	White Robed Monks of St. Benedict	<i>Volume 24 Issue 1</i>
	<h1>Network News</h1>	<i>December 25, 2020</i>
<i>Ausculta</i>		<i>Nondual: things remain distinct while not being separate.</i>
Abbot's Notes		Merry Christmas—2020

Peace be with you.

White Robed Monks of St. Benedict
Homily delivered at 2020 Christmas Eve
Zoom Mass

Rejoice and Be Glad!

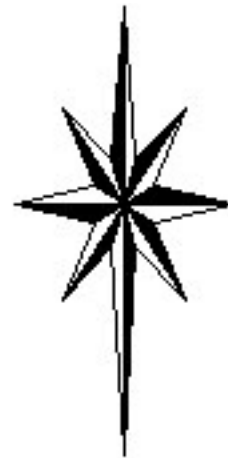
Merry Christmas - what feeling does this phrase bring to our hearts? *Rejoice and be Glad!* In our Old Testament Reading, we heard that *there is a time for everything and a season for every activity under the heavens.*

Merry Christmas mentions a specific season - the beginning of winter in the northern hemisphere and the beginning of summer in the southern. *Merry Christmas* is not attached to winter or summer, or even fall or spring for that matter. *Merry Christmas – Rejoice and Be Glad!*

Right now, here, today is today, in another part of the world our today is tomorrow and in another, yesterday. *Merry Christmas - Rejoice and Be Glad!*

A circumstance is any activity under the sun. A circumstance is just what is happening. How we perceive that circumstance makes it a situation, an illusion. If we take the circumstance personally, we create our own drama. If we intend to perceive, the best we can, what is happening just as it is happening, regardless, we can *Rejoice and Be Glad!*

Jesus of Nazareth, apparent son of Mary and Joseph in one sense was Son of God and Son of Man in another - much like ourselves. How so? When Jesus referenced Himself as "Son



Peace I leave with you;
 my peace I give you.
 (John 14:27)

May the Peace
 of the Christmas Season
 be with you and yours.

of God" he was referencing Himself as a Child of the Father. When he referenced Himself as a Son of Man, He was recalling Daniel's allusion (Dan 7:13) of the son of man who is a heavenly person coming to Earth and returning to God. Jesus was referencing his own divinity by saying: *Only God has the authority to forgive sins, I did this that you might know that the Son of Man has the authority on earth to forgive sins.* (Matt 9:6)

We, too, are children of God. The metaphor follows that we are, come from and are born of The Father through our parents and to Whom we shall return: We too are Sons and Daughters of God and Man. In our first reading, we recognize

Abbot's Notes

the human condition: a time for this and a time for that, a time of duality.

Wishing *Merry Christmas* transcends that duality as we wish Peace and Joy! to all whom we meet. They – as we each - have an option to *Rejoice and Be Glad!*

Words, though, need action to give them actual meaning. *Merry Christmas* is the expression of the Christmas Spirit, metaphorically present under so many guises. The joyful lights of the tree, the glee of opening gifts, the echo of the carols, all reminding us of glad tidings: *Rejoice and Be Glad!*

Merry Christmas resounds with *Rejoice and Be Glad!*. We can bring such rejoicing and glad tidings in to our lives the whole year round. How?

What to do? We can focus our attention on what we have to be thankful for, beginning with our Life. We can appreciate what we have, including our sorrows and joys. We are yet able to enjoy the opportunity to experience human life. Just be thankful. *Merry Christmas* – Thankful gratitude. *Rejoice and Be Glad!* - it's but a choice.

Merry Christmas: What really matters when we replace human drama with appreciation for the gift of Life and just smile at our

own and other's human foibles? We all have our blind spots, don't we? We really don't know the whole picture or what this dance of human life is really all about. Do we just recognize ourselves in others and let go of our self-centered ways? Do we recognize that each of us are on same path to our death? Do we take whatever happens to us personally? Do we not each have a touch of Mr. or Mrs. Scrooge? *Merry Christmas* with a smile and a simple *Hello* often suffice and brakes the ice. *Rejoice and Be Glad!*

Some of us are poor in spirit. We each have mourned. Others of us are meek. Some of us hunger and thirst for righteousness. Others of us are merciful. And some of us are pure in heart. No matter. We each can opt for Christmas and *Rejoice and Be Glad!*

We can maintain the Christmas Spirit with a general practice. We can be mindful of what we say and how we say it. We can act in accord with what we know – not think – but know to be true. We can engage in a career or work that brings joy to ourselves and others.

In other words, we can *Rejoice and Be Glad!* that we appreciate how we can serve in small ways, being mindful that whatever we do or do not do im-

pacts the people present or not. *Rejoice and Be Glad!*

We can focus our attention to our breathing when we find we are out of sorts. We can realize that the impact of how we act does not end with our death. What we do or not impacts the whole one way or the other long after our deaths. *Rejoice and Be Glad!*

So, our basic intention: to bring the Christmas Spirit alive all year round *by rejoicing and being glad* in thought, word, and deed. *Merry Christmas!*

Again, *Merry Christmas / Rejoice and Be Glad!*- just with a smile says and does it all!. Let us bring the Christmas Spirit to all whom we meet all year round.

