"Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger" (Luke 2:10-12).

Why was Jesus born? Most of us can probably rattle off the answer to this question without giving it much thought: as our savior, Jesus was born to save us from our sins and the consequence of sin, eternal damnation. But why did God choose this particular way to save us? He's the almighty God. He could have saved us any way he wanted, but he wanted to do it *this* way: to humble himself so greatly as to take on our flesh and become one of us, his lowly, sinful creatures; to do so, not as a fully grown person of great intellect and power, but as a tiny, helpless infant; to be born, not in a royal palace, as would befit a Messiah, or anointed king, but in a stable with a filthy feeding trough as a bed. Of all the ways God could have saved us, why this way?

Because he had to. The all-powerful God, who cannot be bound by anyone or anything, bound himself to save us in this way when he chose to create us in his own image and likeness, not to be his slaves or sycophants, but to be his loving children. For love to be real, it has to be free, so God gave us the amazing gift of free will so that we could choose to love him. And when we abused our freedom by rejecting God's love and turned away from him, God knew that only by the power of his love could he win us back again. He had to convince us of his incredible love for us, even in our sin, so that we would choose to love him again.

That is why he was born a helpless infant in a manger. God shows us the truth of his unending love for us by surrendering his power and glory and coming among us in the most humble way possible. Jesus wasn't born to dominate us or to compel us by his great power to obey him. He was born to love us and, by his love, to melt the ice which had encased our hearts when we ran away from God's light into the darkness of sin so that we could love God again. This Christmas, whenever you see the beautiful, humble image of the Nativity scene, reflect on the unfathomable love that God shows us in his birth, and let his love draw your heart deeper and deeper into his own.

From all of us here at St. Boniface, have a Blessed Christmas!