

Reflection Mar 10, 11 2018

Readings: 2 CHR 36:14-16, 19-23, Ps 137:1-2,3,4-5,6, EPH 2:4-10, JN 3:14-21

**Like last week, our readings point to the love and mercy of God. God sent us Christ, the light of the world to guide us to eternal life. Now this light also reveals our shadows and many of us don't want to look at them or find it easier to see someone else's shadow than our own.**

**Let's explore today's readings a bit.**

**First reading – God keeps sending prophets to speak to his people and they did not listen as they worshipped idols, were unjust to one another – compassion is God's motivation – then they were overrun and those who survived went to Babylon – the people spent 70 years there – and then King Cyrus, King of Persia, announces that God has charged him to build God a house in Jerusalem and prays for whoever goes up to Jerusalem "may his God be with him!"**

**2<sup>nd</sup> reading – we are saved by God's love, God's grace - - - not our good works. God is merciful.**

**Gospel – 'God so loved the world' – God loves each of us, we have the light of Christ to guide us**

**So, how important is light to us? We know our sun creates warmth and its rays enable plants to grow and other biological rhythms to be maintained. We use various forms of light to sanitize things. Light is essential to our survival.**

**Have you ever been in a place with no light?**

**A month ago I was in Lalibela, a town in the Amhara region of northern Ethiopia. It's known for its distinctive rock-cut churches dating from the 12th and 13th centuries. These are pilgrimage sites for Coptic Christians, the Ethiopian Orthodox as well as tourist destinations. Many of the churches are joined by tunnels and trenches. In the rainy season these may be used for drainage. During the dry times, they can be used to explore the churches. We visited in the dry season.**

**One of the tunnels we walked through is called the ROAD TO HELL. It is about 20 metres long and very, very dark. There are some turns so you cannot see the light at the end from either entrance. Once in the tunnel, you cannot see anything, even your hand before your face or that the tunnel has some areas with a rather low ceiling. I walked along with my right hand to the wall and left hand constantly moving above my head so I knew when the ceiling dropped. It was frightening to be in such complete darkness, especially with such a name. To be cut off from one another and from light – this felt awful, even when I knew it to be temporary and only a few meters long.**

**Contrast this with the words of John in the Gospel,**

**John 3:16 is such a wonderful summary of the Gospel message: 'For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life' and ' . . . the light has come into the world'.**

Mark Beresford, an Anglican priest, says "This is not a cosmic mission to 'condemn'. That, according to this passage, is already the case for all who do not 'believe' in this divine act of love and salvation. This is a mission to *save*. *Mercy* and *compassion* are its core.

*Mercy and compassion are at the core of God.*

Of course, the church is *learning* this radical reality as much as anyone else. *Our* natural response to sin is to condemn. It turns the focus *from* us. It allows us to look at the other rather than at ourselves.

*It makes this passage so very important. God is different to us. We want to point and highlight the shortfall of others. God wishes to save us from ourselves.*

And yet this is no suggestion that God is willing to ignore our sin – allowing it to remain the world’s worst-kept secret. *Uncomfortably, Jesus is a shining light.”*

**We sometimes hide from the Jesus’ light. We keep things secret. We live in fear. We live separated from Jesus and from one another.**

**This is not what these readings call us to do. We have another option. We are invited to live in Jesus’ light. And that light *exposes*. But this is not to condemn. It is to see ourselves clearly so that we can learn to live lives of “deeds . . . done in God”.**

**Our faith in Jesus moves us from darkness to light. Jesus’ light transforms us. Do we have enough light? In an interview in 1981, a few days before she died, Peace Pilgrim said, “It isn’t more light we need, it’s putting into practice what light we already have. When we do that, wonderful things will happen within our lives and within our world.”**

**Let’s continue living our Lenten journey aware of Jesus’ light, knowing that it allows us to grow into the people God calls us to be and trusting that we have enough light to change.**

Other interesting places to check out:

[http://theark1.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/John-3-14-21\\_18.docx.pdf](http://theark1.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/John-3-14-21_18.docx.pdf)

<https://www.barefootfollower.com.au/> reflections by Mark Beresford

Material from Mar 7 2018 Living Lent Daily, Loyola Press

In Jesus, God saves us by becoming so vulnerable that we are able to kill him in a vile and humiliating way. The crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus assure us that God's offer of friendship will never be withdrawn, no matter what we do. If the cross did not result in a withdrawal of the offer, then nothing we do will lead to a change of God's heart. We can, however, refuse the offer. Friendship is a mutual relationship, and a person has to accept the offer; he or she cannot be coerced or tricked into it. And any human being's final refusal of God's friendship breaks God's heart. Still, God does not turn away from such a person in anger and rage. God lives eternally with a broken heart. That's how vulnerable God wants to be.

From interview with Peace Pilgrim in 1981 *Conducted by Ted Hayes, manager of radio station WKVI in Knox, Indiana, the day before she was killed in an automobile accident. This interview can be found at the end of the Campbell House audio tape and in Appendix V of the Peace Pilgrim Book.*

Peace, let me ask you this: Was it always Peace Pilgrim, or did you have a name as a little girl?

**PP:** Oh, it isn't my old name, but if you should address a letter to my old name, I would not even receive the letter. I'm very much Peace Pilgrim now. I am told that it's a professional name, consistently used, you see. It has been my legal name now for some ten or twelve years because, of course, it was taken way back in 1953 when I first started on my pilgrimage. Things have changed a good deal since then, but I will say one thing has not changed and that is my peace message. It still remains: This is the way of peace--overcome evil with good, and falsehood with truth, and hatred with love. That's still the message that I'm carrying after all these years. Well, you see, we haven't learned to live it yet. The key word for our times is really practice. It isn't more light we need, it's putting into practice what light we already have. When we do that, wonderful things will happen within our lives and within our world.