

Small Talk – October 13 2021
By Michael Small

We are surrounded by beauty in these Northwoods with numerous lakes and abundant growth – every day bringing change, surprise, thanksgiving, and gratitude. Birds have begun their migration to winter locations. All around people are beginning to prepare for winter, some have also begun their migration. Boats are being stored, docks are coming in, and dried and dead leaves are settling in for the winter. Typically, by this time of year, we have had our first freeze. In this area we will set a record this year for latest freeze. Without a doubt the season is changing!

The winds are blowing and too often the winds bring words and ways of harshness and despair. The phrase that comes to mind in this season – all are yearning for “tidings of comfort and joy.” Yes, it is too early to be thinking about Christmas, but in the darkness of this time, words of comfort and joy are so desperately needed.

What brings you comfort and joy? Is it friends and family? Children becoming adults, developing relationships, marriage, and grandchildren? Is it a good book in a long series of books? Is it that home prepared meal, with family, friends, and loved ones? Is it that candle that is lit on the darkest of nights? Is it a concert, play, musical, or a good movie? Is it the sunrise of a new day or the sunset of a day well-lived? Is it the spontaneous conversation in the middle of busy times?

Traditionally tidings of comfort and joy come to a people mired in darkness, filled with despair for the future. It is at the darkest moment when all seems lost. In that moment, one candle, one word of comfort and joy can change everything. The tide begins to shift, and heads are lifted toward hope.

For 55 years Star Trek in all its manifestations has been one of those candles. The writers and actors have imagined a future filled with hope, challenge, and possibility. With curiosity I looked forward to hearing the words of Captain Kirk (Bill Shatner) after experiencing a brief moment in space. He reflected on breaking through the fragile yet stark barrier between space and the blue atmosphere of earth. Looking up into the blackness of space he saw death – the harshness of space. Looking down on the earth covered with a “blue mantle” he saw the wonder, the miracle, the fragility of earth and of all life! It was a life changing moment for him, and he wished all could experience those few moments between space and earth. To look back at this rare, one-of-a-kind blue marble, surrounded by the bleakness of space he found amazing comfort and joy.

Twelve minutes from launch into space and a return to earth. In that short time Shatner discovered an extraordinary and life changing moment. “I’m so filled with emotion about what just happened. It’s extraordinary, extraordinary. I hope I can maintain what I feel now forever. I don’t want to lose it. It’s so much larger than me and life.” Tidings of comfort and joy!

One of the tasks, may I say charges, of being a person of faith is to carry tidings of comfort and joy into the world and into peoples lives when it is the darkest. For a new thing is happening and we are the bearers of that new thing. We carry it with love and grace, peace and understanding, patience and presence. We do not walk alone. For we walk with each other and the spirits of all of those who have gone before us. We are surrounded by the spirit of creation creating a new thing – in this very moment.

Receive blessings of comfort and joy.

In the spirit and agape love of Jesus, Michael

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