

Even You, Even Me

Let's face it, we are a people who live in darkness, we indeed live in a land of deep darkness.

Just take a glance at the front page or Washington DC or our rapidly changing climate.

It is the darkness that falls across us when we come to a place in our culture that insists that this life is far away from, totally separate from, the kingdom of God.

It is the darkness that falls across us when we put our faith in America First, in weapons of mass destruction, in wishful thinking, rather than in self-giving love, a pouring out of self for the sake of one another.

Our poor substitutes for what is "really real" exchange the sun for a mere light bulb, and one with pretty low wattage at that!

And so we gather tonight, to remember once again, who we really are and to recall and reclaim, the truth of our destiny.

We gather tonight to once again dare to look past the light bulb, to gaze directly into the sun: for then we shall become a people who has seen a great light, a people on whom a great light has shined.

For too many years, the church has taught that the sum and substance of faith is to straighten up, follow the rules and wait till you die for a taste of heaven.

That kind of thinking leads to a select few being set aside to live the spiritual life, so everyone else can get on with the messy business of fighting wars and making money and holding on to political power.

How many people will never think of sticking their head in a church because of the way church was presented by a priest, or a parent or someone else with influence?

How many were taught, quite wrongly, that religion is all about saving our individual selves, that God is nothing more than the morals police, and if you mess up, whether by divorce or drinking or if you don't fit into the straightjacket of socially acceptable gender or sexual roles, or or...the list, after all, is endless then you're sunk?

No wonder so many folks don't walk, but run from such nonsense.

Because that is not our faith!

That stuff tries to make God look like us – rather than challenging us to change, so that we may look more like God!

Tonight has nothing to do with shaping up and flying right.

It has everything to do with encountering, perhaps for the first time, a God who is so crazy in love with all of creation that God crashes the very party she set in motion so long ago.

And in the process, God sets in motion a new mystical path by which all of creation, including every last human being, yes, even you, even me, will someday become one with God!

The mystery that we come to remember tonight, to become part of again tonight, is that on a particular night in human history, in a particular place, and to two particular parents, the Creator of all things becomes one with creation - becomes a human being.

What that tells us is that in God's "commitment to bodies, our bodies matter.

That God's determination to be known in the flesh means that caring for, in the flesh, the least and lost and left behind among us, matters."
Karoline Lewis, paraphrased.

That, what matters is not what may or may not happen after we close our eyes for the last time in death, what matters is the life we are living, here and now.

That as much as this holy night teaches us something about God — that God is gracious and full of humility, that God adores each and every human person — this night also teaches us about ourselves: that our destiny is to be united with God, to become become One with God.

And because unity with God is our destiny, God invites, no, urges us, to try that life on TODAY, without delay!

True faith is an invitation to step into God's kingdom this very moment!

We enter that narrow door when we practice compassion.

When we forgive.

When we stand up for the vulnerable.

When we leap, trusting that the net shall appear.

Unity with God.

This is the high calling of our life — of every human life — and of all of creation too..

And it's not something we strive for as much as it is something to recognize as THE already existing reality!

All things exist in God.

Period.

End of sentence.

The branch is always connected to the vine.

But because we are mesmerized by the light bulbs of our own creation: fame, money and power; we live stuck in the illusion that we are separated from God, and from one another.

Our task, each and every day, is to reject the illusion, and to reclaim our true nature, allowing us to live each day with both eyes fixed on our true destiny.

That process is already at work in each of us.

"The True Self -- where you and God are one -- does not choose to love as much as IT IS love itself.

That's what St Paul is saying when he reminds the earliest Christians that:

"You died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

And when Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory."

The True Self doesn't TEACH US compassion as much as IT IS compassion.

Loving from this core of your being is like a river flowing within you of its own accord, which is why Jesus says:

"Whoever believes in me ... will find rivers of living water flowing within themselves."

And let's be clear, when Jesus speaks of "believing," it's not something we do with our head, it's something we do with our feet!

Do I stand in a place of isolation, looking out just for number one?

Or do I stand in solidarity with the least and the lost of this world?

It is from the grace-filled standpoint of solidarity that connection, empathy, forgiveness, and love, flows...

We were made in love, and for love, and to love.

This deep inner 'yes' IS God IN me, loving God THROUGH me.

The false self, 'infatuated with the ridiculously dim light bulb of self,' doesn't know how to love.

It's too self-centered, it's too small, to know anything of compassion, mercy, kindness." R. Rohr, paraphrased.

This holy night, as we celebrate God becoming the first truly HUMAN being, remember this: you are made in the image of God.

"And if you could see with the eyes of the soul, you'd see angels leading the way before every person, announcing with trumpet and song:

"Make way for the image of God!

Make way for the image of God!" Long, Testimony, 46.

Even me, even you.....

In this child, through the grace of God, all of humanity is home free.

The groaning of creation will one day find its new birth.

"A magnificent, yet delicate project, worked out over the vast expanse of time.

Revealing, not the power of one who insists on everyone cleaning up their act, but the greater power of one who patiently and compassionately and gently loves us into being.

This gracious God — for whom time — doesn't matter." James Allison. paraphrased.

I don't know what this priest or that parent may have told you long ago, but the truth is, God doesn't come to punish, or frighten, or scold.

No.

God comes to tell us, all of us, even you, even me, that we are deeply, truly, and forever loved!

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