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“It may be hard for an egg to turn into a bird: it would be a jolly sight harder for it to learn to fly while remaining an egg. We are like eggs at present. And you cannot go on indefinitely being just an ordinary, decent egg. We must be hatched or go bad.”

Mere Christianity by C.S. Lewis

We must be hatched or go bad... that is putting it bluntly, don't you think? What is C.S. Lewis getting at and what does this have to do with Christmas? Everything, I think. God came to us in the person of Jesus Christ so that we might be hatched; so that we might come into the abundance of life. This is what John the Baptist kept preaching near the Jordan River. The coming of the Messiah was going to change everything. We better get ourselves ready for that change.

Jesus' "hatching" brought about definitive change in the whole universe. He had a mission to carry out that God had entrusted him with. What if he just stayed in heaven? What if he remained in the womb of Mary? Unthinkable. Joseph and Mary were made privy to the plan of God to bring his Son into the world. God, as we hear over and over again in the Bible, chooses to involve humanity in his plan of salvation. With every invitation that God extends to us to be involved in – both our salvation and the salvation of the world – he waits for our response. He waits for us to freely choose. But, we have to choose. Not to choose is a choice itself. We must be hatched or go bad. Our choice either leads us toward Jesus or away from him.

Sometimes the choice to be made is very big but most often the choices we make are small and happen in the ordinary rhythm of our lives. Mary's invitation to become the mother of God, of Jesus, and Joseph to be his father, was unique to them. They also faced many other decision points that followed their initial yes. At Christmas we pick up the story where Joseph and Mary decide to journey to Bethlehem even though she's very pregnant. Despite the uncertainties they face, their fears, the lack of hospitality at Bethlehem, Jesus is born. God becomes present to them as baby Jesus in the manger.

The shepherds too. They were faced with a decision. Do they disregard the greeting and the summons made by the angels and remain in the fields with their sheep or do they set off in search of the child Jesus? Do they remain indifferent or do they become witnesses of God's glory manifest in a newborn baby? And the magi, do they stay in the safety of their homes or do they set off on a journey with only a star to follow? Do they remain stuck in their books or do they announce to the nations that they have met Jesus, the Messiah? Now Herod, he grew frightened at the news of Jesus and remained in his palace...

As we enter into the mystery of Christmas is the Lord inviting us to consider a decision that will draw us out of ourselves and closer to him? Does something need to be hatched or run the risk of going bad? Perhaps the invitation Jesus extends from the manger is to simply allow ourselves to be loved by him, to love him and witness to the relationship as it unfolds. Do I remain where I am and allow uncertainties or inertia to get the better of me, or do I have the faith to set off and pursue this relationship? We will not have far to go because God is already pursuing us.



On behalf of St. Patrick's Clergy and Pastoral team, I would like to wish everyone  
a Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Fr. Dominic

