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How Does a Weary World Rejoice? We Make Room

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I have a confession to make. I believe in magic. Magic is real. Since December 27th of 1997, I have been living in apartments or houses – all of my dwelling places – that have a magical power. It's almost like these magical fairies come and take up residence wherever I am. It's amazing, and quite mind blowing. It has bolstered my belief in magic, the supernatural even the paranormal.

Here is how it goes. As I live – in my house, I will on occasion use something – a plate, a glass, something, and on completion of using that, whatever... I will place that item on the counter with the full intent of returning to said item and deal with it – otherwise known as cleaning up after oneself. Now, quite often – and this is when the magic happens, the paranormal activity – before I can return to said item it somehow has magically cleaned up after itself.

But the amazing thing is that this activity isn't confined to the kitchen area but to entry ways with shoes, jackets, hats and don't get me started on laundry... but just in case you think I've lost it with all the paranormal activity in my house, all the fairy magic, I have other witnesses. My kids experience this too, they will attest and in case you were wondering if these were just rare events that one could chalk up to coincidence or happenstance, oh no, the sample size is quite large.

It happens so *often* that I have thought our house should be on some kind of ghost – magic – paranormal reality show but there is just one major problem. For some reason my wife doesn't believe. Even today, right now, she refuses what is overwhelming evidence. It's almost as if she is living in an alternate reality.

Ok, so it's not really that bad. Ok, sometimes it is really that bad, but over the years, as my wife and I have navigated housekeeping issues, the conversations have always been about what the definition of a "mess" is. And over the different seasons of our lives that definition of a "mess" has ebbed and flowed, but one definition we completely agree on is that our daughter's room is a complete and total mess. And don't get me started on her bathroom. It's like a wild animal has taken over. How can someone leave so much hair behind and still have hair – as I watch with horror at my own deforestation – it's totally unfair. I can tell you one thing – her room is the only room in the house that the fairies refuse to spend any time in, it's magic proof. There isn't any paranormal cleaning activity happening in there.

But what is the definition of a mess. One's person's mess is another's highly personal organization system. One person's mess is another's "filling up the sink" so that when you finally do the dishes it's worth your time. So maybe the goal isn't to define it, but the effort should be on asking how much room does our mess leave for others. In our own messiness, is there room for relationship. In our messiness, is there room for Jesus. In the messiness of this season of travel, of gift opening, of overclocked schedules, is there room for the holy. In our messiness, are we making room.

What I find totally amazing is that God makes room for us, even in our messiness. I mean Jesus is born in a room that is used to keep animals. How much more messy can it get? God doesn't wait for us to get all cleaned up. God doesn't wait for the dishes to get done or the vacuuming. God makes room – shows up in our messiness. The Apostle Paul puts it this way... *For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. (Rom 5:6 NRS) But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. (Rom 5:8 NRS)*

And our response to that love is to make room in our own messiness for that love to grow in us. But it is almost impossible to know that we are living in a mess unless we turn to look at it for what it is. And that's what God's word does for us in this season of preparing to celebrate the birth of our savior. To celebrate God's massive hug, the cosmic gathering of all things into Jesus Christ. This season of Advent. This Christmas Eve. In this time of preparing, we take time to turn and to see the mess of our lives and how much our mess is crowding out, not making room for God's love.

And we don't turn to our mess so that we would be swallowed up in shame and guilt. We turn to our mess because God is already there. And that is the Good News. The Good News is that God is already there waiting for you – already there in your messy kitchen, entry way, even in your mess of a room, and no it's not magic, it's not a fairy tale – it's love.