

“Mothers of God”

When I was a child Christmas Eve was very boring. There was absolutely nothing to do. We had only five channels on the TV and there was nothing on but reruns. There were no Christmas specials, or “It’s a Wonderful Life,” “White Christmas,” or the like. The Baptist church we attended did not have services on Christmas Eve. We did not have a special meal and we did not open presents. Once in a while a family friend would come by and we might get to open the small present they brought us—a pair of socks, a small book or some such.

Really all we children had to do was wait around until it was time to go to bed. Then lie restlessly waiting to hear the reindeer on the roof, or more likely my Dad bringing in a gift from his car or the garage where it had been hidden. Christmas Eve was dreadful and absolutely no fun at all.

As a young adult I worked in retail for many years. In retail Christmas Eve was exhausting. We were worn out from working long days over the previous weeks. Now we had to deal with lots of last-minute shoppers many of whom were testy. Once the shop was closed then it was time to do **my** last-minute shopping, purchasing the leftovers of the season. It could be fun, but I almost always spent too much.

Since finding the Episcopal Church my Christmas Eves have been much different. Instead of boredom I am looking forward to services. Often I am preparing for them. Instead of exhaustion, I am excited for the carols, the greenery, the candlelight, the anthems, the wonder and pageantry of Christmas liturgy. I look forward to Christmas with eager anticipation. I am not anticipating Santa Claus; I am anticipating the Christ child.

Each year I am anticipating a birth and a rebirth. I know that Jesus was born more than two thousand years ago, but Jesus can get reborn in by heart every year. That new birth of Jesus opens up new possibilities for me. His birth in my heart, like the birth of a baby, comes with possibilities, hopes, new horizons, love. I feel in my heart a fire kindled and new light in the darkness. I am reborn as surely as the Christ child is reborn.

Mystical poet Angelus Silesius wrote in the seventeenth century the following lines. “Christ could be born a thousand times in Bethlehem – but it is all in vain until He is born in me.” Meister Eckhart, another mystic but from the thirteenth century wrote, “We are all meant to be mothers of God, for God is always needing to be born.” It is as these two mystics wrote I need God to be born and reborn in me each Christmas.

For me Christmas Eve is no longer boring or exhausting. Christmas Eve is a time of waiting for the new birth that comes to me each year. God is coming. Jesus is coming. My heart is filled. I am at peace.