

Pastor's
Christmas
Message



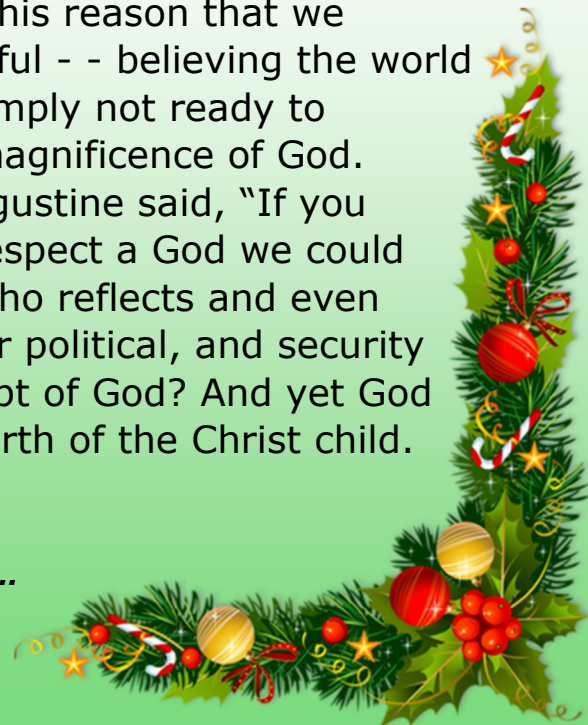
It is not hard for us to name the things that cause us worry, anxiety, or fear in our lives - - be it anxiety over the well-being of your loved ones, a difficult medical diagnosis, financial uncertainty, a mental health issue, a family member who has become estranged, among the many other struggles and fears we face each day. Add to this the reality of living in a society that in many ways appears to be increasingly confused in its moral values. Our moral convictions seem to be more and more questioned and relativized by the world around us.

It is in our faith that we are called to find our stabilization. We are invited to place all of our trust in a God who walks with us and helps us navigate through the darkness.

This great revelation is hard to live by because we normally find it difficult not to default to our own limited image of God which is. In many ways we have created a God who fits into our small systems and our understanding of God. We want to be in charge and project our image of God on God who is greater than our cultures and our immediate needs.

Richard Rohr writes, 'If God is always Mystery, then God is always in some way unfamiliar, beyond what we are used to, beyond our comfort zone, beyond what we can explain our understand.' Perhaps it is for this reason that we sometimes doubt God or become anxious and fearful - - believing the world has spun out of control and we feel lost. We are simply not ready to comprehend the totality and utter simplicity and magnificence of God. Rohr goes on to say, 'In the fourth century, St. Augustine said, "If you comprehend it, it is not God." Yet could we truly respect a God we could comprehend? And yet very often we want a God who reflects and even confirms our culture, our biases, our economic, our political, and security systems'. Does that not undermine the very concept of God? And yet God has revealed God's self to humanity through the birth of the Christ child.

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We often hear that God meets us where we are at. When we ponder the Incarnation we see our God doing exactly that. He reveals Himself to us in the most precious reality that we, as human beings can know and experience - - in the preciousness of an infant child. In spite of all the struggles of life we face, this season reminds us that our Lord has come into our world. Our God lives among us and at the same time is utterly transcendent. He comes to us as one of us, tiny, vulnerable, seemingly entirely dependent upon human beings for care and protection - - the very image of innocence, purity and new life. The eyes of a child radiate unburdened openness, fascination, and innocence.

The image of an infant child speaks to us of hope and promise for the future. It is the one image that directs us toward the experience of the same love and softness of heart that God has for each one of us.....as helpless precious loveable children. We are all helpless vulnerable children of God with a great dignity and potential for great love. What that great dignity means and how it will unfold has yet to be revealed to us. At the end of his life Jesus cries out, 'Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.' (Luke 23:46) At the beginning of Jesus' earthly life, the Father entrusts His Son into the hands of humanity. What a priceless gift exchange between Father and Son, with all peoples invited right into the middle of that love through the Holy Spirit. Our God's presence is manifested in and through our participation in countless ways, both visibly and invisibly.

As we enter into the Christmas season, may our image of God open up to the infinite mystery of life, bringing us in touch with the child of God within, and may it foster a desire to share that love openly.

May Christ's Presence and Peace help us put the heaviness and worries of life into proper perspective - - that is, into the Hands of our Creator God who knows firsthand the struggles of life and offers us the gift of new life in Him.

Peace and Blessings to All,
Fr. Brad

