

## Heart of Christmas

by Naomi Fata

Snow fell softly. Inside mother and father wrapped last minute gifts. They had just returned from the candle light service, tucked the kids in bed and were finishing preparations for Christmas Day. It had been a busy season, filled with holiday parties, baking, school concerts and shopping. Each day of December, mother had wondered if she could make it one more day. Now the end was in sight. After tomorrow, she could rest until next year. Pausing for a moment, the nativity sitting on the mantle held her gaze.

Father, in the other room, added up the receipts of all the gift purchases. He sighed. Once again, they had overspent the budget. Even with all the good

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sales, there were last minute gifts that put them over the top. Now January would be spent paying for gifts already forgotten. As he made his way to mother, he followed her gaze to the manger.

The Babe lay wrapped in the swaddling clothes with Mary and Joseph gazing down at Him. The shepherds bowed down worshipping, and the three kings brought their gifts to the King. He was the reason for Christmas. This Prince of Peace came with

a promise for the hearts of those who follow - the promise of peace.

Mother pondered this peace, wondering how she had missed it. With the overcrowded days, peace had been anything but present in the past month. She turned to father and said, "I want to do it different next year. I want to celebrate Christmas with less stress and more joy. Let's make Christmas filled with love and less stress."

That was last year. Once again Christmas is approaching. This is their chance to celebrate the holiday season with the promised peace, joy and love. Will the pressure of the season drag them down again or will the heart of Christmas fill their hearts this season?

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