

Dear People Whom God Loves,

CHRISTMAS INCARNATION

Incarnation means that Spirit, Love, God comes into, or perhaps to say it better, is in the flesh. That is within the human. At Christmas we celebrate that LOVE (God) is in Jesus.

I would like us to consider that Incarnation started 13.7 billion years ago. Only LOVE existed "before" (I don't know what other word to use) the Big Bang. The Big Bang was not flesh but it was physical. It was truly matter though not human flesh.

LOVE was within the Big Bang. It was LOVE within the Big Bang that caused it to be. I think that is was something deeper than causing. We call it creating from nothing. I don't think that any human words can describe it.

LOVE was within the stars including now in our sun. Without that "withinness" nothing would exist. LOVE is within our planet earth. LOVE is within our mountains and lakes. LOVE is within the sparrows and eagles. LOVE is within all the animals of the world. LOVE is in all of us humans. It is the LOVE within that makes us be.

LOVE within us wants our love to grow in ever deepening compassion, mercy, forgiveness, healing and understanding of ourselves and others. I think that this love will be both for ourselves and others or it will be neither.

I believe that LOVE is present in our virtuous actions and in our sins. My experience is that often the negative things in life become our greatest blessings. Our trick is to allow LOVE to work in us and through us. I believe that that is what prayer deeply is. It is our willingness (with LOVE'S help) to allow LOVE to work in us. I find this very difficult because what LOVE wants and what I want are often not the same.

As LOVE transforms us inside, our actions change because it is now LOVE working through us to bring compassion and empathy to those what are oppressed and suffering. This allows us to be grateful to have a role in of relieving oppression and suffering and to be humble because we know we didn't do it by ourselves.

This brings us to Jesus. The fact that LOVE is present in us and everything can perhaps give a small insight into the mystery that Jesus is human and divine. This remains a mystery. Our words and even the words of the creeds cannot plumb the mystery. They can, however, point to the mystery and draw us (by grace) into the mystery –a mystery that can transform us. The creeds are also valuable because they can hold us until we

have the faith awareness that lets us know in another way and after that when the faith awareness is dry. That and the memory can help us hang on.

Our Christian belief is that Jesus is fully human and fully divine. If we eliminate either pole, we do not believe in the mystery. Some of us downplay the God part. Some of us downplay the human part.

It is really LOVE (God) that is within us humans and works in and through us as free human beings. We remain human and we are still free but still LOVE (the indwelling of the Holy Spirit) is truly in us. The Eastern church Father loved to speak of our spiritual growth as being divinized (more and more God-like).

It is truly LOVE (God) that is in Jesus and works in and through the free human being that Jesus is. Jesus is human and at the same time LOVE (God) is in him.

At the same time we do not say that we (or the Big Bang, or the stars, or the earth, or the sparrows or eagles...) are divine in the same way that we say that Jesus is divine. There may be a similarity but they are not the same.

Jesus is the human face of God. When we want to know how LOVE wants us to live as full humans we need to look at how Jesus lived. That is why if we are to follow Jesus we must continually look at how Jesus lived.

LOVE chooses to live in humanity. This tells me that LOVE is humble. This tells me that the more we become divinized (God-like) the more we are graced to be humble. When we are proud and egotistical we are very small.

Christmas is the celebration of the Incarnation. LOVE is with us.

Smile, God Loves You
Father Clay

P.S. I believe in the mysterious Incarnation. The words that I have used do not, (for me) in any way deny the mystery. They may be a poor expression for others. My faith awareness of this astounding mystery is an undeserved blessing for which I am grateful.