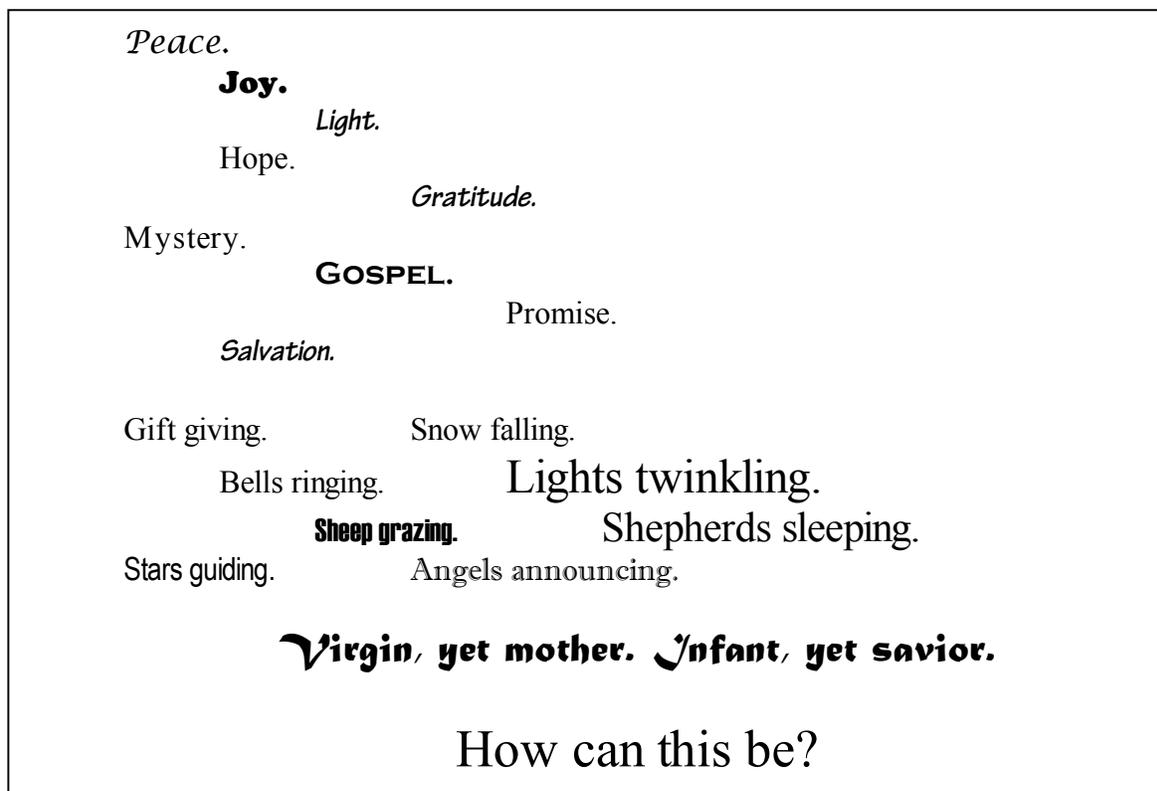


December 14, 2006

Our grasp of the message of Christmas is informed by words and images. Words, because the message is spoken to us in holy scripture. Images, because the words tell a story. As story, the message involves people and places, time and travel, miracles and smells.

In my own reflections on the message of Christmas, these are the words and images which come to mind most quickly.



This is the wonder of Christmas in Chicago, and around the whole world.

CELEBRATION, REST, TRAVEL – Each of us, along with our families, will be involved in these three activities over the days ahead. The end of the semester makes for much work in our community with exams being written, grades posted, new students to enroll, food to prepare for campus events, students to counsel, maintenance projects to complete, etc. The list seems endless. In this environment, it is sometimes hard to embrace the season of Advent, and to anticipate the celebration of Christmas.

Yet, the semester break will soon be here. And during these days we can take advantage of one of the blessings of working in an academic setting. During the Christmas and New Year's break we have occasion to celebrate, time to rest, and opportunities to travel.

May we celebrate with joy, rest in peace, and travel in safety.

SERVICE ANNIVERSARY – Earlier this week we gathered in Hamming Hall with our colleagues to celebrate the Christmas season. And on that occasion, we also celebrated the work-anniversaries of those who have worked here for five, ten, and up to forty consecutive years.

North Park University is, first and foremost, a place of people. So we honor those who have committed a portion of their life to shaping student lives (toward significance and service!) on our campus.

Congratulations to each of you who have achieved this milestone of service at North Park, and many, many thanks as well!

Five Years of Service

- Denise Almaahdi-Jeigula
- Hannah Barbosa
- Rob Berki
- Allyson Dickie
- Gordana Erzic
- Jennifer Henrikson
- Paula Hensel
- Helen Hudgens

- Margo Jarosz
- Brent Laytham
- Jin (Jean) Lee
- Catherine Marsh
- Annette Miley
- Lindsay Mitchell
- Ginny Olson
- Kurt Peterson
- Jennifer Pope
- Aaron Schoof
- Kelly Vanderbrug
- Julie Westerman

Ten Years of Service

- Joe Alulis
- Theodora Ayot
- Mike Lewkowich
- Andrew Lundgren
- Ron Matthews
- Jack Surridge
- Dayle Zelenka

Fifteen Years of Service

- Sally Anderson
- Ann-Helen Anderson
- Jeanine Brown
- Rich Eckman
- Ho-Youn Kwon
- Victoria Nelson
- Jay Phelan

Twenty Years of Service

- Nancy Arnesen
- Michael Tennehill

Twenty-five Years of Service

- Virginia Schelbert
- Carl Wistrom

Thirty Years of Service

- Peter Pearson
- Linda Vick

Forty Years of Service

- Frank DeBoer

OPEN OFFICE DAYS – As has been our tradition this semester, I will continue during the spring semester to include “Open Office Days” on my calendar. These days, scheduled once each month for employees and students, offer an opportunity for members of the campus community to visit with me at their leisure.

During the fall semester many of you have taken advantage of these days to introduce yourself to me, to tell me of a moment of celebration and cheer in your life, to discuss with me a concern you have for a student or another aspect of our life together, or to comment on what goes particularly well and what might be improved on campus. These visits have been an important part of my introduction to the University; I anticipate that will continue in the semester ahead.

Days for the spring semester are as follows:

- For Employees
 - Thursday, January 25
 - Thursday, February 15
 - Thursday, March 22
 - Friday, April 13

- For Students
 - Monday, January 22
 - Monday, February 12
 - Thursday, March 8
 - Tuesday, April 10

We'll send an email reminder one or two days in advance of each date.

A Prayer for after Christmas

Almighty God, you have poured upon us the new light of your incarnate Word: Grant that this light, enkindled in our hearts, may shine forth in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.