



INNER PEACE

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Joy to the World

By **Karen Jeffery**
for the Tidings

This holiday is a virtual conspiracy of love! All over the world ... 'tis the season! So go give someone a hug, make a call, send prayers, be with the ones you love. And if you can't be with the one you love ... (like the song says) "love the one you're with."

May we occupy our hearts (every season) and enjoy the continued blessings of family, community, perfect imperfect moments, amazing grace ... and all the seasons of love.

There's a book by HHDL Tenzin Gyatso, "Ethics for the New Millennium," in which the last chapter is entitled "An Appeal," saying in part:

"As we have seen, compassion is one of the principal things that makes life meaningful. It is the source of all happiness and joy. It is the foundation of a good heart who acts out of a desire to help others. ...

"We cannot escape the necessity of love and compassion. This then is my true religion, my simple faith. In this sense there is no need for temple, church, mosque or synagogue, no need for complicated philosophy or doctrine. Our heart, our own mind is the temple. The doctrine is compassion. Love others and respect their rights and dignity, no matter who or what they are.

"As long as we practice respect daily, then no matter if we are learned or unlearned, whether we believe in Buddha or God, or follow some religion, or none at all, as long as we have

compassion for others and conduct ourselves with a sense of responsibility, there is no doubt that we will be happy. ...

"Therefore, with my two hands joined, I appeal to you that you make your life as meaningful as possible. Do this by engaging in spiritual practice. I hope I have made clear, there is nothing mysterious about this. It consists of nothing more than acting out of concern for others.

"I say this as neither Dalai Lama nor as someone who has special powers or ability. Of these I have none. I speak as a human being: one, who like yourself, wishes to be happy and not to suffer." (p. 234)

The sentiment expressed in these words from Tenzin Gyatso are central to how I wish to live, occupying my heart and loving others.

The Dalai Lama closes with a short prayer, which is appropriate for this season and so similar to the The Prayer of St. Francis:

May I become at all times, both now and forever

*A protector for those without protection
A guide for those who have lost their way
A ship for those with oceans to cross
A bridge for those with rivers to cross*

*A sanctuary for those in danger
A lamp for those without light
A place of refuge for those without shelter
And a servant to all in need*

Karen Jeffery is a mother, grandmother, friend, writer, teacher, student, activist, volunteer, and more.

Hanukkah

By **Allan Weisbard**
for the Tidings

Growing up Jewish, watching my predominately Catholic schoolmates excited about the Christmas holiday, I often felt like an outsider. Seeing the decorated homes and Christmas trees, I often felt there was something I was missing. As I have gotten older, I feel that I have been able to appreciate the warmth and light of the season in my own way.

For me the winter holiday season has three components.

Thanksgiving, a time for looking at my life with an eye for gratitude.

Hanukkah, as I light an increasing number of candles to illuminate the eight darkest nights of the year. This year Hanukkah coincides with the winter solstice and Christmas.

New Years, which brings a sense of optimism and a fresh start.

Together these three holidays form a pathway to help me get through the darkest and coldest time of year.

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