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# The View from Blackwater Bluff — Charles LaFond

Advent's themes of expectancy and quiet reflection call me to consider my stewardship of time and thought while things around me are bustling and noisy.

So often, we relegate "stewardship" to conversations about money. And it's true that the money and things we have are a gift from God, who has entrusted them to us. But money is hardly all we have been given. What about the stewardship of our time...and the stewardship of our thought?

The time we have "to live, and move and have our being" is a gift: we are given stewardship of it. Our time is on loan to us, as well as our life. Time is so precious and it can be spent wisely or recklessly. So too our thought – the time we spend watching and thinking about things is also a gift to us from the One who gave us eyes and minds and hearts in which "to ponder all these things."

Never having lived out in the country before, I'm still getting used to



KAI

some of its great blessings. One such blessing is the brightness of the stars. When I take my dog Kai out for his last walk, I marvel at the brightness of the stars.

Living alone in the country is sometimes lonely, yet many of us do, especially the widowed and the

single. Television sometimes seems to be a needed companion. And families all too often use TV as a means of relaxation and entertainment. But that bluish TV light is not where I want to stare my eyes and distract my mind this Advent. Indeed, the over-the-top advertising and marketing represents the "disaster" of Advent – a competing star-light.

The word "disaster" comes from the Middle Ages and was developed in the west by the church. The word comes from the Italian meaning of "without a star". Dis-aster is actually "dis-astron:" "Dis" means "without" and "astron" means "star."

So to be in a disaster is to be without a star – without the hope and joy and leading light of a star that shows the way to a place of peace and safety.

Too much I have let the television screen be my star. But don't get me wrong! I am still going to be the first one on the floor in front of the TV, in my old flannel jammies with televi-

sion and popcorn for *The Grinch*, *Miracle on 34<sup>th</sup> Street*, *White Christmas*, and *Charlie Brown's Christmas!* But in between, I hope to take care of the stewardship of my eyes and my time and my heart. I plan to make some gifts. I plan to shop on just one day. I plan to light the Advent candles at night as a family, Kai and me, by the wood stove. And I plan to make time – scheduled time- for silence so that I too can "ponder these things" in my heart.

To be a good steward of mind and time is to avoid the disaster of being without the right star. As we sit and wait for the Light of the World to come into our midst, I need to dim the other lights – televisions, malls, overscheduled evenings – so as to see the coming of Christ without too much competition; much like the way I can see the stars at night when my little house in the woods has its lights dimmed in breathless expectation.

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