

The Fish Net

Christmas 2014

Dear Friends,

While walking our dog through our neighbourhood in the weeks leading up to Halloween I couldn't help but notice how many houses were decorated with jack-o-lanterns, fake tombstones and even skeletons that appeared to be rising out of the ground. In the days after Halloween these decorations quickly disappeared and the Christmas ones started to take their place. There is nothing unusual in that but when walking by one house I noticed something rather odd; namely that the Halloween and the Christmas decorations were both up at the same time. It was an odd sight and in fact it was even a little bit bizarre but then again perhaps, the homeowners made a statement without ever realizing it.

The great theme of Halloween of course is fear and as a person once said, we mock and poke fun at the things we fear the most. This is certainly reflected in many of the Halloween decorations with their allusions to monsters, things that go bump in the night and even death itself. The great promise of Christmas however, is that we need not fear. This is why Jesus was born; this is why the Word became Flesh. In Jesus, God became one of us to experience life as we do; both the good and the bad. To put it simply the great promise of Christmas is that God loves us and is with us; He was with us in the person of Jesus 2000 years ago and He is still with us today in the person of the Spirit. With God beside us we need not be overwhelmed or paralyzed by the things that go bump in the night. This in fact is one of the reasons why we decorate our homes at Christmas. The bright Christmas lights shining in the darkness remind us of Jesus, the Light of the world. As St. John said at the beginning of his gospel which is the traditional gospel reading on Christmas Eve: "The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world" and "The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it."

To return back to the homeowners who had both their Halloween and Christmas decorations up at the same time, I really don't think that they were trying to make a statement and yet they did. Yes, fear is an unavoidable part of life but we need not let it overwhelm us. God loves, God redeems, God restores, God is with us; that is the promise of Christmas and that is why we celebrate.

Wishing you and yours a most blessed Christmas! Shawn