

Dear People Whom God Loves,

## **BENEATH THE CHRISTMAS STORY**

### PART 1

Let us look with new eyes into the birth of Jesus.

We have three eyes or we might say three ways of seeing things. We are familiar with the first two. We might not be aware of the third.

The first eye is the bodily eyes in our head. With this eye we can see physical forms and shapes. We might call this the eye of the body.

The second eye is the reasoning mind. With this eye we can understand many things. We can see consequences and we can plan. This eye opens to us vision that the first eye can't. We might call this the eye of reason.

The third eye lets us know a different way. It is knowing that is not possible to the first two eyes. It is beyond seeing physical forms and rational understanding. Because it is beyond reason, often thinks that it is irrational. On the contrary it only seems irrational because it is beyond what reason can see. We might call this the eye of the spirit.

Let us use example to move closer to understanding. When we look at a baby, what do we see. With the first eye we see arms, legs, head and torso. Good. But there is more.

With the second eye we know that the baby has to be fed, changed, and kept warm and nurtured. This is better but isn't there something else? When we look at that tiny child, isn't then, at least at times, a sense of wonder and awe. Something that moves us at a depth that we can't really put into words. Something that moves us to sense that there is more to life than we normally sense. That sense moves us toward love. For some of us to the Love we name God. For others of us even though we don't name it God we are drawn to love which is bigger than ourselves.

Something that is difficult and perhaps impossible to put into words. But it is real. I would say the real thing that there is. Inexpressible but it can

change our lives. Being drawn into love changes us. Believers often call it drawn into love: Love is our name for God.

All three eyes are good. The third eye is the one that is most likely to change us into lovers.

Another example. What happens when we see a beautiful sunset. Our first eye see the colors. Our second eye tells us that it is different wave lengths. When our third eye is working, there is a deep sense of wonder and awe. There must be something more. We don't try to explain it. We just let it sink in. Beauty like love can draw us into faith.

In fact our present story of the universe is a beautiful awesome story. From the big bang to xxx stems and plants. To the beginning of bacterial life, to frogs and lizards, to dogs and cats, to humans. Ruggedly awesome and at the same time beautiful. The third eye says to us there must be something more. We can be drawn to bow in wonder. Without the third eye would life be worthwhile, would it have meaning, would there be purpose? Without the third eye we can easily be tempted to see all of existence as a big joke.

## PART 2

Let us now turn to the manger and baby Jesus in the crib.

With our first eye we see the baby image in the crib. With our second eye we know the Christmas story. Many of us have known this story since we were children. This Christmas a little girl, she looked to be about a year and a half, walked into church holding her mom's hand. As I wished them a Merry Christmas the mother said to me "she wants to see baby Jesus". Such memories can help us later in life. They can help us to avoid making religion too complicated.

What can the third eye see as we look at the infant in the crib. It can see the human being Jesus and the mysterious presence of God in Jesus. We can't know exactly how this works. We don't try to figure it out. We have our valuable doctrine pointing to this wonderful mystery. It is a good pointer but no words can describe the mystery. With the third eye we can hold on to the mystery to which the words point.

With the third eye we can ponder that Love (God) chooses to enter into humanity. Chooses to share in our human journey. Choose to share human ups and downs. Chooses to share our joys and sorrows. Chooses to share our successes and failures. Chooses to share how we feel when connected and how we feel when abandoned. Chooses to show us that suffering is a part of human living. Chooses to show us how to live through suffering and when we feel abandoned in suffering that we are not alone even though it feels that way to us. Reminds us that Love will heal our wounds of body, mind and spirit. Reminds us Love will prevail and that Love is our destiny. It will be okay.

The words that I have written are frail and bland. The third eye can be drawn into the mystery and know in a way that is deeper and beyond. A knowing that can transform our lives and allow us to see in a new and deeper way. I think that working through the third eye is one of the ways that Love transforms us. I believe that transformation was what Jesus wanted to take place in our lives. That xxx even when good (and they can lead to transformation) are not enough. I think that was what Jesus was about when he said "Go and learn the meaning of the words 'I desire mercy not sacrifice'. I did not come to call the righteous but sinners."

That is why I think the name "hospital for sinners" is one of the appropriate names for church. It reminds us that Love (God) embraces everyone. All people are invited to the journey of allowing Love to transform us. Why some of us are at different places on the journey and why some are not on the journey at all is a mystery to me. That mystery is valuable to me. It reminds us to be careful not to call some people good people and other bad people. I believe that only Love knows all that is going on. I also suspect that when we are gifted with the Beautiful Vision we will be xxx.

### PART 3

Let us look at a child being baptized. The second eye knows that the child is becoming a member of the church. The third eye sees that the child (through she is not aware of it) is invited to the journey of being transformed into love. The second eye knows that the journey has problems, twists and turns. That the parents will make mistakes that

hinder the transformation. That since Love respects our freedom the child will have to do her part by being willing to be transformed.

Going back to the third eye, what does it see. It sees the Love deeply wants to see the child while growing up and as an adult is transformed into Love. That Love only needs a crack to begin the transformation. (We are often not willing to be transformed because it means letting of things to which we cling. I believe that is enough for Love if we are just willing to be willing. Even just to be willing to be willing to be willing. I say this because although Love is not the power of force, Love is subtle and patient. Love is seductive and wise. I don't think that we can run fast enough and long enough to not be caught by the "Hound of Heaven". That is what I mean when I say that Love will help us to be willing to be willing to be willing.)

A third eye way of looking at church is to see church as an assembly of people who are willing to be willing to be willing to be transformed into Love.

We are indeed the mystical body of Christ. We need to have a structured to last. Without church the message of Jesus would have been lost. What a tragedy that would be. The Holy Spirit works through our sins and mistakes. Everything in the end is the grace of God. I am just trying to find a way to look more deeply.

There is a story (perhaps a legend) about the Emperor Napoleon. The emperor said to a Cardinal "I could smash the Catholic church with my fist in an instant." The Cardinal replied, "We clergy with our sins and mistakes have been trying to do that for eighteen hundred years. What makes you think that you can do a better job".

Our ultimate faith and trust is in the Infinite Love who holds us, understands us, heals us and cherishes us forever.

Smile, God Loves You,  
Father Clay