

CHRISTMAS EVE 2017

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

"AND MARY KEPT ALL THESE THINGS, REFLECTING ON THEM IN HER HEART"

I THINK YOU KNOW THAT I DON'T LIKE TO GET INTO POLITICS UP HERE - ESP. AT CHRISTMAS....

IDENTIFY WITH ONE POLITICAL PARTY OR THE OTHER

BUT I FEEL OBLIGED TO INFORM YOU - IF YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY HEARD - THAT THE SUPREME COURT RECENTLY RULED THAT THERE WILL BE NO NATIVITY SCENE AT THE WHITE HOUSE THIS YEAR ----

I BET YOU'RE THINKING THAT IS NOT GOOD...

BUT EVIDENTLY, THEY WERE UNABLE TO FIND THREE WISE MEN IN ALL OF WASHINGTON, DC....

IS THAT A SURPRISE, OR NOT???

A LITTLE HUMOR CAN GO ALONG WAYS AT CHRISTMAS....

LET'S TRY THIS ONE FROM LAST YEAR...

JOHN WAS FRESH OUT OF IDEAS FOR A CHRISTMAS GIFT FOR HIS MOTHER-IN-LAW FOR CHRISTMAS.

SO HE BOUGHT HER A LARGE PLOT IN AN EXPENSIVE CEMETERY.

THE FOLLOWING CHRISTMAS HE ALSO COULDN'T THINK OF ANYTHING TO GET HER, SO HE DIDN'T BUY HER ANYTHING...

SHE COMPLAINED HE WAS SO THOUGHTLESS AND WAS JUST TAKING HER FOR GRANTED.

HE SAID, "WHAT ARE YOU COMPLAINING ABOUT?"

YOU STILL HAVEN'T USED THE PRESENT I GAVE YOU LAST YEAR."

THE MUSIC TEACHER WAS DIRECTING A GROUP OF CHILDREN WHO WERE SINGING THE CAROL:

"WHILE SHEPHERDS WATCHED THEIR FLOCK AT NIGHT" TO A PACKED HOUSE AT THE SCHOOL'S ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CONCERT.

TO HER HORROR, SHE REALIZED ONE OF THE YOUNG BOYS WAS PROUDLY SINGING AS LOUD AS HE COULD:

"WHILE THE SHEPHERDS WASHED THEIR SOCKS AT NIGHT."

OUR LAST ONE COMES FROM DAVE BARRY WITH A LITTLE BIT OF SATIRE

"ONCE AGAIN, WE COME TO THE HOLIDAY SEASON, A DEEPLY RELIGIOUS TIME THAT EACH OF US OBSERVES, EACH IN HIS OWN WAY, BY GOING TO THE MALL OF HIS CHOICE."

HOW ABOUT THAT? THANK YOU FOR ALSO OBSERVING CHRISTMAS BY PARTICIPATING IN THIS CHRISTMAS EVE LITURGY...

I DECIDED TO ONCE MORE TO BEGIN WITH SOME HUMOR BECAUSE IT WORKED LAST YEAR AFTER READING A BOOK LAST YEAR ON THE "SOUL OF CHRISTMAS" BY THOMAS MOORE...

HE TALKS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD CHEER AS A WAY OF CARING FOR THE SOUL OF CHRISTMAS AND CARING FOR OUR SOUL DURING CHRISTMAS...

I THINK IT IS ALSO A GOOD WAY TO HELP US CONTINUE TO LIVE FULLY IN THE PRESENT MOMENT...

I THINK GOOD HUMOR HELPS US TO LIVE IN AND APPRECIATE THE PRESENT MOMENT.....

*AS WELL AS GOOD MUSIC - WE THANK OUR CHOIR FOR THAT
MARY IS ALSO OUR MODEL TODAY FOR HOW TO LIVE IN THE PRESENT
MOMENT, ISN'T SHE?
AS WE HEARD, "AND MARY KEPT ALL THESE THINGS, REFLECTING ON
THEM IN HER HEART"
NOTICE, SHE WASN'T KEEPING ALL THESE THINGS IN MIND, OR IN HER
HEAD....BUT IN HER HEART....
THAT WAS HER REACTION TO PRESENT MOMENT AT THE FIRST
CHRISTMAS....
WE KNOW SHE WAS FULLY PRESENT BECAUSE SHE WAS PRESENT
WHOLEHEARTEDLY - AS WE SAY -----
HER PRESENCE WAS HEART FELT...
WHEN WE ARE PRESENT WITH OUR HEART WE ARE FULLY PRESENT...
WE ARE THERE, HEART AND SOUL...
HOW OFTEN DURING YOUR DAY ARE YOU FULLY PRESENT - WITH YOUR
HEART.....WITH A HERTFELT PRESENCE?
ARE YOU WHOLEHEARTEDLY PRESENT THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON??
KEEPING YOUR EXPERIENCES IN YOUR HEART REFLECTING ON THEM?
IT IS A CHALLENGE TO BE WHOLEHEARTEDLY PRESENT
NOT SOMEWHERE ELSE, HOPING FOR THAT PERFECT CHRISTMAS THAT
DOESN'T EXIST, OR COMPARING THE PRESENT CHRISTMAS TO ANOTHER
CHRISTMAS WE'VE EXPERIENCED OR TO ONE WHAT WE THINK OUR
CHRISTMAS SHOULD LOOK LIKE..*

ALL OF WHICH KEEPS US FROM BEING WHOLEHEARTEDLY PRESENT TO THIS CHRISTMAS....

