

Christmas Today!

Isaiah 9²⁻⁷; Psalm 96; Titus 2¹¹⁻¹⁴; Luke 2¹⁻¹⁴

To you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour. [Luke 2¹¹]

You've heard the Bay City Rollers - at least they were honest in a TV interview a few weeks ago: they thought they would reform and go on tour as other bands are doing it - and are making money!

The Bay City Rollers were ground-breaking.

- ✦ They were the first boy-band created for a particular look with the music left to the magic of the sound engineers - in other words, they couldn't sing!
- ✦ They were the first band where the merchandising was created as part of the image: I confess to having a shirt with the tartan trim and green and orange platform shoes (but I drew the line at the tartan-trimmed three-quarter trousers)!

Yet, how many adults approach Christmas by trying to recreate something from their past - the naive acceptance of a mythical figure that would have to spend no more than 2 ten-thousandths of a second at each home (assuming speeds of 6395 times the speed of sound); the simple and uncomplicated family with no tension or needs; the security of being at the centre of everyone's attention?

Few ever manage to satisfactorily recreate the past and those who do, in part, are seldom satisfied with it!

At Christmas we celebrate God doing something new and radical! He isn't cashing in on or recreating the past, but creating a new future!

Instead of being distant and intangible, in the baby born in Bethlehem God becomes human!

- ✦ In that baby, fully human, was all of God!
- ✦ In that baby was God's gift of love to the human race!
- ✦ In that baby was the greatest potential for sacrificial love that the world has known - which is why we celebrate Christmas with a celebration of the

Eucharist: in bread and wine we learn about love outpoured in the brokenness of Christ!

- ✦ In that baby is our hope.

We aren't trying to recreate what it would have been like for a teenage couple to give birth at Bethlehem more than 2000 years ago - we are trying to discover in this moment what it feels like to be loved by God; forgiven by God; and inspired to be like God!

One last thing - Christmas isn't for everyone!

It is a common myth that this is the season of goodwill to all - but that isn't what the text says!

Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours! - terms and conditions apply!

- ✦ Peace here isn't the absence of war - it is the positive relations between individuals and God and individuals and one another: the Hebrew would have been *Shalom*.
- ✦ Peace is experienced only those whom God favours - for those who have experience of his grace.

Christmas is never about recreating the past - it is always about creating a new future!

You won't find me wearing two-tone platform shoes or tartan edged clothing - not that ever was a significant part of my past!

You will find me celebrating Christmas enthusiastically as a Christian - because in the past I allowed God to change my future!