

Column122522

Companions on the Journey

December 25,2022

Dear Friends,

Christmas has come. "Long lay the world in sin and error pining till He appeared and the soul found its worth." Yes, when the Word became flesh that is what happened. Each soul can now find its worth. It is part of the awe that is associated often with Christmas. There is a certain look that a young child of 4 or 5 gets at Christmas as they round the corner into the living room or den and see the scene of tree and presents set before them. It is a look of awe and excitement. Often, it stops them dead in their tracks as they take in all the details before diving into presents.

As we get older though, there are fewer things which "awe" us. We have experienced more of life and on the second or third time around some of the luster has worn off and the surprise is gone. We can still have anticipation and even expectation. There may well be happiness and joy and smiles but not necessarily awe. But there is something that we adults experience that does still touch us with awe. It is a new baby. I have been greatly blessed in many ways in my life. Besides a sister and two brothers there are 11 nieces and nephews and from them 24 great nieces and nephews. One of the many blessings is to be asked to introduce each of these children to Jesus by baptizing them into Jesus Christ. Christmas just brings this home much more powerfully.

After the baptism of each of these little ones I was honored to be able to hold this gift of God's love and as I sat there holding each new little girl or boy in my arms, seeing all the fine detail of their fingers and watching their eyes as they tried to focus and make some sense out of this sudden, bright, noisy new world of theirs, I felt awe again. Not because that baby was my baby or my son or daughter but just because that little boy and that little girl were at all. What a gift! What a gift repeated over and over again.

Our God entrusts to us mortals these little ones. Our God trusts us with these babies. And as a recent contemporary card said: "Babies are such a great way to start people." Even God, when his Word became flesh, came as a baby. The awe is there, it is a gift from the Creator. If the awe is not there then we are not doing our job well enough. We must find ways to help and encourage and support.

This week we celebrate the Lord's coming as a baby. The Lord comes in other babies too in a slightly different way. May we never grow used to that gift. May there always be room in our inn for any baby that the Lord sends our way. Merry Christmas! May we all live to celebrate the birth of the Christ Child for many more years!

Peace and Merry Christmas!

Msgr. McHenry