

Sunday, December 14, 2014

3RD SUNDAY OF *Advent*

The third candle lit in the Advent Wreath represents the joy that we have in the birth of Jesus.

*When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another, "Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us." So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger. **Luke 2:15-16***

One of the ways that we often "experience" God, or see God, is through other people. It might be a time when we run into someone we haven't seen in a long time. Or it might be a word of thanks or affirmation that someone says to us. It might even be in watching someone whom we love or respect show us what God is like by how they live their lives. Take a moment and reflect on some of the people in your life who have been used by God to deliver His Word or express His love.

In the Christmas story, we hear about how the shepherds visited Mary, Joseph and Jesus. The angels came to the shepherds while they were in the fields going about their jobs. When the angels told them about the birth of Jesus, they went and found Him. Then they spread the news about what they had been told. My guess is that Mary and Joseph were amazed at what the shepherds had to say. In fact, Mary "pondered all these things in her heart." (Luke 2:19) The shepherds were used by God to confirm that God was at work in Mary's life.

During this season of Advent, be on the lookout for the people God sends your way. It might be in one of the Christmas cards you receive, or in running into someone you haven't seen in a long time, or even in the words of a stranger. Watch for how God comes to you in other people and then, like Mary, ponder in your heart what God is doing. God is always holding us in His hand, caring for us and working in our lives. Be on the lookout for the ways God holds you.

Dear God, thank You for coming to me through other people. Help me to recognize You in others. Amen.

Rev. Dr. Ron Hilliard