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Called to Gift

A reflection from Still Speaking Writers' Group

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Christmas gift giving should be a simple matter, but often isn't. What gift to give? What gift will bring the person joy? How much should I spend?

Then there are a whole series of social pitfalls. What if I give a gift to someone and she doesn't give one to me? What if she gives one to me, and I don't give one to her? What if we give each other gifts, but she spends more than I do? What if she doesn't like the gift I give her?

There are other social pressures around gift giving. I recall my parents giving me a pep talk before the relatives showed up: "Make sure you say thank you and be grateful for whatever gift you are given." I may have overdone it to the point of transparent hypocrisy, especially if the gift was socks.

But the meaning of Christmas is not wrapped up in our gifts, neither the ones we give nor the ones we receive. The meaning of Christmas is about a gift God gives us, the gift of God's own Self and God's love in the child born in Bethlehem.

This gift is not one we expected or wanted, but it is the one gift we need. We can't buy it. We don't deserve it. We can't return an equal gift. This gift comes with no strings attached!

This gift changes things wherever it is received: changes people, communities, even changes the world. Christmas celebrates not merely a gift, but THE gift, the wondrous gift by which all other gifts are measured and found wanting.

Prayer

Holy God, we thank you for the wondrous gift you have given us in Jesus Christ, our Savior.