



Father Danny Murphy is a retired Pastor from Brooklyn NY. A gifted man with a God given talent to inspire and God's gift to us at Holy Cross Church in Vero Beach Florida. This is just one of his inspirational homilies.

## Fr. Danny Murphy – Christmas Eve – 2016 Children's Enacted Gospel

We thank all of the children who participated in the enacted Gospel tonight including all of their parents and everyone who helped make this possible. It is clear that in tonight's Mass we are blessed with having many children with us. So I'm going to ask the children, if you know the alphabet, could you please raise your hand? Wonderful, now, do any of you know the difference between the regular alphabet and the Christmas alphabet? The answer is that the Christmas alphabet has NO "L"! We got off to a weak, weak start, tonight!! How about some Christmas stories?

One day, the devil figured out that the way God was able to do all the good things that he did was by him saying them. So, God said: "Let there be light," and there was light. God said, "Let there be the sun and the moon and the stars," and so it happened. Whatever God

said, came to be! So one day, when God wasn't looking, the devil tied God's tongue so God couldn't speak anymore and then every day for eons and eons, the devil would taunt God because God couldn't speak anymore. Then one day God held up one finger to the devil and the devil knew that God wanted to speak just one word. The devil figured, what harm could come from allowing God to speak that one word. So the devil loosened God's tongue and God spoke one word. This is the word that God spoke: "Jesus." And from that day up to this day, the devil is defeated. By Christmas day, that word became flesh and he still makes his dwelling among us. Indeed he makes his dwelling within us! The next Christmas story that I'll share with you, I experienced one Christmas back in Brooklyn some years ago. A little backdrop to the story – during Advent, this sentence from scripture is repeated several times: "The Virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son and she shall name him 'Emmanuel' a name that means 'God with us.'" Well, on this particular Christmas Day, I received a phone call from the hospital because a twenty-one month old girl had just died. In the midst of their sobbing and grieving, both of their parents told me, "We know that God is with us," and they both told me "We know that God is with our daughter." They believed in Emmanuel! When I was leaving the hospital, a woman asked me if I could visit her husband who was dying of cancer. When I went into his room, he told me: "I'm seventy-nine years old, I go to Mass every Sunday, I put my envelope in the collection basket each week, I try to live a good life and this is the thanks I get? Cancer? To be suffering, dying? I'm DONE with God!! God isn't with me! God has abandoned me! That

poor man didn't believe in Emmanuel. Now already this morning and I'm sure last night, we have heard and said multiple, multiple times "Merry Christmas!" That's all good, and if you want to really HAVE a Merry Christmas, if you want to have a Merry Life, believe in Emmanuel, believe that God is with you, believe that God is always, always with you! One more story! One Christmas Eve a father was frantically trying to assemble all the toys and decorate the tree, so he asked his seven year old son, "Would you please shine the shoes that I want to wear to Mass for Christmas?" And the little guy said, "Sure, dad!" and he polished and polished and polished and when he looked, he was so pleased at the job he had done. And his father beamed and he handed the little guy a five dollar bill in appreciation for the great job. Well, later when the father was putting on his shoes to go to Mass for Christmas he felt a lump in one of them. He reached in and he found a five dollar bill wrapped in paper and on the paper was scrawled these words: Dad, I done it for love, I done it for love!

Christmas stories! We could go on and on, these stories are great. But here's a suggestion that you can give your own Christmas story. If you have a crèche at home, or for all of us if we gaze upon the manger here in church, as you look, hear God shouting to you – whispering to you: "I done it for love, I done it for love..." Well, for me all of the Christmas stories are summed up in this Christmas hymn: "O holy night, the stars are brightly shining. This is the night of our dear Savior's birth. Long lay the world in sin and error pining, till he appeared and the soul felt his worth. A thrill of hope, a weary world rejoices for yonder

breaks a new and glorious morn. Fall on your knees! O hear the angel voices! O night  
divine! O night when Christ was born. O night divine, o night, o night divine!"