wrapping paper.  
Others have been mishandled in the mail.  
Once in a while there is a 'Special Delivery',  
Some persons are gifts which are loosely wrapped;  
Others very tightly. But the wrapping is not the gift.  
It is so easy to make this mistake...

.I am a person, therefore I am a gift too.  
A gift to myself, first of all the Father gave myself to me.  
Have I ever really looked inside the wrappings?...  
Persons are gifts, received and given, like the Son.  
Friendship is the response of person – gifts to the Father – giver. Friendship is Eucharist.

My own reflection on this brings to my mind an experience I had recently whilst speaking with a young mother, and she is happy for me to share it with you. She was telling me about her six year old daughter, she said, "My daughter came home from school with her lines for the Christmas nativity. Enquiring what role she was playing she replied, "I am the navigator," so thinking to myself I thought she must mean she is the 'Star' pointing the way to Bethlehem; but she went on explain what she was doing, and I realised she was the narrator.

However, she went on to say that she "wanted to be God"; this puzzled me as I didn't know what she meant. I left it for a while but kept thinking about what she had said, what did she mean she wanted to be God? A few days later when we were practising her lines, we were chatting about the play and it seemed like the right moment to explore why she wanted to be God and to my surprise she said, "Because if you are God you get to hug Jesus, and I want to hug Jesus."

What a wonderful gift this little child unknowingly has shared. It was lovely hearing this mother's story, and we reflected on God's gift to us - our families, those who are with us now and those who are in heaven.

How is this gift experienced by the older members of our families – those who have the responsibility of caring for a loved one, how do we see them as gift? Many of those who are caring are very elderly themselves and receive little help or support; they give of themselves every minute of every day, often becoming exhausted and isolated with no one to turn to. They often have little time but do appreciate pastoral visits where they can find comfort and peace in receiving Holy Communion.

They are not forgotten and for this reason, a special Christmas Mass will be offered for them by Bishop David McGough, Auxiliary Bishop of Birmingham and lead bishop to the Pastoral Care Project on Tuesday 23rd December. Bishop David said, "Please pass on my greetings to those who, at this special time, are concerned with the most vulnerable in our society, those most in need of love."

To read the full version of 'Persons are Gift' please visit [www.pastoralcareproject.org.uk](http://www.pastoralcareproject.org.uk) and follow the Christmas Appeal link on the home page, where you will also find additional Christmas resources.



We wish to thank all those who have supported our Christmas Appeal, donations can still be made online or sent to our new address

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