

Reflection for Sunday, March 13, 2022

Second Sunday in Lent

Mother Hen's Lament

We sing of Jesus, a Jew, born to a woman in poverty in a time of social upheaval and political oppression. He knew human joy and sorrow. So filled with the Holy Spirit was he that in him people experienced the presence of God among them. Jesus announced the coming of God's reign—a commonwealth not of domination but of peace, justice, and reconciliation. He healed the sick and fed the hungry. He preached and practised unconditional love.

May the peace of the Lord be always with you.

Let us pray:

O God of steadfast love, how right and good it is to give thanks; things are as they should be when we do. But we have learned that being grateful because we should is neither right nor good. Dear God, a grateful heart is a gift or it is not real at all. A grateful heart transforms life. It turns life into a mysterious gift, and precious in our sight. It opens our heart to wonder and surprise. It lets us revel in sight and sound. It permits us to love another. Dear God, it's because you are there when we turn to you, that we dare embrace life. It's because you believe in us that we can freely accept the gift of life. It's because you love the world that we can take it into our hearts. Gracious God, it's all because of you that our hearts can sing. Turn loose our praise. Amen.

Rev. Justin Cantuar, the Archbishop of Canterbury, observes that: "the joy of the Christian faith is the hope—the promise—of a world transformed." The six weeks of Lent is a journey we travel together towards that world. From Ash Wednesday through to Maundy

Thursday, the season of Lent guides us from human frailty into the glorious light of God's triumph over death.

During Lent, we have the chance to walk towards the God who journeys towards us. Over forty days, we can move from our flawed humanness to our humaneness, from brokenness to wholeness, repentance into restoration. As, in the shadows of Lent, we dare to dream of the glorious light of the day of the resurrection, the day God pours himself out to make right what is wrong, make whole what is broken and perfect what is flawed, may we start to think about how we are invited to step into that world and God's work in the here and now.

The comforting truth of Lent is that as we delve deeper into our own self-examination, we find that we are not alone. God is still on the move in our lives, walking with us every step as we travel the road to Easter.

"Go and tell that fox for me, 'Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way...' How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings...!"

I can remember discovering, on my first pastoral charge, how big a problem a broody hen was to an egg producer. I heard homemakers discussing ways to cure a broody hen. Broody hens weren't satisfied with producing breakfasts for someone else, they wanted to produce a family. For Jesus, God is like a broody hen.

Love, as we well know, is never easy. Lent offers us the opportunity to deepen our faith without the gift of foresight. God always keeps God's promises, even and *especially* through times of trial.

Death doesn't discriminate between the sinners and the saints, it takes, and it takes, and it takes. (Aaron Burr). Birth and death leave no instructions, so it is our custom to seek out meaning and direction wherever we can find it. God's relentless pursuit of humanity has more power than death ever will.

Jesus is on an unstoppable course toward Jerusalem, but that also means that he's on an unstoppable course toward us, toward our hearts, with tenacity and determination that will not be blocked, not even by the obstacles we put in his place. Jesus moved into some of the most physically and spiritually demanding experiences humans can go through. "He didn't take the tourist's view, one where he could casually drive by our struggles and gaze out the tinted windows of his air-conditioned limo" (Rev. Mandy Sloan McDow). Jesus actually walked through the toughest struggles you and I face. He's been there before and conquered the most difficult experiences we could imagine.

Lent will bring new and unique challenges, but we have one who has promised to walk beside us. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Bill Cantelon