

“This Advent: O Come!”

“O Come...Back To Your Roots!”

Isaiah 11: 1-10; Psalm 72: 1-7; Matthew
3: 1-12

December 8, 2020 *Second Week of
Advent*

O come...on, O come by...here, O come
over.

O Come when you are ready... O
Come to think of it...

O come on down - the price is right!

O come...to me!

O come away with me...to the
manger.

Deeply, quietly we...want to...come. To
belong.
To come to understand. Come lovingly.
Be love.

Long to have agency in our own lives.
For light to *come with us* into the
mangers,
the unknowns of our lives.
Yes! Oh do we long to come!

*But...we're often afraid to come...
as the angels warn us not to be!*

*We're afraid...to make ourselves
vulnerable...
to face the mangers of risky
possibility in our lives.*

Uncertain how to be and what to
do...so...

we ask holiness...to come to
us...first or instead!

Feeling vulnerable, or helpless, or in
over our heads,
fear and trepidation sometimes seeming
to block the way...

we want Holiness to come to us!

Come to us because so often we don't
know how...

to come to...terms with our own
lives.

**And, indeed, this is just what is
about to happen...Holiness is
coming to us!**

We call it Christmas!

O Come...Christmas! It comes. O
Come!

Christ is about to come as baby Jesus to
show us the way
to live from a heart of compassion...to
show compassion
to ourselves and others...how to live as
enlightened beings.

Christ is about to break through as baby
Jesus.

Break through our darkness and fear.

Your life? You don't have to get
over it!

You can't! Rather, live through it!

You can't escape your life...but you can live anew through it!

Holiness is about to put on a human face.

This baby Jesus comes to help *you*...hold all of life together in significance, in ways that...

make the lion to lay down with the lamb...

your family to gather around the dinner table...

give you the courage to leave that job,

to stay in that relationship,

to find yourself free and at peace.

In Jesus is to be revealed the redemptive pattern that we call the life and death of things, the grace of God's Do-Overs!

(Adapted from Richard Rohr's *Radical Grace: Daily Meditations*, pp. 387-388)

The Universal pattern for living unconditional love is being born again...

in just a few weeks...so...come...

O Come...Away With Me To The Manger.
Let it be so!

Prompting:

At Advent, everyone, church and unchurched alike,
is given a "free pass" to openly and boldly proclaim the ***dream of peace.***

The dream of peace may be *the single thread* that connects us to every community, in every country, in every time and place throughout history.

Peace is a core value of our human heart...

~whether that's a ceasefire,

~a setting aside of personal differences with friends,

~a way to agree to disagree and move forward together at work,

~a way to work through feelings in families which does no harm to anyone.

Peace.

John the Baptist had it part right.

A Prince of Justice and Peace is to come and we need to be prepared, get ourselves straight!

One is coming whose sandals John was not worthy of carrying. So powerful, he would change the world.

He would see us as we really are...as Isaiah says...he won't be fooled! He will know the difference between outward appearances and inner-repentance (kings and commoners alike!)

*You know...*those demonstrations of pious humility or occasionally doing "right things"

vs. having your heart energy shaped anew which shapes intention toward:

PEACE not only for yourself but for everyone
in the same moment.

Yes, John had this right but I'm not so sure he understood "how" ...how Jesus would do this. We won't achieve it doing what we've always done the way we've always done it.

John uses violent images of burning the chaff, baptizing with fire, with his threshing fork gathering his wheat. (Of course, remember, he's talking to the Sadducees...a brood of vipers!)

It's as if John thinks Jesus will beat the bad guys at playing the conquering game on their terms as if the ends justify the means. As if that would bring...peace?

John did the best he could but could only know so much, go just so far. His thought-world could not have conceived of what would be possible...come next.

He prepared the people by baptizing them to survive the world.

But Jesus baptizes us to be able to upturn the world!
More than survive it...re-create it! Put down roots and resist...but without violence,
including everyone!

Jesus came powerfully to conquer the world
with assertive compassion and personal integrity...
not sweetsy niceness or brutal power-over!

Assertive love sees clearly what really is (underneath the surface of things) and invites
individuals to then live
more intentionally! Freely, Peace-able-ly.

The Jesus who comes to change the world through engaged compassion is a healer, wisdom teacher, and preacher.

