

CHRISTMAS 2016

Dear parishioners and visitors to Holy Redeemer Church,

R.S.Thomas is a famous poet of recent times. He lived from 1913 till 2000 and lived all his life in the country villages of Wales. What is interesting about him is that he was also an Anglican priest, and many of his poems deal with the question of finding God and the Holy in the midst of ordinary human life. One of my favourite poems of his is entitled "**Nativity**", and I would like to share it with you as a reflection on the great feast of the birth of Christ.

Nativity

**The moon is born
and a child is born,
lying among white clothes
as the moon among clouds.
They both shine, but
the light from the one
is abroad in the universe
as among broken glass.**

The poem speaks to us of our need of the light in our hearts and in our world. At night time we take comfort in the light of the moon which guides us on our way through our daily lives. It provides us with a rhythm to measure the days and the weeks and the months of each year. But at Christmas time we are invited to reflect on a far greater light, the Light of Christ born into our human world and transforming our lives and indeed the history of the world.

Once again this year, in our personal and family lives, in the life of our country, and in the world, we have known many moments of struggle, of pain and loss; and we are easily tempted to lose hope, as violence and injustice continue to manifest themselves in so many parts of the world. At times, we are tempted to ask ourselves where is God to be found in the midst of so much anguish and pain, most often inflicted on the innocent.

It is here that I find comfort and hope and joy in this beautiful little Christmas poem of R. S. Thomas. He is asking us to maintain our faith that, in all the brokenness of our world, the light of the Infant Jesus brings an eternal innocence to the world. His Light

shines among all the broken glass around us: our own personal weakness and failures, our struggles within married and family life, and the horrors of violence and the tragedy of refugees and the inhumanity of man to man.

Yes, at times the light of the world seems very dim indeed. But in our broken and fractured world, we can still rejoice to celebrate the truth that Jesus came to share in our human condition in all its weakness and brokenness, and through His redeeming love, all that brokenness will ultimately be transformed into the pure light of Love. This is why Christmas is such a gift to all of us: that in the light of the baby Jesus we encounter a Light that can never be extinguished.

Let me take this opportunity, on behalf of the Redemptorist Community that serves you here at Holy Redeemer parish, to wish you joy, hope and love, this Christmas and in the year that lies before us.

Fr. Gerard, CSsR

