

Insights in Liturgy

Spirituality Of The Preface

By David E. Nowak
Preface for Christmas I

In the wonder of the incarnation Your Eternal Word has brought to the eyes of faith a new radiant vision of your glory. In him we see our God made visible and so are caught up in love of the God we cannot see.

Most of us are suspicious of anyone claiming to have had a vision. Immediately we try to find some rational explanation. Surely, it is nothing more than an hallucination caused by psychological stress or a poor diet. We want to write it off as an uncontrollable symptom of an unfortunate condition. And we hope someone discovers a cure before it spreads.

Yet, this is just what we Christians claim. During this season of light, we proclaim to the world that we are a people of vision. And we want everyone to join us in our revelry.

Our "vision," proclaimed in the Preface for Christmas, is not an illusory flight from everyday reality. The Christian vision we call the "wonder of the incarnation" cannot be blamed on the

length of Rochester Winters, or an overdose of Christmas cheer. Our "vision" is not a way out of our lives. It is a way back, a way of seeing the truth of our lives.

The Christmas vision is not an escape into the past, sentimentality, or the dream of a life untested by real needs. Our vision is the hope of being "brought" close to what is real. It is the promise of the invisible meaning of our life "made visible."

The birth of the Messiah is a "vision" in the sense of a new and sharper perception. The "Word made flesh" is a new outlook, a new way of entering more deeply into the texture of the world.

The birth of Jesus reveals our potential for being reborn: from a mere observer hovering above life, to the real knowledge of being plunged into the world. This is a "vision" which leads us beyond appearance and personal fancy to the fullness of life now being fulfilled in us.

An often overlooked fact is that our Christian faith is not only truth about God and his Kingdom, but it is also truth about us. The mystery revealed to the "eye of faith" is a vision of the glory of God discovered in our lives "caught up" in his love. It is our own mystery, upheld and transformed by the love of the Father, which we proclaim in faith.

Our Christmas vision is our contemplation of the glory of God unfolding in the radiant light of personal truth. For Christians the revelation of Jesus in our lives, where we are today and as we continue to fulfill our destiny to share in divine life itself.

St. Athanasius wrote, the revelation of "God becoming man, is that man may become God." Our Christmas vision illustrates our central claim for mankind: we are an image of God, destined to join him and reign even like Gods, the perfect mirror of our Father's glory.

What numbs, and even kills, the commitment of many Christians is that while we monitor very closely the doctrine and desires of Christians, we frequently fail to supply a vision of God that is worth pursuing, that really stands

up to the rigors of everyday life.

What enables us to sustain our hope in loving and loving is not naive or idealism, but the revelation of what God shares with his people. Our Christmas vision is, finally, the power we share to love, to create, to care, to be vulnerable to unreturned affection, and to be transformed along the way into his image and likeness, even as he has chosen to be born of ours.

One holy monk summarized it in this way:

"Thank you for the free gift of your gracious birth, God, Son of Man, through which we have access to that grace in which we stand and in which we are confident of attaining glory as heirs of God.

"It is indeed an admirable commerce to take flesh and bestow divinity." (Blessed Guerric of Igny)

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Deaths

C.L. Goonan

Charles L. Goonan, onetime pitcher for the Rochester Red Wings, died Dec 15, 1979, after a heart attack. He was 56 years old.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated this

morning at Christ the King Church.

Goonan had worked for Genesee Brewing Co. for 20 years, as a salesman and regional retail sales specialist. He was with the Red Wings when they were a St. Louis Cardinals farm club. He was a veteran of World War II and a member of the Bishop Kearney High School Fathers Club and of the men's club at Christ the King.

Survivors are his widow, Dorothy; sons Patrick and Michael; daughters Deborah Donahue (Mrs. William) and Sharon Goonan; four grandchildren; a sister, Anna Connelly; two brothers, James, of Kingston, Mass., and Donald Goonan, and several nieces and nephews.

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