

SPIRITUAL LIFE COMMITTEE  
Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity  
Monthly Reflection for December 2006

**The Grace of Letting-go and Letting-in: An Advent-Christmas Reflection**  
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Advent-Christmas, as we have come to know and experience it, is a tapestry woven of many threads – longing, redemption, hope and grace-filled waiting and arriving... It is a time that invites us to look back and acknowledge the graces of the past year as well as to look ahead to the future, the New Year, for graces yet to unfold. It is a graced season challenging us to 'let go' so that we may 'let in' the God who emptied himself to live among us. It is another opportunity for us to let God be God and surprise us once again by his redemptive love.

One of the older images or threads of Advent is that of the 'wise old owl.' It is the symbol of 'Lady Wisdom' whom we find in the Book of Proverbs and Wisdom: "Oh Wisdom....come to teach us the ways of your truth." It is also the image of the 'wise elder' – those seasoned and grace-filled persons, so much in touch with the grace and presence of God that they can make us feel it when we are with them. We all have met such persons – they are a blessing.

We all need this 'wisdom' to show us the true way and to help us discern what to 'let go' so that we can "let in", the grace of God anew and with power this season.

Isaiah reminds us in 43:15-21, "Remember not the former things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?" Over and over the prophet encouraged the people, "See what God has done. You have not been deserted. You have been saved. You did not die; you were delivered!" Isaiah was not dismissing the past itself– there is much about the past that is worthy of preserving. Rather he was challenging their tendency to cling to the past, to their slavery, when no clear vision of the future was evident, to lose hope and become blinded. Like our ancestors we too often are not able to see this 'new thing' God is trying to do in us. Like them we tend more to look behind than look ahead because the vision seems vague. We get stuck in our own personal struggles, the transitions in our life or in the congregation, the loss of confreres, the many drifts in our church. It's tough to throw our old baggage overboard even when it's useless!

December is a time to contemplate and pray for this 'wisdom' more than ever. We need this 'wisdom' to guide us each through a new 'year of grace' as we celebrate the liturgical seasons with the Holy Scriptures and the movements of God in our life. We need this 'wisdom' of the Spirit to guide us as we gather in assembly and choose our new leadership and prayerfully lay out the directions for our Congregation. We need this grace to be 'wise ole owls' - to learn from our past and to live in the present as we walk forward into our future.

The scriptures and the season promise that as we begin to 'let go', God will bring forth in our

midst a new thing; and it will even be better than before.

I often try to imagine what new things God could do in me or in us as a community. should we give wing to old business, forgive all those IOU's, hurts, injustices and past rejections, bless them all with our notion of what the future should be and release all that to God? I believe that God could use us to do even more marvelous things!

A while back a friend gave me a book, Aquarian Conspiracy by Marilyn Ferguson, that seems to illustrate how the newness of things can lift us to heights! In the book a 12-year old girl says that, " Flying would have been fun if only everyone did it; as it is, however, flying is still too conspicuous and flashy." She's right! Flying is flashy and conspicuous. Fly, and instantly you get all the attention of the world. People will want to know where you got your wings, what your source of strength is, and how you vanquished your fears. Flying, then, becomes a moment for witnessing to the power in 'letting go', trusting and surrendering to God, and letting God bring forth something new. We too trust that God will supply us with journey-mates to fly with us so that we would not be so flashy or conspicuous! So, fly away!!!

"O Wisdom.....come to teach us the ways of your truth."

Reflection Questions:

1. What 'wisdom' have I gained in this past year of grace and from whom? Name the graces and the people.
2. What has God invited me this past year to 'let go' of? Have I resisted and why?
3. What do I need to 'let go' of so that I can 'let in' the newness of God's life and fly?
4. For what do I seek God's 'wisdom' in the year ahead? For myself and our Congregation?