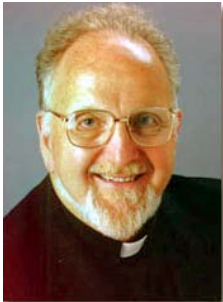


The bishop writes: What I learned from a microwave

“He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God.” John 1:11-12

I t must have been 20 years ago now that my mother decided to give all her children microwaves for Christmas. They were new on the market, and I was not interested in having one - I had cooked all these many years successfully without one, and they took up a lot of counter space. She, on the other hand, was convinced that they were not something I could live without. As it turned out, I received the microwave and soon became a fan of all that it could do so quickly.



H. Gerard Knoche In some ways, my microwave experience parallels the experience of God in giving the gift of his Son. According to John, people preferred darkness rather than light and did not accept the one God sent their way. But those who did became children of God, receiving blessings beyond their imaginings.

Things haven't changed much since the first century. Many today would say "A Savior? Who needs one? I'm handling things quite well on my own, thank you." But these same folk, if they do respond to the Savior, can't imagine how they could have lived without him.

There are others, of course, who are ripe for the forgiveness and fresh start a Savior brings, who respond joyfully when they hear the good news about him. I met some of those folks at the new school for adolescent addicts I visited in western Pennsylvania recently. They talked about how their "higher power" named Jesus had turned them in a new direction. I hear it too from soldiers returning from Iraq, who, frightened by the kind of unconventional war that is killing and

wounding their buddies, share how God became real for them on the streets and alleys of places like Baghdad.

The gospel is not always a gift folks want to receive. But that should not influence our giving. Sometimes God knows best what present we need. And at Christmas time, it's the one gift for which the price has already been paid.

Have a blessed celebration of our Savior's birth.

Peace and joy,



H. Gerard Knoche, bishop