Thank you. Peace and Joy!! *Merry Christmas!!* and may many blessings be to you and yours. Happy New Year!!

+Robert O.S.B. along with the Monks and affiliated Clerics.

**Listen and attend
with
the ear of your heart
-St. Benedict**

Note: A PDF of the above article and of previous Newsletters may be found at:
www.wrmosb.org/archive

Book Reviews

Book reviews can themselves be awakening masterpieces of insight if we let them be so. *Rejoice and Be Glad!* are just words. They can have many meanings behind them as any reader may decide. Given the bias of *The Monks*, the meaning behind *Rejoice and Be Glad!* invites an insight into one's own self.

From *The Mastery of Self: A Toltec Guide to Personal Freedom* by don Miguel Ruiz Jr.

"The ancient Toltecs believed that life as we perceive it is a dream. (ed: as a "Dream Like product of Illusion"*)

We each live in our own personal dream, and all of our dreams come together to make the Dream of the Planet. Problems arise when we forget that the dream is just a dream and fall victim to believing that we have no control over it.

The Mastery of Self takes the Toltec philosophy of the Dream of the Planet and the personal dream and explains how a person can:

- 1) Wake up.
- 2) Liberate themselves from illusory beliefs and stories.
- 3) Live with authenticity.

Once released, we can live as our true, authentic, loving self, not only in solitude and meditation, but in any place--at the grocery store, stuck in traffic, etc.--

and in any situation or scenario that confronts us." (Review)

"Remember that when you perceive someone trying to trigger you by insulting you...

-its your perception that they are trying to trigger you even if they say they are trying to trigger you;

-its your choice to believe that; -its your choice to believe you have an ego;

-its your choice to believe you are easily offended;

-its your choice to believe you are easily manipulated.

The boundaries between what is and what is not your choice are yours to discover." (Rioz)

From "Compassion-based Spiritual Direction: Internal Family Systems as a Resource for Spiritual Companions" by Frank Rogers in *Presence: An International Journal of Spiritual Direction*, Vol 26, No 4, December, 2020, p. 66.

"To be present is to experience the full range of our humanity and in all arenas. Richard Rohr reminds us that being fully present means:

- 1) to have our hearts open and soft,
- 2) our minds receptive without division or resistance, and
- 3) our bodies aware of where we are and our deepest level of feeling (Rohr).

Presence is when all three centers are awake at the same time, giving us a capacity to fully focus our attention, thoughts, and feelings to the task at hand. When we are speaking with somebody, our attention and energy are focused on him and what he is saying. The opposite of being fully present is being 'to in our head' and only thinking about it."

Rohr, Richard. "Living in the Now: Pure Presence. Center for Action and Contemplation, November 23, 2017, <https://cac.org/pure-presence-2017-11-23>.

* www.integralscience.org/sacredscience/SS_quantum.html

The primary purpose of this essay is to explain how quantum mechanics shows that the materialistic common sense notion of reality is an illusion, *i.e.*, **that the objective existence of the world is an illusion**

Psalm 90(89):14

Imple nos matutina misericordia tua et laudabimus et laetabimur in cunctis diebus nostris.

O satisfy us in the morning with Your lovingkindness,
That we may rejoice and be glad all our days.

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(New e-mail address, too.)**




Peace and Joy!

How to Detach from a Belief—Why?

How to detach from a belief and experience freedom and peace of mind? Use a centering meditation taught by Tarthang Tulku in his *Hidden Mind of Freedom*:

"Working with thoughts (beliefs) by opening them as they arise can bring many pleasant feelings, which—without attachment—also become our meditation. We can even go into the thoughts that judge other thoughts, and, embracing this judging mind, become united with it."

"By relying on the light of awareness you can see that the difficulties you face are manifestations of your own concepts. Going deeply into your thoughts, you will see how you create your experience, how you alone are the judge who determines heaven and hell, good and bad. "

"Whatever experience arises, stay with it, expand it, and heat it up. If you remain within the intense

core of the experience, the meditator unites with thoughts and emotions, and everything dissolves. Then awareness grows powerful and one-pointed. As thoughts and emotions are increasingly included within this field of awareness, they become more useful. Instead of being a cause of frustration or confusion, they become agents of well-being. . . "

And why?

A Native American grandfather was talking to his grandson about how he felt. He said, "I feel as if I have two wolves fighting in my heart. One wolf is the vengeful, angry, violent one. The other wolf is the loving, compassionate one." The grandson asked him, "Which wolf will win the fight in your heart?" The grandfather answered, "The one I feed. (Thank you Michael Butler)

May all beings be happy.
Amen.

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And thank you. May many blessings be to you and yours now and forevermore. Peace and joy!

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