

Rx for Scroogitis (a very short homily following Cantata) **Luke 1:26-38**
St Marks UMC, Charleston, WV 4th Sunday of Advent (December 21,) 2014

Luke 1:26-38

²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, "Hail, O favored one, the Lord is with you!"²⁹ But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.

³² He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David,

³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end."

³⁴ And Mary said to the angel, "How shall this be, since I have no husband?" ³⁵ And the angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born³⁶ will be called holy, the Son of God.

³⁶ And behold, your kinswoman Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. ³⁷ For with God nothing will be impossible." ³⁸ And Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

The children's sermon should be summarized here: I told (and showed) them a package I received that said: *"The Classic Snowman Kit ... with EVERYthing you need to build your own snowman."* It contained "2 eyes, 1 carrot nose, 5 mouth pieces, 1 pipe, and 3 buttons" [all of plastic.] The ONE thing that it did not contain was what? Yes! Snow! It's like Christmas without Jesus. "You don't leave out the very essentials," I told them.

We have been focusing on the character of Ebenezer Scrooge in our Advent sermons, and using the acrostic method for unpacking the Gifts of Advent: Hope, Peace, Joy & Love.

We are on the last Sunday of our Advent preparation. The time of Preparation is almost over. Recently I had one of our members tell me (in the company of others) that he did what I suggested in the sermon the first Sunday of Advent. He said, "I know you told us to take time to do it every day, but I only got around to doing it once. I spent 15 minutes of quiet looking into the lit Christmas tree, as my EBENEZER, and let it connect me from earth to heaven. I admit that it was quite good. I wish I had done it more than the one time."

We are on the last Sunday of Advent preparation. The time of preparation is almost over.

There is precious little time left (in Advent and in time for a homily) so I will compress the acrostic for L.O.V.E. into just one sentence: LEAVE OUT THE VERY ESSENTIALS – DON'T! **Don't Leave Out the Very Essentials.**

The most essential is LOVE. The least essential, and not even “essential” -- I would argue -- is GUILT. Guilt is a very good early warning sign, but a very, very bad traveling companion on the journey.

You have done what you have done. Don't waste precious time squandering your energy lamenting what you did not get done.

Scrooge always thought he was “*taking care of business*” – doing what expectations told him was necessary. The Ghost of Jacob Marley told him “*Mankind is our business!*” But it took Scrooge three more ghost visitations before that message got from his head to his heart – the longest 14 inches in the world.

LOVE – that is your one essential. **Know that Christmas is all about GOD loves you – just as you are AND for the potential you can become.**

God became human at Christmas so that humans can become divine – as we were created to be.

Don't Leave Out the Very Essentials Accept that you have done what you can do for this year. And NOW, in the little time you have left – ACCEPT the LOVE God gave, gives, and promises you. And share it. Quietly, calmly. Let go of yours and others' expectations. Just love. **Don't Leave Out the Very Essentials**

ALLOW it to come and to flow through. Don't push. Don't pull. It's the only way that this Gift can flow. Let God provide the essentials.

Behold the servant of the Lord, let it be done unto me, according to your Word ... in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.