

Star-Child



Christmas carols are great at pulling us back into history, at drawing us into the story of Jesus' birth so that we can imagine how we might have felt if we were Mary or Joseph, the innkeeper or the shepherds. Rarely, however, do these carols cause us to contemplate the state of our contemporary Christmas celebrations. The occasional TV special or bell-ringer might help us pause to remember those less fortunate than ourselves, but we readily return to remembering the first Christmas and forgetting that Christmas is a reality we relive every Advent.

This hymn pulls us into the present by connecting the "Christ Child" with all kinds of children we might encounter in our daily lives. The "street child" and the "beat child" with "no place left to go" remind us that, just as there was no space for Jesus at his birth, our world is filled with people who are forced to seek shelter in places we ourselves wouldn't dare to go. The "sad" and "lost," the "hurt" and "used" are people "no one wants to know," but we are called to remember that Jesus welcomed the marginalized. The hymn even acknowledges the "spared child" and the "spoiled child," people who have plenty but are dissatisfied, as well as the "wise child" and the "faith child" who know the "joy in store," challenging us to reach out as Jesus did to those who do not seem in need of help.

After accounting for all these different kinds of people, the hymn offers us a simple chorus: "this year, let the day arrive when Christmas comes for everyone, everyone alive." It is a firm reminder that Christmas does live in the faraway past but reoccurs each year as Christians experience and celebrate the bright promise for our world that is represented in the newborn Christ. Our task is to make sure that all people are able to see past even the darkest circumstances and catch sight of the hope that we find for the current world in that special birth so long ago. As we sing these words together, let us commit to share that hope, through word and action, with everyone we encounter this Advent, especially those we might otherwise ignore.

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