

Friday, December 10, 2004

Scripture Reading: Luke 2:13-14

Text for Today: ***And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of heavenly host, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”***

I will remember the Christmas Season of 2003 as my “voiceless” holiday. I had bronchitis that lingered for nearly a month and rendered me totally speechless for a week. After that, I could speak, but only with considerable difficulty and practically no volume. Even when my voice did return enough that I could speak at least above a whisper, it was scratchy and unpredictable. Singing was out of the question.

I love to sing and I especially love Christmas songs. Losing my voice at the Christmas season was a “double whammy.” But a strange thing happened during that season of quiet. Predictably, God took something bad and turned it into something good.

The special moment came during the third Sunday of Advent. The music is particularly special on that day. Strings and brass accentuate the music created by the already magnificent organ and choir. I was feeling quite sorry for myself, begrudging not being able to be a part of this beautiful offering to God. As I listened, however, to the swelling chords, I looked around the spectacular sanctuary. The light gleamed in through the many stained glass windows. It sent colorful beams upon the glowing faces of the people in the choir and the congregation who were joyously singing their praises to God. It was a more thrilling sensation that I ever had experienced while adding my own voice to the chorus. I could see and feel the joy and the spirit of Christmas in a way I never had before. I heard the voices of those singing around me. It made me feel a thankfulness for the voices of others that I had never experienced while being a part of the carol singing.

On that “silent night” when Jesus was born, those who witnessed his coming, spoke very little or not at all. They listened quietly to the sounds around them. They were without words to describe the event that forever changed the world that night. They simply watched in awe and wonder as God in human form came to be among them.

Next year, though I still love to sing, I will probably close my hymnbook and listen silently to at least one or two carols. I now know that there is a special sensation that can be experienced only by listening. I guess that’s what the Bible means when it says, “Be still and know that I am God.”

Prayer: Loving God, thank you for the gift of your son. As we offer you our praises, open our hearts and our ears that we may hear your voice in the voices of others. Amen.

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