

## CHRISTMAS EVE MESSAGE

December 24, 2023

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I was excited when we chose **Radiance** as our theme this year for our Fall/Winter Benet Hill Review publication, and our Christmas ornament and card. It aligned with the message I heard from one of our speakers at our leadership meeting. The New Cosmology can provide an opportunity for deeper theological conversation since it reflects an attempt to update our theology to respond to today's world. It provides an opportunity to reconsider how we understand and relate to our faith, church doctrines and tradition. I believe we can hold this tension with this new theological perspective without diminishing the holy mystery of the incarnation.

I am not an astrophysicist, physical cosmetologist nor a mathematician. I do not pretend to understand much of it, let alone speak to it. However, the message I do trust is from people like Teilhard de Chardin and Briane Swimme, people who connect science with spirituality and have a deep faith in the highest power of all, our God.

Brian Swimme writes, "All things of the universe are radiating light. Radiance is the primary way the universe communicates with itself, it is primal, beyond us. Every being contains this 14 billion years of radiance compressed into each one of us; **to interact, to resonate and to reverberate out.**" Amazing! We are designed for radiance, always becoming radiant in the form of conscious-self-awareness.

The power of radiance requires contemplation. It requires resonance, a primary form of prayer of oneness within the universe. It reverberates outward as a sacrament of grace and blessing, realizing everything and everyone is to be admired. All share in divine essence.

As we celebrate the Christ of Christmas 2000 years ago, I pray that we can unlearn the “isms” (e.g. racism, tribalism) that we have acquired from dualistic thinking, actions, and choices. I pray that we replace this dualism with harmony, reverence, and deep listening. I pray that we put down our external and internal weapons of destruction and join hearts and hands in civil discourse. I pray that we engage in dialogic openness that means I am willing to ask “would you tell me more?” when we disagree so that we may focus on common ground rather than differences.

The picture behind our nativity scene that we featured on the Review cover, ornament and Christmas card says it all for me: one star among zillions of stars, together radiating light.

Can we dare to **Radiate** because you and I trust in the promise of being forever one with the Christ?

Can we dare to **Radiate** with **UNEXTINGUISHABLE HOPE** in the love of God, neighbor, self and enemy that can ultimately prevail over the darkness of hate?

Can we dare to **Radiate UNEXTINGUISHABLE LOVE** that will ultimately permeate all the violence and multiple divisive “isms?”

I consider this to be my call and perhaps our call this Christmas and New Year.

Let us touch that creative energy of love that is our indwelling God.