

## (Christmas Eve)

Christmas Eve Mediation

December 24, 2018

5 pm

But the angel said to them: "Do not be afraid, Joseph..." "Do not be afraid, Mary."

I can't tell you how overwhelmed with joy I felt when I learned Staci was pregnant, and yet, terrified as well as I thought about finally becoming a parent!" So I can relate to Joseph's fears about becoming a parent just a bit. I am sure, Mary also felt afraid to bear a child, especially one who they both were told would be no ordinary child.

If you are a parent, do you remember feeling excited and maybe just a tad bit terrified at the prospect of becoming a parent?

Most of us did not have a Messenger of God come to us in a dream telling us, "Do not be afraid." Like Joseph and Mary, we faced our fears, trusting the love we had for our baby(ies), would somehow see us through the birth and parenthood.

"Be not afraid," is a message many of us who have become parents, having faced our fears in the birthing room and through years of parenthood, might also want to say to those who will soon become parents.

My nephew, Heath and his wife, Samantha, just announced that they are expecting their first child. Their baby is due to be born around the end of July.

Last week, Kay and Stub Lund, announced the birth of another great-grand child.

Somewhere tonight, in Cambridge or somewhere on the other side of the world, a woman learns she is pregnant. A man learns he is to become a father. And a mixture of joy and fear sets in.

"Be not afraid" is the message we want to share with them.

Yet, it is not just the fear of becoming a new parent that they face, it is welcoming a new child into this terrifying world filled with so much violence, hatred and death.

Will these babies have health care? Will they face the prospect of living in poverty as the gap between the rich and poor continues to widen in our nation and world? Will they have enough food to eat at home or even in school? Will their parents, like Mary and Joseph, find no adequate housing? Perhaps these new parents and their baby will not find a place of welcome because of the color of their skin, or ethnicity, or because, like Mary and Joseph, they are refugees only seeking safe sanctuary for their child?

I wish for all expectant parents and for the children of our world to have a whole "Heavenly Host" light up the night sky, singing their message: "Be not afraid, for we bring you news of great joy, that your, or their child, or anyone's child, will no peace on earth."

Did you know that "'Be not afraid' is the most often repeated command in the Bible. Jesus himself repeated the phrase eight different times. And if you look at the whole Bible, you will find 365 scriptures that command us to not fear or be afraid in reaction to the world, people, or events around us." ([sojo.net](http://sojo.net))

Jim Wallis, editor of Sojourners magazine writes: "Why does the God of the Bible, the angels who announce the birth of Christ, then Jesus himself, keep telling us, again and again,