

The Encounter David Haas

Where shepherds lately knelt,
and kept the angel's word,
I come in half-belief,
a pilgrim strangely stirred;
but here is room
and welcome there for me.

In that unlikely place
I find him as they said:
sweet new born Babe, how frail!
And in a manger bed:
a still small Voice
to cry one day for me.

How should I not have known
Isaiah would be there,
his prophecies fulfilled?
With pounding heart, I stare:
A Child, a Son,
the Prince of Peace – for me.

Can I, will I forget
how Love was born and burned
its way into my heart –
unasked, unforced, unearned,
to die, to live,
and not alone for me.

Prayer Leader:

Betsy Nero
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Christ
walks the earth
as your neighbor.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer



Photo by Betsy Nero



Our prayer is characterized by silence ~
Be still and know that I am God!

In that silence we listen for a new word.
God is present in all our lives.
God cares for us, and
our life experiences are a source
of deepening knowledge of God and self.

Inspired by God's Word in the silence
we share from our hearts.

Renew · Refresh · Refocus

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Ponder: Those Who Go to the Manger Will be Transformed
Dietrich Bonhoeffer

If God chooses Mary as his instrument, if God himself wants to come in to this world in the manger at Bethlehem, that is no idyllic family affair, but the beginning of a complete turnaround, a reordering of everything on this earth. If we wish to take part in this Advent and Christmas event, then we cannot simply be bystanders or onlookers, as if we were at the theater, enjoying all the cheerful images. No, we ourselves are swept up into the action there, into this conversion of all things. We have to play our part too on this stage. For the spectator is already an actor. We cannot withdraw.

What part, then, do we play?
Pious shepherds, on bended knee?
Kings who come bearing gifts?
What sort of play is this, where Mary becomes the mother of God? Where God enters the world in the lowliness of the manger? The judgment of the world and its redemption – *that* is taking place here. And the Christ child in the manger is himself the one who pronounces the judgment and the redemption of the world. He repels the great and the powerful. He puts down the mighty from their thrones, he humbles the arrogant, his arm overpowers all the proud and the strong, he raises what is lowly and makes it great and splendid in his compassion. Therefore, we cannot approach his manger as if it were the cradle of any other child. Those who wish to come to his manger find that something is happening within them.

Readings: Dietrich Bonhoeffer

We have to become clear in the presence of the manger in the stable of Bethlehem how we want to think, from this point on, about what is high and low in human life

So long as there are men and women, Christ walks the earth as your neighbor, as the one through whom God calls on you, speaks to you, and makes demands on you. That is the most serious and most blessed thing about the Advent message. Christ lives in the shape of the person in our midst.

God is not ashamed of human lowliness. He enters right into it. He chooses a human being to be his instrument and works his wonders where they are least expected.

Where else are we to seek mercy for all our betrayals, all our weak faith, all our failures, but in the lowliness of God in the manger?

God is love. That means that the beginning and the end of human life are sheltered in God's hands.

The fact we are allowed to live as real human beings and to love the real person beside us, is founded solely on the incarnation of God, on the unfathomable love of God for humankind.

Sharing...
a word...
a phrase...
a reflection...