

I wonder how God felt on Christmas

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In church today, singing Christmas songs about silent nights round yon virgin mother and child, I began to wonder. Mary was not a virgin physically, but spiritually yes. A conception that was under God's dominion.

For the first time on Earth, a sexual relationship that was with God's permission.

How hopeful God must have felt. But the actual birth of Jesus, which a large part of the world celebrates tomorrow?

Think of a nativity scene, but think of it when you are out in the cold, as I did one Christmas day in Kentucky. Ankle deep in slush, standing in front of a shelf of wooden roses in fragile glass vases. Under lights I had plugged into a portable sign in front of a closed business.

I'm standing there, my breath pluming in the cold air, while cars full of warm families are driving by. Children with their noses pressed up against the window are staring at me and asking "Daddy, what's that man doing standing out there? Doesn't he know it's Christmas?"

And who knows what Daddy says. If they asked me, I don't know what I'd say. Because it hurts to be out in the cold, watching people go by on their way to warm houses full of delicious food smells and waiting

families. TV sets and comfortable sofas. To feel icy slush seeping into my socks. To know that I'll be eating in a smoke filled Waffle House, among strangers.

I'm feeling a stab of self-pity, but then I think of the nativity scenes on street corners, those figures out in the cold. How Jesus came into this world. I tell myself this is how he was born, out in the cold. Maybe I'm closer to Jesus out here on a street corner with frozen feet while everyone else is warm.

Today in church, I wonder how God felt on Christmas. There is Mary, with Joseph. Three kings, a few shepherds, and donkeys, sheep, goats. Is there a midwife? A nurse? Any woman to help Mary give birth? Imagine your daughter about to give birth in a cold, drafty building full of dung, mice, fleas. The only warmth coming from the animals. The only people there to help are men who likely don't know what to do. It tears my heart to imagine my first child arriving in those circumstances.

How slim were his chances of physical survival, to take his first breath in stinging cold? I can only imagine how I would have felt to see my first son born this way. How many tears did God shed on that day? Hoping to finally have a son he could talk to, who could understand Him and share with Him. To watch him being born in conditions that would kill most mothers and babies.

And now, when children are born every day that could hear and talk to Him? When immaculate conceptions can happen every day, and every day more and more couples are brought into that family? How hopeful God must be now. Not without tears, because we're still trying to get it and there are times when He can't get through to us. When the love that could be dies because we can't understand it. But the Parent's heart keeps on trying.

Christmas, the birth of His son, was a special time of hope for God. But also a time of many tears. How much more hopeful can God feel now?

Merry Christmas to all

And a Merrier Christmas to God.