

The X in Xmas

Luke 2:11-20

With so many children present, I thought, “Gee, we need to have an arithmetic lesson.” I’m presenting just one question for us to solve. At first, it seems somewhat abstract, but actually it is very practical.

$$“2 + X = 5”$$

What do we add to 2 to get 5? 3! Certainly. 3 as in 3 Wise People; 3 as in the Trinity.

In a math equation, we say the X is an “unknown factor”; however, with some thought, we can usually *find what the X* represents.

Some people prefer always to refer to “Christmas,” to write out the whole word. I enjoy referring to this Holy Day as “Xmas” because it draws attention to what the “X” refers to.

The name Christ in Greek looks like this:

Xristos

We see that the first letter in Xristos is X (Chi) in Greek. Since the beginning of Christianity, Xristos has been written in shorthand, **X= Christ**.

When we write Xmas, we are really saying Christ-mas, voila! Christmas!

I like to think of Christmas as Xmas because that reminds me that *Christ is an unknown factor*. In fact, we could say that Christ is THE unknown factor in Christmas. We *know* that we will enjoy today’s Children’s Musical; we *know* that we will have goose-bumpy joyous Christmas Eve services. We *know* that we will give and receive presents. *What we do not know is what surprise Christ brings to each of us this year at this moment in our lives.*

The funny thing about God’s Christ events in our lives is that we do not even always know that we’re being given these gifts. Sometimes they seem like “Coincidences,” or “What luck!” We call them a “Moment of Rare Beauty,” or “Peace that passes all understanding.”

One thing I feel quite sure about is that the X, the unknown-Christ-factor, is unique and relevant for each of us, it’s what we need now. God just does not give unwanted gifts. God seems to know exactly what we need, even if we had not known it ourselves. However, I am not sure that God forces us to open what is given. I think that’s in good measure up to us.

Therefore, may we

- be open to Christ-events
- especially vulnerable to God-influence
- wide-eyed ready for beauty
- heart-prompted for leaps of compassion
- able to experience joy
- that is, ready for whatever-it-is that solves God’s very special equation for each of our lives this year.