

From the desk of Fr. Jim

Advent 4 – A Revolution in Bethlehem

There are a host of assumptions that we make about our world. The sun comes up in the East, water runs downhill. Some of the ways we look at the world may be less common, more personal. We might think, for example that today is going to be pretty much like yesterday and tomorrow, pretty much like today. As well, we may think that we will never get ahead financially because there is just too much month at the end of the money. The adages and maxims go on and on. No one questions them very much.

I went to a stodgy Anglican seminary that prided itself in an immovable tradition. We used to poke fun at this by singing a hymn that included this stanza:

*In heavenly love abiding, no change my heart shall fear.
And safe in such confiding, for nothing changes here.
The storm may roar without me, my heart may low be laid,
But God is round about me, and can I be dismayed?*

We would sing the end of the second line with greater volume: “for nothing changes here.” There is that assumption that the world is the way it is and it will always be that way. People are the way they are and they will not change.

What happened in Bethlehem might be once again enshrined in tradition only to occasionally break free, but treasured in the heart of those standing in the scene is the knowledge of something new. All the old assumptions are suddenly challenged. The angels sing of it and the shepherds stand in awe. Kings come from far away to adore it. God declares that the long gloomy days of waiting are over.

*“For when peaceful stillness compassed everything and the night in its swift course was half spent,
Your all-powerful word from heaven’s royal throne bounded.”*

(Wisdom 18:14-15)

God will rise, and then between Him and man, there will be peace.

Now, everything has changed!

May God grant our parish a blessed Christmas. And may each of you know of the love of the God who entered his creation, who became man in order to love us into a new life.

God bless you,

