

Is it not fitting that He should have been born into poverty? Were not plainness and austerity the best robes earth had to offer, in a sense? For the “best” humanity could offer – the finest silks, the most brilliantly dyed robes, the most gorgeous of our gems, our most purified gold – all would have fallen woefully, even ridiculously short. It would not have been gilding the lily. It would have been plastering the diamond in earthen clay. For nothing, nothing this fallen world has to offer could adequately clothe and pay tribute to a majesty so utter that in Heaven it is no abstract idea but a literal robe to enfold His eternal nobility and holiness. And so, perhaps the least ridiculous thing earth could offer was its poverty – a bed in a barn, a homeless life, ministry among the dregs of humanity.

And is that not the best I can offer? My “talents”, my “gifts”, could I stand in Heaven’s court, would be hidden in shame of their inadequacy. My gems become pebbles and dust before Him whose greatness is incomprehensible to me, before Jesus whose very name causes the highest powers amongst angels and demons to fall down in worship, or in terror-filled trembling. I can bring Him nothing – nothing but my poverty.

But, oh, the sweetness in knowing that my *poverty* is all He asks me to bring. The emptiness that is me is the gift He desires. Greedily, jealously He desires what should be considered dross. He picks me up in my shivering and rags and looks at me with the burning eye of the enraptured lover. He cradles me with the gentle, sacrificial, protecting love of a doting father. And this Love, by its untiring power that relentlessly seeks my good, transforms the haggard beggar into a princess, able to stand before the eternal throne; transforms her so absolutely that it is as though she had never lived any life but that of holy royalty.

We can offer only poverty. We have no more fitting tribute. He needs none.