Jesus is the incarnation of the Christ energy of wisdom and understanding, living
justice and integrity
in each moment as life meets Him.

He changes the world one person at a time...and the ripple effect changes everything!

From the stump of Jesse (a stinky shepherd who becomes the grandfather of David) a new shoot, a fresh start was coming...has come! **O Come!**

The shoot will bear the burden of the endless names and responsibilities...of teaching and preaching and staying alongside humanity to help us find our way.
That shoot is Christ in Jesus.

Listen:

When it seems most hopeless, if we will come to the manger of possibility within, the baggage around our hearts will drop away, and new life will come...

for those prepared to believe and receive it.

To take a do-over: repent and receive grace.

YES! When it seems things cannot get worse, when everything we have counted on,

when everything our society ever told us mattered fails—

money and success and connections and achievement *and* being good *and* being nice—

when these have proved to be nothing but emptiness, lies and idle hope,

when life no longer lasts and we have the good judgment to see our old lives for what they really were,

when the wolf and lamb within will not lie down together...

your family won't gather and your work life is in disarray,

your kids aren't doing what you want them to do...

Then, then we can do what we must do...choose!

Be part of a root system that flows from this new shoot.

Then we can choose to live the just life, the kind life,
the Christ life.

In the advent of the world's realities, harsh realities, we can choose to live differently. Something will come out of nothing. We can branch out...better yet, root out!

The growth of this new shoot, of compassion, of truth told in kindness, within yourself or in the world, well...it takes a root system to survive and thrive. A root system.

So, here's the thing: We're all putting down roots all the time. We plant ourselves with attitude, expectations, limitations.

So ask yourself, what kind of roots am I putting down?

Are they anchoring me and holding me up?

Or are they heavy, holding me back?

Are you grounding yourself in universal love...in Christ's Universal pattern of redemptive love...

called Graced Do-Overs?

Are you rooted in Holy Love and Peace?

Are you grounded as you face life's daily grind and the world that seems to have left peace behind?

If not, how's that going for you?

Well, no wonder you want Christmas to come!

The Psalmist says God will be like water washing over you, a refreshing rain: wearing away hardness, washing away burdens, raining peace on each one.

The psalmist speaks of leaders who know and do justice. Who are rooted in these ways.

Friends, the tough Advent news is that YOU are one of these leaders...we are the priesthood of believers, leaders every one of us...ministers in every way, every day.

It is YOU that the psalmist foretold!
You are Queen or King of your own life, your own day!
Christ to be born in you!

You have the power to change your own life and the world.
And...it has to be in that order, too!

A leader does their own work first

(puts down their own roots first), looks at themselves first
before they go about the worshipful work of leading others.

~So, before you gripe about someone else, look to see how that very quality you're griping about...lives in you.

Be Washed, renewed...root yourself. O Come!

~Before you "discipline" your family, remember how *you* have been disciplined and all those promises you made not to do that to your own family or colleagues. **Be Washed, renewed, rooted, and change your family forever!**

O Come!

~Before you are bossy, give orders to others, remember how you receive orders and rethink how you want to give them and be that real leader. **Washed, renewed, rooted.**

O Come!

~Before you get in the car to rush yourself to meet appointments, go shopping, take others places,
remember how you said these very things empty you out.

Be self-aware, self-assertive and lead your day somewhere else...model a new way of being for those around you.

Let go of hecticness...it's easy once you do it. Living a hectic life is often a way we cover up our feelings and our fears. **Wash, renew, root. O Come!**

If whining and complaining, stop!

Take on a cooperative spirit and do something about the things that get you down or overwhelm you or tire you out.

Lead yourself somewhere new.

Isn't this the peace you long for?

As long as there is sun in the sky and moon at night...like a gentle rain or powerful shower, you can come to peace.

God calls you to bring newness, refreshment, peace to your day, to this world. Let the past be. You can if you will.

In more traditional church language, what are those voices crying out for...in our time...what is the repentance we need to move toward?

This is not a task to do, yet another burden to carry...this is an invitation to lay down the burden and walk upright, humble and free "to be" new this day!

Remember, Jesus did not hack down trees, he pruned branches so they would bear much fruit.

He strengthens at root level.

This second Sunday of Advent...

O Come!

You can't escape your life...but you can live anew through it!

Holiness is about to put on a human face.

O Come away to the manger with me!