

It is always a bit jarring this time of year how quickly the story of Jesus moves along. In many churches today, there will be remembrances of both...*a star leading the wise men to the Holy Family...and the baptism of Jesus some thirty years later—all in one Sunday.*

Part of the reason for this is that the Gospel books themselves make great leaps in time from Jesus' infancy to his adulthood. So it isn't surprising that our worship, in telling the story of Jesus, would also take a similar leap.

But also, part of the reason is that...in the divine eye...*all time can*, in a sense, *be present at one time*. That sounds quite metaphysical...and it is. Reading the Bible and the experience of Christian mystics, there is apparently more to time than we normally experience. Even modern physics says as much. And, from the Bible, we know that the perspective of God is not just the same as our own. In the perspective of God, it could indeed be possible that Jesus' infancy, adult baptism, ministry, cross, and resurrection could all be seen *as if they were almost in the same moment*. And in the same manner, *God may so see our own lives*. We are all *comprehended...and held...in the totality of our lives...within the attention of God...who exists both within time...and outside of time.*

So it is not necessarily so strange that Jesus' infancy and adulthood could appear in worship in a single Sunday. But the more I thought about it, I realized that *sometimes we too can get a taste of this divine perspective on time.*

One way that happens is, as we get older, time seems to *accelerate*, such that the past and the present are not so far apart anymore. Older folks are easily known to say something like this to the younger folk in our families: *"My goodness, I can't believe how quickly you've grown up!"* Right? How many times does this get said at family gatherings around Christmas and other times? And yes, it is strange how *quickly* infants...become children...and then teenagers...and then young adults. And how quickly young adults become older adults!

And from the perspective of parents of growing children, especially, being a parent is both...*laboriously slow...and weirdly fast*. Before you know it...everybody is all grown up. Where has the time gone?

I have this sensation with my 27 year-old son every time I see him again. And, when I have the presence of mind, *that strange sensation of time* when seeing my son again, can seem like some kind of *alert...and even an invitation*. And I'm not always sure what the invitation is calling me to. Sometimes it is sheer *gratitude*. Sometimes it is a *poignant awareness* of the swift passage of time. And sometimes the awareness comes as a *question*:

*What must I now do in this time of my life?*

In some ways, that question hovered in the background of my *sabbatical* months last year—being away in Iceland; being home with Jennifer and reading and writing; spending time away in a hermitage; and spending time away with my son. *What must I now do in this time of my life?*

Maybe that question has visited you in other ways in this past year. Maybe you have had *some strange sensation of time* over the holidays, or before: of time accelerated...of the past and the present no longer being so far apart...a taste of the divine perspective on our lives.

And perhaps, somewhere in that experience of time, there was also a question...a divine question...for you:

*What must you now do in this time of your life?*