

Reading: Luke 2: 1-20

Meditation

“Do not be afraid!” the angel said.

**“I bring you the most joyful news ever announced
and it is for everyone!**

The Savior-Yes,

the Messiah,

the Lord—

has been born tonight in Bethlehem!

This is the reason that we gather...

Jesus has been born in Bethlehem of Judea...

It is the reason for the Carols that we sing...

the tree that we decorate...

the cookies we bake....

and the presents we buy...

or so we say!

You know...often times I hear people complain

that Christmas is waaaayyy to commercialized.

That we have forgotten the reason for the season...

that we focus too much on eating and celebrating...

But...I'll be honest...I kinda like the cookies, the tree, the presents.

And...I'll admit...It is often MUCH easier to focus on all that....

than to acknowledge and accept the real reason for the season.

Now, I suppose I ought to mention what the real reason for the season is...

Seriously??? you might be thinking...we know what it is...

the reason for the season is the birth of Jesus the Christ in Bethlehem!

of course it is...on one level.

**But I would like to invite you to consider
that Jesus' birth in Bethlehem thousands of years ago
is only scratching the surface for celebrating Christmas.
I would like to suggest to you, that the real reason to celebrate Christmas
is to celebrate God's birth in each and every one of us!**

**Remembering and celebrating an event from so long ago
is good...no doubt about it...
but celebrating a one time event in the long ago past...
doesn't nearly have the power nor the gift
of celebrating what is happening...what could be happening
each and every day of OUR lives...**

**I would like to suggest that what we truly celebrate this Christmas
is a deep knowing...
that the Holy One of the Cosmos,
the Creator of all that is...
the Abba God of Jesus of the Christ
lives and breathes
and loves
in us and through us...**

**What we celebrate at Christmas is the birth of God over and over
and over again...in each and every human person...
Christmas isn't a day to remembering ancient miracle stories from long ago..
Christmas is not a season to celebrate an ancient miracle
no matter how spectacular ...**

**Christmas is a way of life....
it happens every time
we forgive someone...
every time we show kindness,
every time we offer compassion...**

every time we enlarge our circle of care and concern...
every time we pray for our enemies and other people
we simply don't like

Each and every time do any of these things...
we celebrate Christmas....
because we give birth, once again,
to the Presence of God in our lives...
and WE make known the Reign of Heaven on Earth here and now.

That is what Jesus taught.
and what he gave his life for so very long ago...

the question of course is: do we believe it?
Do we believe that God has been born in us...
that God desires to be born through our lives?

Please don't get me wrong...it is right and good and beautiful to celebrate
Jesus' birth!

The cookies, the carols, the cards, the candlelight...the celebrations
the presents...
it is all good,

Ohhh....But let us not stop there...

Let us take his life seriously so that we can his birth seriously
and then.....

Let us take our birth seriously so that we can take our lives seriously...

and then let us imagine how beautiful the world will be in the Kingdom of
God.....

We will no longer tolerate hunger or hatred...

We will no longer accept war as just the way that it is...

We will no longer look away from loneliness...

We will no longer look at any human being simply as an object to like or dislike...

We will no longer be afraid....

And we will see each and every human person as another incarnation of God and we will see ALL of creation glowing with Divinity...

And.... we will know that we are loved, absolutely, unconditionally, eternally loved

and yes...We will live in the Reign of Heaven on Earth .

So, this night... ..let us celebrate Jesus' birth in Bethlehem ...

let us sing and tell the stories and exchange gifts and eat the cookies...

But sometime soon...please find a quiet spot somewhere for a few moments and listen...

Listen for the angels singing the good news of your birth...

And while you there....don't forget to say "Thank you".....

Amen.