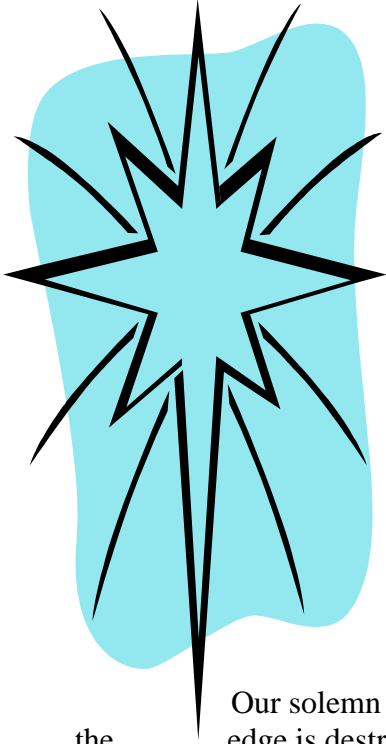


42. Better be good 'cause He's coming to town!



Teachers are coming to a colleague's home for their annual Christmas party. Outside on the entrance walkway and accompanying stones are written in chalk: "Joy", "Peace", "Jesus is the reason 4 the season" and "Christmas blessings". Some of the neighbours' children have added their comments, concerned that the real message of the season is missing. Their additions include, "We love Santa", "Santa is coming!" as well as "Santa is cool" and "I believe in Santa".

400 years ago, Blasé Pascal wrote, "There is enough light for those who want to believe and enough shadows to blind those who don't." We can choose to believe that consumerism will provide contentment, and that status or the ideal job, or even celebrity will make us happy ever after. It is not unlike belief in this Santa Claus isn't it? We know enough of Jesus not to turn from Him, and choose what will still leave us hungry and wanting more once the novelty and thrills ebb and subside.

Our solemn task is to walk our students to the brink, and say that to go over the edge is destructive. Santa seems nice and paternal; he doesn't demand that much of us and promises such pleasure. But he is a myth, created to sell services and merchandise. He is like the desert mirage when you really want steak on the oasis, like a pretty *Barbie* doll when you really want true romantic love, or like a glossy travel guide brochure when you crave the real holiday.

Today let's orient the gaze of our students away from the shadows and into the gentle light, away from the tinsel of Vanity Fair and towards the one who loves them and us so much.

*But against all illusion and fantasy and empty talk, there's always this rock foundation: Fear God! **Ecclesiastes 5:7***

*Everyone who makes a practice of doing evil, addicted to denial and illusion, hates God-light and won't come near it, fearing a painful exposure. **John 3:20***