

## **Respecting Life by Living in the Light of Faith**

"Make me an instrument of your peace...

Where there is doubt, faith and where there is darkness, light."

The darkness of December days has descended upon us. This seasonal darkness causes us to pause and notice the light that breaks through the darkness from time to time in the shimmering stars, glistening snow, house lights, headlights, and decorative holiday lights. It also challenges us to move forward with our lives when it would be more comfortable to stay in our own space.

The darkness of political uncertainties, economic insecurities, social inequalities, spiritual questioning and questing, and global power struggles can overshadow us with doubt and fear. Where is the light to break through this darkness?

Pope Benedict XVI has proclaimed a special Year of Faith to "be a moment of grace and commitment to fuller conversion, to strengthening our faith, and to proclaiming God with joy to the people of our time." The Year of Faith began on October 11, 2012, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Second Vatican Council and will conclude on November 24, 2013, the Feast of Christ the King. The core elements of the 10 Year vision outlined by Fr. Clay and the pastoral council also invite us to renewal of faith, continual transformation and participation in the mission of Jesus through our living and being.

Now, in the Advent season, we remember and prepare to celebrate the historical presence of Jesus in our world. God's love, manifested in Jesus, is the Light of the World and it is the presence of Jesus working through each of us which will be the light needed to dispel the darkness of our times. In this season of giving and receiving presents, it is presence that we most need. The light that heals, unifies, and graces each of us and our world is generated by being present to ourselves in prayer and meditation, by being present to those close to us, our family and friends, in mutual care and support, by being present to the local community in listening to their stories, sharing our resources, skills, and time, and seeking systemic solutions, by being present to the world community in learning what we can about other cultures and promoting peace and justice for all people.

Submitted by the Social justice Committee