

## All Share in the Good News

Christmas

December 25, 2018 (Readings from the Mass during the Night)

Fr. Tony Davis

Looking back on this past year, we are still divided as a church and as a world. Depending on how we worship or how we vote, everyone seems to have strong opinions about pretty much everything. To make matters worse, the more we disagree with someone, the more we become entrenched in our own opinions. 'We're right and everyone else is wrong' is the mentality. I highly doubt that this is the case.

This Christmas, we remember God becoming human. It is a great mystery. Jesus took on flesh and blood and entered fully into the human experience. 'The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light,' as *Isaiah* the prophet said would happen.

In our Gospel from *Luke*, we are told the story, which we all know. But notice what the angel says to the shepherds, "I proclaim to you good news of great joy *that will be for all people.*" Do we really believe that...that God cares for all people? That there is good news for all, no exclusions? No matter how enlightened or inclusive we think we are, all of us are guilty of limiting and redirecting God's good news to only those we think deserve it. We contradict the angel's universal vision with our own narrow-mindedness.

On this holy (evening/night/morning), I want to remind us that the good news was originally meant for all and everyone, therefore, has something to contribute. Our divisions, our hatreds for one another, and our taking sides are not consistent with the Gospel, a Gospel which promotes the dignity of every person, every culture, and every race. It is a Gospel of bringing people together and overcoming man-made boundaries.

This past summer, the spiritual writer Fr. Richard Rohr told a group of us that whenever we hear someone say something that we disagree with, instead of getting mad or saying they're wrong or stupid, ask ourselves, 'is this at least 10% true?' His point was that it probably is. There is usually at least a hint of truth to everything; that is why people say it. No one is hardly ever totally wrong. To be clear, we don't need to fully agree with other people, but whenever we can acknowledge that there is at least

some truth, a bridge is built and a connection is formed. Unity becomes a real possibility. Whenever we are open to another's comments, even if it is just 10, 20, 30, or 50% true, we ourselves can learn something we otherwise wouldn't have known.

Jean Vanier, founder of an international network of communities for people with developmental disabilities, asks us to grow up in our interactions with each other. He says, "perhaps we all have to embrace the strong beliefs of adolescence before we can become mature adults with the wisdom to modify our certitudes and listen respectfully to those who bring us different views." (126) Spiritual adults are no longer interested in proving themselves right. They are intent on getting as many perspectives as possible so as to arrive at the truth, a truth which is always greater than me, my ideas, and my theories on life and God.

*All share part of the good news, so the more perspectives we can get on reality, the better off we are as the human race.*

All of us have a piece of the picture, but only that, a piece. God alone sees the full picture. We need each other to figure it out.

Question: Have I been so sure of myself this past year that I have been rude, inconsiderate, or dismissive of other people's perspectives?

As we gather around this nativity scene this (evening/night/morning), especially as we look at the shepherds, let us know that the good news is for all. Let us pray that we may stand in awe, as one human family, of a profound truth greater than all of us: Emmanuel, 'God is with us.'