

We have a God who comes to us?

Back in **May** of this year, **my God-mother**, my Aunt Rita, died at the age of 90.

She had many joys in her long life,
including seeing **her 2 children** and **4 grandchildren** grow up into adults.

But, **she** also experienced the sadness of knowing ... that **for the last 20 years** ...
none of her 4 grandchildren were going to Church.

Now, Aunt Rita & Uncle John were **very faithful** in attending Church each Sunday,
And **their two daughters**, my cousins, were **faithful** to attending Church on Sunday.
But the 4 Grandchildren, even though they all attended **Catholic gradeschool** and
High school ... stopped going to Church once they left home!

Has that happened to any of you? ... where **family** or **friends** no longer go to Church?

For the oldest grandchild, **Renee'**, it happened when she went off to College and
took a course called "World Religions".

Right after that, she stopped going to Church ... not just the Catholic Church ...
but **any Church!**

You see, **Renee'** didn't just lose her Catholic faith ... she lost her faith period!

She didn't choose to go to another Church, Temple, Mosque or Shrine.
She hasn't gone anywhere ... in **20 years!**

Perhaps, she left her college class on World Religions feeling ...
this is **way too confusing** ... and **since no one** seems to agree about God,
I'm not going to invest any more time looking into a belief in Him.

This is happening a lot ... as we saw in this year's movie, "**God is not Dead**"
where **some College Professors** guide whole classrooms of students ...
to get past the idea that there is such a thing as God.

Perhaps, **Renee'** had **such a college Professor as this** or **perhaps** ...
she was just truly confused by the wide array of different religions to choose from.

I mean **what's the difference?** **What's the difference between** ...
Christianity and **Judaism** and **Islam** and **Hinduism** and **Buddhism** and **others?**

Well, there are **many** ... **but one** stands out above all the rest ... **it's the fact that**
... in no other religion, except Christianity, did God come to be with His people!

**In Judaism ... the one true God, called Yahweh, spoke to the Leader Moses ...
in a **Burning Bush ... on a mountain top ...** and at the **Meeting Tent.****

But He never showed Himself to the people ... so the Jews ...
continue to wait to this day for God to send them a long-awaited Messiah.

**In Islam ... the one true God, called Allah, supposedly spoke to the man
Mohammed, who proclaimed himself to be the latest & greatest of God's prophets.**

But He never showed Himself to the people ... so the Muslims ...
continue to bow & face east in submissive prayer to him several times a day.

Buddhism neither affirms nor rejects the existence of God ... it only teaches ...
**that man should be able to achieve Nirvana (which is the absence of suffering)
over a period of several lifetimes.**

No God there ... and certainly no God coming to the People.

In Hinduism ... there are a multitude of gods ...
with **Brahma** being **the creator of the universe.**

But neither he nor any of their other gods ever showed himself to the people.

Only in Christianity ... where the one true God is called Father, Son & Holy Spirit,
do we find a God ... who revealed Himself to His people!

In every other religion, God is solely transcendent ...
meaning that He's totally aloof ... above ... apart and away from our existence.

Only in Christianity is God both transcendent and immanent ...
meaning that **while He is far above us in wisdom and power ...**
He is none the less ... close to us ... and intimately involved in ... our existence!

And it's that closeness ... and that intimacy that we celebrate today!

For no other reason than love ... the one true God ... chose to take on our
humanity and come among us as a man ... so as to rescue us from sin & separation.

Why? Because ...
from the beginning, mankind had chosen to turn away from God, who is Love.

And so broken was our relationship, that the only way it could be repaired ...
was for **God to fix it Himself ... which is what He came to do 2014 years ago ...**
being born **a baby** in the little town of **Bethlehem.**

For **the last three years** of His life, **Jesus, the Son of God**, revealed everything we need to know about who God is ... that God is Love Itself ...

and **that He loves all of us infinitely and unconditionally.**

He demonstrated this most powerfully by dying on a Cross so that we could receive forgiveness for our sins and win the prize of eternal life with Him in Heaven.

Zechariah, the father of **John the Baptist**, reverences all of this in one sentence of his beautiful prayer recorded in **Luke's Gospel**. He proclaims:

"Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel ...

He has come to His people and set them free!

What did our God do?

He came to His people ... Christmas

and set them free ... Easter.

In no other world religion ... has God come to his people ... and set them free!

Only in Christianity do we find a God who is with His people!

And **here's something else that makes Christianity especially unique ...**

the fact that God foretold that He would do all this well in advance of it happening!

Yes, in **His revealed word, God promised ... over and over again ... for years and years and years ... that He would rescue us from **sin** and return us to union w/ Him.**

And **He did ... He made a promise ... and He kept His promise!**

He came to us ... so that we could come to Him!

How blessed we are ... for we have a God who loves us and desires union with us.

We know this because on the night before Jesus died for us,

during **His Last Supper** with his Apostles, **Jesus established the Eucharist ... as His true presence to preserve His union with us until He returns again in Glory.**

So we have a God who **not only came to us physically ... as a **Baby** ...**

but also comes to us sacramentally ... in **Holy Communion**.

If you or someone in your family finds the array of World Religions to be confusing ... then share with them the specialness of Christianity ...

That it's here and only here that we have Emmanuel ... who is *God with us* ...

from that very First Christmas ... even now ... and until the end of time.

Let's rejoice in the God we have. He loves us and will be with us forever.

Merry Christmas!