

Advent Message from Fr. Laurence - Week 4



"From a divine son will rise a human race and a hero will dominate

the world and his fame will spread over the earth." These words from a 7th century Tibetan hymn suggest how deep and universal is the anticipation for one among us who will come and lead us beyond ourselves in order that we may at last find ourselves. This one we await will be both familiar and a stranger.

The run up to the Christmas celebrations are rituals, religious, cultural and domestic. Year by year we repeat them and their familiarity is of their essence. But they are a front for a deeper level of meaning in our relationship with the one who makes his appearance in a transhistorical 'today', every day, with every breath. This one is as strange as he is familiar. He is like a fully expressed, well-chosen statement or a thought that that is not spoken casually or unconsciously but is well-considered and articulate and accurate - a true and powerful word that comes from the real silence and brings the reality of that silence with it.

'Even when manifest he is still a stranger' (Maximus the Confessor) and 'in whatever way he is understood he remains mysterious' (Dionysius the Areopagite). His coming has been worth waiting for because it is not only a gift from outside. It also implodes the awakening of our own true nature, making us conscious of the gift of our own being. Its familiarity is that it entirely human. Its being ever strange is due to its elusive divinity. When it is recognised and when it fully opens the parcel of the soul, everything is changed because we see everything as it really is.

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