



By Pat Haggerty

The Christmas season is officially over. After all the preparation and planning, we are moving forward in the liturgical year. Some churches are shedding their decorations, removing their Christmas trees and storing the manger for another year. As I look around my neighborhood, I see fewer lights and definitely a minimum of Christmas trees still standing. Ours is still up because we are having a delayed family celebration in a few days. I always call it "Petit Noel." I know it is after the Epiphany, but, I can still call it that---thus keeping the spirit going for a little longer!

I have been reflecting on Christmas and what it means to me. I would encourage you to do the same! What can we carry away from Christmas that will give us impetus for spiritual renewal? What symbol of the season can we hold onto that will provide us with some direction? I don't think that we are meant to experience Christ in the manger and then forget that anything happened. There are so many lessons to be learned from Mary's yes, Joseph's acceptance and Jesus' coming into our world.

We can ponder the poignant readings of the season. There is such richness there! Or, we can recall the lovely hymns that are so much a part of the holy time. What resonates for me is the gospel reading for the feast of the Epiphany and the recording of "The Little Drummer Boy" by Pentatonix. I see a beautiful correlation between the two. In the gospel, we hear that "They were overjoyed at seeing the star, and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh." (Matthew 2:10-11) These men followed their dream, were in awe of the Christ-Child and presented him with their special gifts.

Similarly, the little drummer boy wanted to give something to the Child. He says he “has no gift to bring” . . . but continues “shall I play for you on my drum?” We hear that Mary nodded at him and the Child smiled.

What can we do to make Jesus smile and Mary nod? What can we offer this year that will be our special gift to the Lord? Can we offer a long-term gift that will be indicative of us and unique to us alone? We each have gifts given to us by God. It is up to us to use those gifts for his greater glory. The enormity of the gift is of little consequence. There is a Maori proverb that touches upon that in a simple way: “Though my present be small, my love goes with it.”

Consider what your gift or talent is and combine it with love. Present it to the Lord.