

Homily for the Fourth Sunday in Advent.
Dec. 19-20, 2009. "C"

We live in an age which more than any other has seen the education and intellectual development of its people. It is an age of intelligence and reason. This has affected our way of believing and the values we hold. What we believe in must be reasonable.

Many of us struggle with our religious beliefs, because sometimes they seem unreasonable.

I believe that is why the euthanasia bill passed in Washington State this past year. Despite what religious beliefs assert, euthanasia sounded reasonable. I think that is also why the teaching on birth control is rejected by so many, it does not sound reasonable. And perhaps that is why so many otherwise compassionate people can accept abortion, it sounds like a reasonable solution. Though they sound reasonable, they do not take into account the reason of true love, and so these seemingly reasonable positions, are corrosive to human well being.

And we struggle with other beliefs of our faith as well. Is it reasonable for us to believe that the God of all creation became a man and walked the dusty roads of human cities? Is it reasonable to believe that God was born of a virgin who had nothing else to distinguish her as notable?

Is it reasonable to believe that God can heal the broken heart or mend a life ripped to pieces and tattered by sin?

The scripture reminds us that "The heart has reason where of reason has no knowledge."

This is what Jesus words refer to in the second reading from Paul's letter to the Hebrews, "I have come to do your will, Oh Lord."

In this phrase, we begin to find the meaning behind the seeming unreasonable actions of God. This opens our eyes to the meaning of God's choosing the insignificant, the weak and the down trodden to bring his plans into active power.

Bethlehem, a no account city in a no account nation was to be the site of God's enfleshment in the world. Elizabeth, a dried up old woman is suddenly pregnant with the greatest Prophet of all time.

John himself, a transient and a wild man was chosen to herald the new age. Mary and Joseph, humble and poor, were to be the parents and care givers of the power of the universe.

"The heart has reason where of reason has no knowledge." This is a truth that this age, with all its reason and intelligence, has failed to take into account. Christ chose to meet us and redeem us in our most weak and vulnerable selves. He did this to proclaim a powerful insight to those who need to find hope in a confusing and unfair world. He proclaims undying hope when things seem hopeless.

Jesus chose to accept the will of God. And even when it led to his suffering and death on the cross, he trusted the wisdom of his Father. Jesus' death seemed a failure of all that he did in life, it was a shameful way to die, but through it, God opened for all people a path to heaven.

Mary seemed to be accepting scandal and shame, but she trusted in God's wisdom, and rebuilt the fallen and shameful reputation of Eve.

The Church continues to teach values and morality which the world laughs at and thinks are foolish, yet, trusting in God's wisdom, it stands alone as the most powerful voice and most effective agent for protecting and defending the dignity of human life today.

Jesus embraced the will of God because he first loved God. Elizabeth, after struggling with her limited reason, embraced the will of God because she first loved God. John, and Mary accepted the will of God in their lives, against what seemed reasonable objections, because they first loved God.

Can we do any less than to accept God's will for us? We do not need to be theologians, all we must do is first love God. We do not have to set aside reason, we only have to embrace, as well, the reason of the heart.

It is only when we first choose to love God that we begin to see with the eyes of faith, and then the marvelous wisdom of his plans becomes clear to us. It is love of God which reveals to us the reason of the heart, which the world has such difficulty understanding.