

Christmas

December 25, 2009

Isaiah 52:7-10

Psalm 98

Hebrews 1:1-4,(5-12)

John 1:1-14

In the name of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

In the cold winter nights of the far North, there is a pale light that moves and shimmers in the northern sky, growing from the edge of the world to fill the sky with a radiance. It begins suddenly. One moment you walk beneath a star-filled, incredibly black sky; the next moment your eyes are filled with a light not of this world. Science may call it the Aurora Borealis, the northern lights, and explain that it is a disturbance in the ionosphere. The Cree people, a First Nation people of Canada, in their ancient wisdom call it “the dance of the Spirits.” Perhaps we might call it “the dance of the angels.”

It would have been like that, of course. To the eyes of shepherds, keeping their flocks on the Judean fields, it must have been a night like any other, a night under a familiar unchanging sky with predictable stars under which they had lived every moment of their lives. Then, suddenly, that familiar sky dissolved in light, first one light and then myriads and myriads of lights, greater and brighter than the stars: angels shining, as they sang the birth of Jesus, and, perhaps, danced for joy.

Joy is the word: simple joy. No great star shines in the East for the shepherds; no ancient texts are to be consulted as to the portents in

the sky. No far land must be sought to worship this newborn Messiah. He is there, right there, for the shepherds. He is here, right here, for us, for you and for me. God in His great love for us has given us the precious gift of the Incarnation, become one of us that we might be one with Him. That love is so great that God entrusts Himself to us, a baby born in a rude stable to a tiny, exhausted family of travelers for whom there is no room. God places Himself in our care.

We, you and I, are called to receive Him, to receive Him and to worship the one we receive. That is what we are about here tonight. In the midst of bright lights and shiny paper, tall trees and tinsel, carols and cookies, the greatest gift of all is there for us tonight.

You know, of course, that the angels still sing; their song never ends. Perhaps you and I can join the song, and, perhaps, dance with the angels.

In His Holy Name.