

“Kindom Empowerment” ~ homily for Advent 3 at Mary of Magdala

ECC in Ft. Collins CO

My husband has been complaining ever since I got my first cell phone that I send too much time on social media. I, on the other hand, see it as a valuable tool for connection, although ironically it does take time away from my being attentive to him. For me, surfing my feeds is a prayerful experience, for what pops up often reveals a need for intercessory prayer or in other ways shows the movement of the Spirit.

Just this morning, Facebook reminded me of something I reposted 2 years ago: “Just some thoughts as we enter the Christmas season. It is important to remember that not everyone is looking forward to Christmas. Some people are not surrounded by large wonderful families. Some of us are having problems during Christmas and may be overcome with great sadness when we remember the loved ones who are not with us. For many it is their first Christmas without a particular loved one and many others lost loved ones at this time. And, many people have no one to spend these times with and are overcome with loneliness. We all need caring, loving thoughts right now. If I don't see your name, I'll understand. May I ask my friends wherever you might be, to kindly post this status for one hour to give a moment of support to all those who are having family troubles, health struggles, job issues, worries of any kind and just need to know that someone cares. Do it for all of us, for nobody is immune. ~ With prayers. Fr.BalaMadan.ECC”

During this season of joy many still wander faint of heart in the wilderness with weary hands and trembling knees, the anawim—the have-nots.

An old friend from back in the 70s found me on Facebook. Our both being of Sicilian heritage, he saw me as part of his intentional family, a connection he desperately needed after years of emotional and physical abuse by his biological family (which included several instances of gun violence). He wrote to tell me how much he valued my support back then, and that he's

been seeing beyond his personal wilderness with the help of a therapist. It was obvious that our simple reconnection via Messenger made that desert bloom with joy.

Let us amplify our joy tonight by sharing experiences that you have had — instances of deserts blooming, of eyes and ears opening, of rough ways made smooth

and laments replaced with songs of joy. [A couple of people shared experiences of challenge that led to unexpected blessings.]

In these and in many other ways the Kingdom Vision transforms our world. Victor Turner called such experiences “liminality” — a movement from an old way of being that doesn’t work anymore, through a barren period of betwixt and between, leading to an unexpected vision and ultimately a new reality.

John the Baptist, wallowing in his cell, must have been filled with joy at Jesus’ message, a message that not only reminded him of Isaiah’s prophesy but let him know that it was being fulfilled. Yes, “the One who was to come” was ushering in the Reign of God, but in a way that John could never have imagined. John had tried to usher in the Kingdom promise, by preaching a gospel of repentance that would remind the people of their covenant obligations to one another; but there are limits to what can be accomplished by such faithfulness alone.

The Promise would be realized and even more songs of joy would arise, because the least born into the Kingdom of Heaven is able to do more than John could, more even than Jesus’ earthly ministry could — for we, as the Body of Christ, are the liberating love of God incarnate and active in our world.

Our covenant obligations to one another are the same, but they are now empowered by Grace. Let the new message be proclaimed — be it through

our advocacy for the have-not anawim, in our attentive ears and healing touch, or through a simple Facebook connection: “God saves through us!”

Maybe that’s what the James the evangelist meant when he wrote: “the second coming is at hand.”

#Advent3 #KindomEmpowerment #Isaiah35

#DesertBlooming #SecondComing www.usccb.org/bible/readings/121519.cfm