

Pastor's Message

November & December 2007

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Peace

Few things are more difficult to manage in the world today than peace. I do not mean global peace but spiritual peace, emotional peace, personal peace.

One would have thought that peace was a given in the modern age. A few centuries ago, ordinary citizens had neither leisure nor vacations. They did not have private space in their own homes or the possibility of a planned retirement or opportunities for education or travel. They had neither safety in the work place nor health care. They had a poor diet and a short life expectancy. Plagues and famines were frequent. People had neither rights nor a voice in sacred or secular enterprises.

Today none of these benefits is unexpected or unusual. The modern age protects us from so much of the turmoil of the past. And yet we remain agitated, anxious, fearful and unquiet.

Part of the problem is the taking of so much for granted. We have come to expect perfection and even demand it. We seek control over more aspects of our lives and relationships, than people in the past ever sought. It is more difficult for us to surrender to the inescapability of nature and time, to the inevitabilities of age and boundaries, to the limitations that are essential for a creature, even one as richly endowed as humans are.

Some of the need to expect perfection and seek control is healthy. It is no virtue to be passive when action is required. The problem of the present is not passivity but hyper activism. Silence and contemplation are seldom chosen as desirable options. We barter our tranquility for the turbulence of the superficial.

Thanksgiving in November and Christmas in December are a summons to peace. In gratitude and awe we possess ourselves and find our humanity.

Anthony