

Proper 19 Year C 2025

Those of you who are on Facebook know that the algorithmic gods theoretically send you content in which you are interested. If I, for example, click on something about Alabama football, the gods remember that, and I get all kinds of posts about Alabama football. I also get a lot of political posts; I get poetry and invitations to zoom seminars on literature... and then I get ads targeted to senior citizens... don't know why that is! Senior cruises, back pain medication, orthopedic devices... depends. Lately I've been receiving podcasts having to do with quantum theory, Einstein's theory of relativity. No matter how hard I try, I just can't get my mind around the notion that time and space are the same thing. My brain just can't comprehend that an electron can be in two different places at once. Imagine two objects travelling at the speed of light.... No, I can't.

But there was one post just the other day that caught my interest. It had to do with consciousness. The premise was that all of us, all humans, share in one collective consciousness; that there is just one over-arching awareness in which we all participate; that certain symbols and mythologies are common to many different cultures. We are of one mind, as it were, sharing ideas and insight in common; ancient memory stored in our DNA. W.B. Yeats called such a phenomenon *Spiritus Mundi*, the world of the Spirit. Artists have the uncanny ability to draw from the well of such consciousness, and speak with astonishing resonance to the human community, articulating truth and beauty with which we are already strangely familiar. Prophets, too. Words out of the abyss. Words of

truth and possibility. James Joyce wrote that “thought is the thought of thought... a tranquil brightness.” It is that mysterious brightness that so draws us.

This time of year, I’m captivated by the Gulf Coast Fritillary butterfly. They migrate from Mexico and Latin America in the Spring, travelling for days over open water, headed for the continent of North America... and then a new generation born here travel back to parts south to begin the migration all over again. They only live for fourteen or so days, and yet, they live as a vast community of purpose. How do they know? What is the source of their intrepid skill? What manner of information do they possess in their bodies that so forms them to achieve such an impossible epic? They have no brain as such. Perhaps they follow the same conscious knowledge that guides us humans; perhaps it is the same consciousness that birthed the universe. It might be that, among God’s many names, many metaphors, we may call this consciousness, God; that perhaps, the universe is God’s ever expanding consciousness, God’s mind, heart, and soul; and that we participate in such consciousness bearing God-knowledge, as it were. That consciousness we have far preceded us. It was in the beginning, and it will be forever. The writers of John’s Gospel thought as much, that humankind, represented by the literary figure of Jesus, was both human and divine; eternal.

So, having fantasized about all that, it is clear to me that our lives are so very contingent to each other. We are not solitary souls. We are of one substance, body, mind, and Spirit, bound to each other, and to the earth itself. It is as if we humans, and

all that inhabit the earth are one organism, one body... and we tend to the health and healing of that body as if it were our own... because it is our own. Salvation, then, is about the healing and wholeness of the one body, the one organism that bears the life of God.

Pope John the 23rd in the 1960's made famous the phrase that God has a preferential option for the poor.... It was controversial, because the privileged among the flock, the modern day Pharisees, if you will, wondered: what about us? It's the same thing with the Black Lives Matter movement.... We say Black lives matter and the white folks say, what about us? ...But the point is this: God loves everyone, of course... that is a given... but what springs God into action, what gets God up in the morning... where God's passion is kindled is in giving God's life for the restoration of the lost, the weak, the voiceless, the untouchable.... God acts first for the victims of poverty and its blood brother violence, victims of hunger and deprivation... the ostracized and the scapegoated... the disabled... the abased and powerless... those are who God pursues first... and as God is called preferentially to the least of these, so too are we, brothers and sisters; because none of us are whole until all of us are whole. God sees humanity as one organism, a part of God's own body.... And God is first and foremost a God of healing.

That is the point Luke is making in our reading today... yet again. He is relentless in his admonition to serve the outcasts of the socio-economic order.... The culture exalts

the individual in our world, even more so the powerful. But Luke is relentless in his call for us to be countercultural; to break bread with the unloved, the so-called non-persons that live so very near to us, but who live worlds apart; His point is that God has zero tolerance for there being the lost... the lost sheep, a metaphor... the lost coin... and a few verses later, the lost son.... God searches out with obsessive compulsive passion the lost ones of our world.... Because the world is just not right until all are found... the world is not right until dignity and well-being is shared among us equally... justly.... And such restoration we are told merits celebration.... We don't pray that the world may find peace, shalom... we pray that the peace of God will find the world... and folks we are that peace in flesh and blood.... It is the love that we bear that will do the finding.

Love in the gospels takes on the form of passionate advocacy and radical hospitality.... And Love is meant for the public domain... public domain, because that's where people live! ...Our faith is a public, activist faith... a faith guided, not by right belief or stilted dogma, but by love that serves the cause of restoring the lost.... Brothers and sisters, the kingdom of God is not a hope for a utopian future. The world will always struggle with injustice and evil and suffering. The kingdom of God is here and now set amid the world's ruin and brokenness, but with Love present to it; and we are that Love good people, saints of God. Love does not make the world perfect. Love invites the world into healing and restoration. Salvation

Despite its flaws, and the corrupt spectacle that our political process has become, we live still in a world that teems with possibility.... Our democracy will never be the same. Greed and power have subverted our society. Racism has reared its ignoble head; false narratives seduce our culture. But know that such distraction and evil is at last unsustainable, because of the tranquil brightness we carry in our collective souls as people made in God's image. The kingdoms of our world, built on power, injustice and violence will crumble. Love is forever, and Love will sustain us when all is said and done. Remember, God's dream for the world is Love, and the means of Love is justice. Would that our politicians surrender to conscience. In his teaching Jesus named the virtuous rudiments of human consciousness... compassion, mercy, hospitality, justice... all elements of healing; and healing begins first with taking care of our least... the poor, the addict, the mentally ill, the sick and the disenfranchised, the prisoner, the undocumented immigrant... the unloved. Our own well-being according to the teachings of Jesus, is found... with joy... in the well-being of the ones left out.... Our joy is found in finding those who are lost.... That is the improbable alchemy of God's kingdom.

The lost are the ones for whom Jesus gave his life, after all... these are the ones after whom God seeks and pursues passionately... if we stop and weigh what is good and true, noble and lasting... if we believe that our baptismal call is worth everything, then we are to go and do likewise.... We are to be advocates for justice and mercy... We are to be advocates for love, in short.... Christianity is not for the faint of heart. I'm not talking

about what passes for Christianity these days. I'm talking about the Jesus movement that is revolutionary in its sacrifice for the least. Christianity, alas, is not everyone's cup of tea. It is not the proverbial "big tent"It requires commitment, singleness of heart, radical empathy, and all the courage we can muster... and in these dark days, risk.... It is the commitment of our lives ... for life.... But where else would we go?... to what else shall we give our life? Haven't we learned by now what is true, and what is good? This call... this Cause, at last, is all there is... and cause for celebration... a celebration not for a select few, but a celebration for all... a celebration of the tranquil brightness that is the very life of God, a life that God is so very pleased to share.