

DAYSPRING WORSHIP/December 14, 2014

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 (NIV):

16 Rejoice always, 17 pray continually, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

19 Do not quench the Spirit. **20** Do not treat prophecies with contempt **21** but test them all; hold on to what is good, **22** reject every kind of evil.

23 May God alone, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. **24** The one who calls you is faithful.

This is the word of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Prayer:

Brothers and sisters,
as we joyfully await the glorious coming of the Christ,
let us offer our prayers for the needs of the church, our community, and the world...
as we wait in expectant silence(pause 10 seconds)

God of joy and exultation,
You strengthen what is weak;
You enrich the poor
and give hope to those who live in fear.
Look upon our needs this day.
Make us grateful for the good news of salvation
and keep us faithful in your service
Until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ ...
as we sing the prayer that Jesus taught us. (Casey leads Lord's Prayer)

WAITING PATIENTLY IN EXPECTATION

a story told through the Christian Mystics

"Conditor alme siderum" by Guillaume Dufay (Kerm Towler and Paul Krogh)

Narrator/HENRI NOUWEN (1932-1996)

Without patience our expectation generates into wishful thinking. Patience comes from the word "patior" which means "to suffer" ... What seems a hindrance becomes a way; what seems an obstacle becomes a door; what seems a misfit becomes a cornerstone.

Mechtild of Magdeburg (1210-1282)

There comes a time when both body and soul enter into such a vast darkness that one loses light and consciousness and knows nothing more of God's intimacy. At such a time when the light in the lantern burns out, the beauty of the lantern can no longer be seen. With longing and distress we are reminded of our nothingness.

St. John of the Cross (1542-1591)

The dark night is an inflowing of God into the soul, which cleanses it of its ignorances and imperfections, habitual, natural, and spiritual. Contemplatives call it infused contemplation, or mystical theology, by which God secretly teaches the soul and instructs it in the perfection of love, without its own part or understanding how this happens. Insofar as infused contemplation is the loving wisdom of God, it produces two special effects in the soul, for by both purifying and enlightening it, this contemplation prepares the soul for union with God in love.

Alfred Delp (1907-1945)

Advent is a time of being deeply shaken ... The shaking, the awakening: with these, life merely begins to become capable of Advent. It is precisely in the severity of this awakening, in the helplessness of coming to consciousness, in the wretchedness of experiencing our limitations that the golden threads running between Heaven and earth during this season reach us; the threads that give the world a hint of the abundance to which it is called, the abundance of which it is capable.

“O Magnum Mysterium” Tomas de Luis Victoria**Narrator/HENRI NOUWEN**

Somewhere we know that without a lonely place our lives are in danger. Somewhere we know that without silence words lose their meaning, that without listening, speaking no longer heals, without distance closeness cannot cure. Somewhere we know that without a lonely place our actions quickly become empty gestures. The careful balance between silence and words, withdrawal and involvement, distance and closeness, solitude and community forms the basis of the Christian life and should therefore be the subjects of our most personal attention. Let us therefore look somewhat closer, first at our life in action, and at our life in solitude.

Meister Eckhart (1260-1327)

There is a saying of the wise man, ‘When all things lay in the midst of silence, then leapt there down into me from on high, from the royal throne, a secret word.’ (pause) First, we will take the words, “In the midst of silence there was spoken in me a secret word.” But, sir, where is the silence and where the place in which the word is spoken?

St. Augustine (AD 354-430)

Imagine if all the tumult of the body were to quiet down, along with all our busy thoughts about earth, sea, and air; if the very world should stop and the mind cease thinking about itself, go beyond itself, and be quite still; if all the fantasies that appear in dreams and imagination should cease, and there be no speech, no sign: Imagine if all

things that are perishable grew still -- for if we listen they are saying, "We did not make ourselves; he made us who abides forever" -- imagine, then that they should say this and fall silent, listening to the very voice of him who made them and not to that of his creation; so that we should hear not His word through the tongues of men, nor the voice of angels, nor the clouds' thunder; nor any symbol, but the very Self which in these things we love, and go beyond ourselves to attain a flash of that eternal wisdom that abides above all things. And imagine if that moment were to go on and on, leaving behind all other sights and sounds but this one vision which ravishes and absorbs and fixes the beholder in joy; so that the rest of eternal life were like that moment of illumination which leaves us breathless: Would this not be what is bidden in scripture, Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord?

"Come to Us" Heather Sorenson

Narrator/HENRI NOUWEN

If you would ask the Desert Fathers why solitude gives birth to compassion, they would say, "because it makes us die to our neighbor." At first this answer seems quite disturbing to a modern mind. But when we give it a closer look we can see that in order to be of service to others we have to die to them; that is we have to give up measuring our meaning and value with the yardstick of others. To die to our neighbors means to stop judging them, to stop evaluating them, and thus to become free to be compassionate. Compassion can never coexist with judgment because judgment creates the distance, the distinction, which prevents us from really being with the other.

Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179)

The true and ardent lamp of Charity was lighted when God so loved humanity that for its love He sent His Only-Begotten to take a human body ... And so He inflamed humankind with Charity that they might faithfully assist all the needy, and this virtue is clothed with the tunic of God's sweetness that she may shine upon all people with true light for their devotion, use and profit.

You shall therefore do these things with all your heart, and all your soul, and all your strength, and all your mind, that nothing may be wanting to you in faith ... You shall also love yourself. How? If you love God, you love your salvation. And, loving yourself in all this, you shall also love your neighbor. ... You shall rejoice in his righteous prosperity and heavenly salvation.

"How Long" by Mark Miller, Bill Edwards, solo

Narrator/HENRI NOUWEN

It is Advent again. Oscar Uzin in his sermon said "Be alert, be alert so that you will be able to recognize your Lord in your husband, your wife, your parents, your children, your friends, your teachers, but also in all that you read in the daily papers." The Lord is coming, always coming. Be alert to God's coming. When you have ears to hear and

eyes to see, you will recognize him at any moment of your life. Life is Advent; life is recognizing the coming of the Lord.

Meister Eckhart (1260-1328)

Here in time we celebrate the eternal birth that God the Father bore and still bears constantly in eternity, and which is also now born in time, in human nature. St. Augustine says that this birth is happening continually. We should ask ourselves: If it doesn't happen in me, what good is that birth after all? What ultimately matters is that God's birth should happen in me. ... We are all meant to be mothers of God... for God is always needing to be born.

Et in Terra Pax" Sally K. Albrecht (Youth Choir)

Narrator/HENRI NOUWEN

God came to us because he wanted to join us on the road, to listen to our story, and to help us realize that we are not walking in circles but moving towards the house of peace and joy. This is the great mystery of Christmas that continues to give us comfort and consolation: we are not alone on the journey. The God of love who gave us life sent us his only Son to be with us at all times and in all places, so that we never have to feel lost in our struggles but always can trust that he walks with us ... Christmas is the renewed invitation not to be afraid and let him – whose love is greater than our own hearts and minds can comprehend – be our companion.

Julian of Norwich (1342-1416) and Teresa of Avila (1515-1582)

Julian: *God, of your goodness,*

Teresa: *Let nothing disturb you,*

Julian: *give me yourself,*

Teresa: *nothing cause you fear;*

Julian: *for you are enough for me, and*

Teresa: *All things pass*

Julian: *I can ask for nothing ... less*

Teresa: *God is unchanging.*

Julian: *which can pay you full worship*

Teresa: *Patience obtains all:*

Julian: *And if I ask for anything ... less*

Teresa: *Whoever has God*

Julian: *always I am in want*"

Teresa: *Needs nothing else,*

Julian: *but only in you do I have everything.*

Teresa: *God alone suffices.*

Wait for the Lord, Renew 278

Narrator/HENRI NOUWEN

Mysticism is for all, not just for a few special people. Based on our baptism, all are called to a mystical life, to communion with God. We need to claim that, to taste it, and feel it, to trust that the deeper we live in this communion, the more our behavior will witness to the truth. ... The great challenge is to discover that we are truly invited to participate in the divine life of God; our mother, father, the son and Holy Spirit.

Alfred Delp

The holiness of Advent and Christmas is that particular mysteries of God happen to us, and that we respond ... and that the great mystery – the Mysterium – is hidden. Something happens between Heaven and earth that passes all understanding. This mystery is made present to us, continues in the world till the end of time, and is always in the process of happening – the abiding Mysterium.

"What is That Light" Terry York and David Schwoebel

Julian of Norwich

As truly as God is our Father, so truly is God our Mother, and he revealed that in everything, and especially in these sweet words where he says: I am he; that is to say:

Mechtild of Magdeburg: *I am he, the power and goodness of fatherhood;*

St. John of the Cross: *I am he, the wisdom and the lovingness of motherhood;*

Alfred Delp: *I am he, the light and the grace which is all blessed love;*

Meister Eckhart: *I am he, the trinity; I am he, the unity;*

St. Augustine: *I am he, the great supreme goodness of every kind of thing;*

Hildegard of Bingen: *I am he who makes you to love;*

Teresa of Avila: *I am he who makes you to long;*

Julian of Norwich: *I am he, the endless fulfilling of all true desires.*

CLOSING MONOLOGUE/Julian of Norwich

Life
is a precious thing
to me
and a little thing:

my life is a little thing,
when it will end here
is God's secret.

And the world
is a little thing,

like a hazelnut
in his – her hand

but it is in the ever-keeping,
it is in the ever-loving,
it is in the ever-making,

how should any thing be amiss?

Yes, all shall be well,
and all will be well,
“and thou shalt see thyself
that all manner of thing
shall be well.”

Kind friends,

I pray God grant you
all your good wishes,
desires, and dreams –

it is all in the choosing,

it is all in the asking.

Hymn of Promise, UMH 707