

Baby Boomers will remember where they were when JFK was assassinated. Gen-Xr's will remember where they were when the towers were struck on 9-11. We won't know what millennials will have or Gen-Z. It would be nice if they had a generational positive moment of change.

Remembering where we were, or what we were doing at these events makes them even more real and probably more connected to them. I remember being in Seminary on Sept 11, 2001, going to the dining hall for my morning coffee and a priest telling us the news, so we gathered around a TV and were in utter shock. We had to go to mass and our mood was just crestfallen. I also remember how quiet it was because all the planes had been grounded, and our seminary was over the flight paths of San Francisco, San Jose and Oakland.

Luke uses this same effect for us in the Gospel. He grounds the events with real people and real time. He is stating to readers that this is true; it happened at this time and in this place.

What happened? A major change, a better choice, a renewal; for those willing and open to it. A choice for life in Jesus Christ. A choice for all the world, and a choice for each of us as persons.

We can have these communal-generational transformative events, but we also can have our personal transformative events, in which God offers us, invites us to a different way of living; often a better way. And at times, these can arrive when we are confronted with difficulties in life; when we are hurting or in distress. A moment when we are unsure what to do.

Let's go back to Luke's gospel. What Luke does is not merely grounding the coming of Jesus in history, but he is also making a statement about the quality of the transformation that God brings.

Luke uses Roman rulers who clung to power, who ruled over others with violence and used violence to quell any perceived opposition. Rulers who claimed a divinity, as did Augustus and his descendents. Ironically Augustus was the pinnacle of Roman Imperialism, after him his descendents were even more depraved, murderous and led to the downfall

of the Empire. Luke uses them to contrast with the Values that Jesus brings into the world.

God offers us a better way, the true way; power not over others, but power to raise others up. No violence, but compassion, mercy and support; self-giving... All through Jesus Christ.

God comes to us in our uniqueness, our particularity; and usually not just once, but time and time again, to offer us a way to move forward; to offer us a better way to live, free from holding onto resentments and violence and vengeance; freedom from living with greed and fear.

So as we struggle with anger and hurt in our lives, Jesus offers us the path of forgiveness and mercy, to be freed from the anger and hurt.

Or we wrestle with guilt and shame over hurt we have caused; Jesus reminds us that we have been forgiven in God; redeemed by him on the cross, so there is freedom from shame.

When we get caught up in depression, anxiety, pressure to conform, pressure to appeal to the standards of this world... Christ reminds us of God's infinite love; no need to earn it.

I think so many need to hear this. So many from our youth and young persons even to our older folks, have not opened their hearts and ears to this message. Once again in the paper I read an obituary of a youth that made me sad. We strive in the church and parish to offer ministry for kids so that they can learn to open themselves to the Spirit, to hear God speak and find options for living, but...

Living as disciples of Jesus Christ, with the true values of mercy, kindness, compassion, love, generosity can be transformative for us and for the world.

Holding onto them is so difficult, because there persists this belief that violence and overpowering others is the only way; victory is only defeat of enemies, "I must win" at all costs. The Roman Empire may have fallen, the but attitude, the sinful condition lives on.

So we strive as Catholics to open ourselves to better choices, better ways.

We strive to live well. Each week we have the gift of the Eucharist which strengthens us, renews us, and reminds us of the choice for life.

It is God, right here and right now, coming to us.