

Dear Members and Friends of the United Independent Catholic Church

Behold! A virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Emmanuel; God with us. (Isaiah Chapter 9 vs 6)

In my meandering through life I have come to the realization that I want this more than ever. I see the wanton greed of the rich and powerful. I see religious bigotry under the guise of love. I see wars and famine. I see the pain of the poor who are beset by the politicians who see them as lazy. I remember all of my losses that at times I mourn. As I listen to the Advent readings I feel these things even more. I hear words like hope, light, fulfillment, peace, justice. Again Isaiah, (Chapter 9 1-3), says "comfort my people; speak comfortably to my people, for their sins are pardoned. In my weakness I bow my head and feel that these promises will never be kept.

If we are honest with ourselves we would admit to being in that painful space at some time in our lives. This is part and parcel of being human. Yet in history there was child who was born in a stable. He came into the world in the harshest of conditions. Mary and Joseph had to go to register in Bethlehem and Mary was close to giving birth. There was no place for them to go so she could give birth. They found a leaky and cold cave. Animals were in this cave and you can imagine the stench that they left. Mary had to lay her son in a manger were the animals ate; less than sterile.

This child was to be our savior and preach the Good News that would forever change our relationship with God and each other. He, who is God, became flesh. He who is the king of heaven was poor. He who is the author of life was killed upon a cross and he who is without sin was made sin for us at the crucifixion so that we might have eternal life.

We tend to forget this as we enter into the Christmas Season. Nothing is as misleading as the words, Christmas Spirit. Does this mean a warm fuzzy that we think that we have to have during this season? Does this mean going out and shopping trying to get the latest fad? Does it mean putting up Christmas trees and hosting big parties with rich foods and drink?

No friends, this is a time for celebration of the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Christ became man that we may be like God (St. Athanasius). The true Christmas spirit is when we acknowledge our sinfulness and celebrate our salvation. We, remember the poor every day in their struggle. We seek out justice for the ones who have no voice. We challenge our religious leaders to preach love rather than hate.

With all that we also celebrate our humanity that was redeemed. We celebrate our friends and family that raises us up to stand against the vicissitudes of life. We celebrate the joys of God's message of peace and justice through each other. Believe it or not we are the heralds of the Good News by what we do and say. We receive comfort from our family and friends when we mourn. We are messengers of hope when we feel lost or alone. We are light when our loved ones travel in the dark. We are fulfilled when we meet that Child that was given to us through each other.

Yes, there is hope, light, fulfillment, peace and justice in the world. We just have to listen and these promises are made real through each other. The Christ Child is present, when out of our love, we minister to each other. We do not know this at the times that we are there for our friends and families.

It is my prayers that we all come to enter the Christmas Season with Joy and hope and a determination that we live Christmas every Day.

Sincerely,

+Jerry

Servant