

A Family Christmas Prayer

Richard A. Rhem

Christmas, 2013

O God,
Mystery beyond us,
Mystery within us,
Sacred Presence enveloping our lives
in all that is good and true and beautiful,
we are gathered here in this home
we have loved for over 30 years
as a family first formed forty-one years ago
on Christmas.

We remember the little church,
the tree, the poinsettias, the reception at the Brysons
in their warm and lovely home
and can hardly believe
we have shared forty-one Christmases as a family,
grown from eight to twenty-six –
a family we treasure,
so warm, so caring –
simply Love embodied.

Today we welcome Robbie into the embrace of this family
as he and Sarah dream a future together.
And today Richard is in the circle,
having been given a place in Dan and Susan's family,
welcomed by Dani, Sarah and Sam.
Gathered here,
we hold in our hearts those absent from us:
Katie, Jonathan and Brenda, Joseph and family.
How blessed we are.

In these moments, O God,
we know that the Christmas story is true.
It goes to the heart
of what is truly human, truly divine –
Love and Joy and Peace,
the Light that scatters the darkness,
a vision of an alternative world
that can find expression in nothing less than
a choir of angels singing,
“Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace.”

Once a year this annual festival calls us
to stop, to reflect,
to penetrate the mists of our muddled thinking,
so caught up with matters of only passing concern,
to see what is truly ultimate,
what truly matters,
what is finally true –
that vulnerability invites trust,
that humility invites embrace,
that love begets love.

O God,
we worship and adore
in the Presence of the Christmas Babe.
Amen.