

A Christmas Reflection

By Sister Gloria Marie Jones

Something happened,
in darkness, in obscurity, in utter simplicity.
A homeless couple, Mary and Joseph by name, are found in a manger.
A birthing has happened.
And in that moment, all is changed.
It is only in time, gradually, that the gift is realized, unwrapped.
Only in time does that which seemed so ordinary become an extraordinary event.

For the last 2000 plus years, we Christians have struggled to articulate, celebrate, and understand the mystery that happened so simply. We use trees and lights, songs and decorations, festive food, Christmas cards, poetry and prose to somehow capture the wonder of that night..

And what is the heart of the mystery? What is it that we have to celebrate?
Two truths specially speak to me this year.
The first truth is that our God is the God of Love who *longs* to be in relationship with us and will stop at nothing to make that gift real....even to giving his life for us!
At Christmas we celebrate the faithfulness of our God who simply will not stop giving, our God who has claimed us and made a home in our hearts.
We celebrate a God of Love in Jesus who meets us where we are and *promises* to love us into life, if we but let him.

The second truth is that relationships are in fact the heart and meaning of each of our lives. It is in and through our relationships that God continues to come, continues to be born in our midst. Our efforts to build relationships, heal relationships, celebrate relationships, support relationships, take the risk to be in relationship--all of these efforts do in fact make real the gift of Christmas.

We celebrate anew the mystery of Christmas that we might come to LIVE the Christmas mystery day after day. It happens in our lives in ordinary, simple moments. It calls us to compassion and forgiveness, to honesty and vulnerability. To live the Christmas mystery is to stand open and ready to meet our God in this moment, however surprising or obscure his coming. To live the Christmas mystery is to allow our hearts to be stretched more and more to embrace "the other", who ever that other might be that resides outside of our hearts.

May we each wake up to that place in our hearts and in our relationships most in need of God's healing and peace. May we have the courage to say "yes" to the invitation to LOVE. And may that "yes" give birth to LOVE all over again this Christmas.