

ROCKY MOUNTAIN CONFERENCE - DEC. 18, 2011

Reflections

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

'CHRISTMAS SWEATERS & ADVENT'

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As a non-apologetic lover of all things Christmas, Advent is one of my favorite times of the year. The idea of the hope, the light, and the blessings given to us come to life at this time. "Advent" is the root of the word "adventure." It is synonymous with dawning, opening up, and revealing a new thing. As we celebrate this season, we are entering into a new experience with birth of the Christ Child into our midst. The fourth Sunday of Advent is often thought of as Annunciation Sunday. We talk about the angel Gabriel coming to Mary and telling her that she is to be favored with the birth of God's own son.

As I was considering these passages again this year, I was reminded of a story concerning my favorite Christmas sweater. Years ago, I purchased one of those seasonal sweaters that everybody has. Mine, however, does not have any reindeers or snowmen. It is the only sweater I have ever found that has a nativity scene on the front. I am fond of wearing it every year and doing a children's talk about the traditional image of the nativity.

During this discussion, I ask the children if they have any questions. One year, a little girl gave me quite a surprise. As she looked at baby Jesus in the manger on my front, she asked, "Was Baby Jesus in your tummy?" Needless to say, I was a little bit at a loss for words.

As I contemplated whether Baby Jesus was in my tummy, I was reminded of something I had read before:

"We are all meant to be mothers of God, What good is it to me, if this eternal birth of the divine Son takes place unceasingly but does not take place within myself? And, what good is it to me if Mary is full of grace and if I am not also full of grace? What good is it to me for the Creator to give birth to his Son if I do not also give birth to him in my time and my culture? This, then is the fullness of time: When the Son of God is begotten in us". ~ MEISTER ECKHART

What a profound thought! We are all called to be a part of a dawning, a creation story, an arrival, and new birth. We are to the carriers of the message of Christ in our time.

Each year I wonder as I put on that sweater whether I have demonstrated in my life the birth of Christ through all I do. Have I carried the Baby Jesus in my tummy? Have I shared the birth with all who I have encountered?



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