"BEING PRESENT TO OUR CHRISTMAS EXPERIENCE FULLY, REFLECTING ON IT IN OUR HEART NOW"

WE'VE GOT TO BE GENTLE WITH OURSELVES, AND BE AND THINK FLEXIBLY" AT CHRISTMAS - AS MARY CLEARLY WAS GIVING BIRTH IN A STRANGE AND POOR PLACE, AWAY FROM THE COMFORTS OF HOME -

WE NEED TO HAVE A HEART THAT IS OPEN TO CHANGE....

A HEART THAT EMBRACES FULLY THE PRESENT MOMENT, NO MATTER HOW IMPERFECT IT IS

AND YOU CAN BE ASSURED THAT IT WILL BE IMPERFECT

THAT IS ALL THERE IS - IMPERFECTION - WE NEED TO BE ABLE TO EMBRACE IT - IMPERFECTION.....

WE WILL NEVER HAVE A PERFECT CHRISTMAS EXPERIENCE

WE MUST EMBRACE THE IMPERFECT - AND REJECT THE PERFECT WHICH IS SO OFTEN THE ENEMY OF THE GOOD....

WELCOME THE GOOD ENOUGH CHRISTMAS TODAY, NOW!

AS MARY MUST HAVE, AT THE FIRST CHRISTMAS

AND WELCOME THE GOOD ENOUGH WHOLEHEARTEDLY, AS MARY DID..

IT IS ALWAYS HELPFUL FOR US TO STOP AND TAKE A DEEP BREATH PERIODICALLY IF WE WANT TO EMBRACE FULLY THE PRESENT MOMENT...

DEEP BREATH IN AND OUT - INHALE AND EXHALE

IT IS ALWAYS HELPFUL ALSO TO HAVE A MANTRA THAT WE KEEP

REPEATING - WE KEEP GOING BACK TO ...

E.G. EMBRACE THE IMPERFECT

OR TODAY, A SAVIOR IS BORN TO US

SOMETHING THAT YOU FIND HELPFUL.....FOR ME IT IS

COME HOLY SPIRIT, COME

BUT STOPPING - EVEN FOR A MOMENT -

TO WHOLEHEARTEDY EMBRACE THE MOMENT

HELPS US NOT ONLY LIVE MORE FULLY IN THE MOMENT BUT SINK MORE

DEEPLY INTO THE SIGNIFICANCE OF OUR EXPERIENCE....

TO EMBRACE IT WITH OUR HEART AND OUR SOUL

IT HELPS US REFLECT ON OUR EXPERIENCE IN OUR HEART....

TO FEEL MORE DEEPLY OUR EMOTIONS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

TO BRING OURSELF MORE FULLY INTO THE PRESENCE OF OUR CREATOR

TO EXPERIENCE MORE FULLY THE GIFT OF OUR EXISTENCE AND ITS

MYSTERY AND ITS MEANING - IN THE MIDST OF ITS IMPERFECTION

TO BE MORE FULLY AWAKE AND ALERT!

TO GROW IN GRATITUDE FOR THE GIFT OF OUR PRESENT MOMENTS

LET US GO FORTH, KEEPING ALL THESE THINGS, REFLECTING ON THEM

IN OUR HEART.....

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

WE TAKE OFF WORK, WE GIVE GIFTS, WE EAT MORE, WE PLAY MORE

***SOUL IS ABOUT HEART, INTIMACY, CONNECTION AND PRESENTING OUR
INNER LIFE TO OTHERS, TO OUR WORLD...***

***AS MOORE SAYS: "CHRISTMAS SHOWS THAT IT'S POSSIBLE FOR A HUMAN
BEING TO BE AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL POSSIBLE AND YET REMAIN
DEEPLY HUMAN AT THE SAME TIME. THE GOSPELS PORTRAY A JESUS
WHO IS SUPREMELY COMPASSIONATE AND CAPABLE OF LOVE AND
FRIENDSHIP, WHO LOVES GOD AND USES HIS WIT, AND AT THE SAME
TIME IS FOREVER AWARE THAT HE HAS A FATHER IN THE SKY, A FATHER
AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL FAR BEYOND THE HUMAN"***

SO, IF WE TAKE CHRISTMAS TO HEART, IT WILL NOURISH OUR SOUL,

***WE NEED TO GET PAST THE ANXIETIES IN ARRANGING GIFTS AND
PARTIES.....***

***WHEN WE DO, WE WILL REDISCOVER EACH YEAR AT THIS TIME THAT
OUR SOUL GROWS AND WE EXPERIENCE A NEW BIRTH, OF SORTS, A NEW
AND EXPANDED SOUL.....***

LET US PRAY FOR A SOULFUL CHRISTMAS!

***MY WISH FOR EACH ONE OF YOU...
A MERRY AND SOULFUL CHRISTMAS TO EACH OF YOU!***