

It has been claimed by some that my handwriting is occasionally illegible. Of course this cannot be true because (well, I can't read my notes about the reason but there has to be one!!).

Actually, when I take the time, I DO write well, and legibly, even though I'm left-handed. Unlike in this country, English schools did not insist that I – like all left-handed people – adopt a gymnastic writing technique, though I'll grant that I went home every day with ink on the outside of my hand!

What they did insist was that I learn the second “R” – writing – the first, of course, being reading, and the third arithmetic (apparently for both nations spelling wasn't included, since neither the second nor third “R” is really an “R” – but that's another story for another time!).

It goes without saying that learning to write is not just a “rite of passage” (you can groan, here), but central to what it means to be an educated person in the modern world.

Except.....

As of last week 45 states are moving toward adopting national curriculum guidelines for 2014 for English and math that **don't include cursive handwriting, but do require proficiency in computer keyboarding** by the time pupils exit elementary school

Now we need to pause for a moment of silence while we wonder “what ARE they thinking?!! What cherished institution is next? **Emails?**”

Actually it's obvious what THEY are thinking! The way we communicate in the 21st Century is by typing. And emails are, indeed, becoming passe! Texting and Twittering are the only way to go.

The next wave will be few keyboards. We'll speak our input and voice-recognition will do the rest. The world will look like a bunch of crazy people talking to themselves!

But if you stop to think about it, then it all makes sense. Human beings are adaptive creatures – it's how we've survived and thrived in such a short period of time. After all, we've been around for about 200,000 years; dinosaurs were the dominant terrestrial vertebrates for 135 million years, and they didn't get much beyond the mental capacity of your average lizard.

I suppose, using that comparison, change is a relative thing! But “change” is why I'm telling you all about cursive writing, homo-sapiens, and dinosaurs.

More video was uploaded to YouTube **in English** in the last 2 months than ABC/NBC/CBS combined have aired 24/7/365 since 1948!

The average American sends over 2200 text messages a month – and since most of us are not “Average Americans” that means some folk are sending way more than that!

The only constant is change. Really. And that change is accelerating. 135 Million years and you get to be able to do “lizardy things”. 200,000 years and going to the moon is passe.

We are preparing students for jobs that don’t exist, using technologies that haven’t been invented, to solve problems we don’t even know are problems.

This is really hard for most human beings – especially those of us who have been around awhile! I think it’s hard in part because the change that takes place can feel like a rejection of who we are, what we value, and how we have lived and now try to live our lives.

No more cursive writing is a metaphor for no more lots of things, and, ultimately no more us – as if we don’t matter.

Mattering is pretty important! In fact Jesus tells us that mattering is central – that every human being, every thing, has value, is part of God’s economy. And in God’s economy change is not a bad thing - rather than saying we don’t matter, the change that comes from God says we matter a great deal.

Faith is an invitation into a community that says every human being, and every thing – all of creation – matters to God, and to each of us. Matters so much that the alternative – a purposeless existence with no meaning – is not just like death, it IS death.

Much in our world – and especially much in our communications – is a means to an end. Cursive writing is a means to an end. It isn’t the end itself.

Our story, which we begin again today, is an invitation to focus on the end: the transformation of the world – and thus of ourselves – by the in-breaking of God’s grace and love. It’s a story about change: the change that can come about in us and in everyone if we are willing to let go of the things in our lives that no longer matter, or no longer hold a purpose, or no longer carry meaning, for the greater good of a world transformed.

Our story is about the coming of one who would change the world, making it a different, better place than it was in the 1st century, and a different, better place than it still is in the 21st century.

Advent says, in part, lets keep our eyes on that prize, and remember, in Jeremiah’s words, that “the days are surely coming,” when the one who is Justice and is Righteousness will appear, and nothing will ever be the same again, and that’s a very good thing!