

“This Advent: O Come!”

“O Come...Be...Taken!”

Matthew 24:36-44

August 9, 2020

Summer Rerun of December 1, 2019

First 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:

The original color of Advent was black...not because it's a downer or depressing time or a time of mourning.

The dark color marks a challenging time of consciously

entering the unknown, feeling vulnerable but fully held in anticipation (active hope with a developing plan)

...anticipation of a future beyond what we have been able to think up in our own thought world
or figure out or conceive on our own.

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You know...I think I most often see it in the faces of young lovers or those newly in love, ...  
or between loved ones in a crisis.

Sometimes I see it in the faces of children totally engrossed in play or busy with an activity provided for them by someone who understands how their minds and imaginations work.

Sometimes...I see it in your faces as we study and pray or play together or as I look out to behold you during worship.

It's the look of deep caring, devotion.

It's the look of engagement.

It's the look of totally being taken with every word, every movement, every possibility offered in a moment.

It is the look of a sure and certain...patient pause...  
in anticipation of impending love and peace.

A peaceful pause that slows you, that allows you to see your life and its issues more clearly...

to behold God's simplicity, God's possibility...  
within the moment at hand.

Today's reading tells us clearly...the power of belief is in our hands. It is our choice. ...just as it was Noah's choice, just as it was the choice of the people who ignored Noah's warning and God's invitation "to come" O Come! on board a new life.

God is not choosing some and leaving others behind.  
We are the ones doing the choosing.

God chooses each of us, is taken with each of us,  
adores each of us...smitten!

Are we taken with God?

Or are we, instead, still out there grinding away  
and overthinking ...  
taken with our routines and responsibilities,  
telling ourselves the same old stories over and over again?

As they were in their routine lives...out in field, grinding meal...one got it...one was smitten, one taken,  
the other missed that moment's chance.

So often in the midst of what we are doing, we are grouchy, self-centered, judgmental....miss out on the moment!

We have tunnel vision or we over-function, we're scattered  
...and we miss it! The moment! Why?

Perhaps we don't know any another way to live...and still  
be able to protect ourselves from perceived threats.

Perhaps we are avoiding or denying what's really going on  
in us...our real issues and needs.

Perhaps we don't know how...to see life differently, to retell  
our stories more compassionately...to ourselves...yet.

And so, we end up feeling left behind....  
left out...scattered...  
on the wind...often heartsick inside.

BUT, You've come here...to open to another way...  
to learn and practice how to live differently.

You choose to be taken...to come closer...to the manger

And, Jesus is here, too...not a celebration of a coming long  
ago or even a second coming.

Jesus comes here and to you now and each day  
to support your choosing...your being taken  
with possibility, doubts and all.

Jesus being born in you!

This is more than an idle promise....this is real.

This is the light that shines in the darkness...more than Christmas lights, tree lights, star light, neon lights, candlelight.

It is the light that shows up in a world...a world that often chooses to stay in the dark!

To some, the dark may actually feeling safer than stepping into the light...and that's saying something...sad!

But here's some good news:

All choices have holy, healing possibility. All redeemable.

This moment is perfect for God to help you be self-aware and touch your longing and then to do the next thing.

Your choices speak very clearly to what you value... no words needed....just look...at what you are taken with! What defines your usual days!

~Is it self-importance...taken with a sense of or need for power...in your family-being the boss and making choices for others, or power at work, or here perhaps?

~Taken with money...a never enough pity party and excuse not to do the things that are "right" because you let yourself think you don't have enough....or, spending too much on stuff that doesn't bring lasting joy.

Or not spending as a way of impressing others with your generosity or frugality?

~Are you taken with image? ...portraying yourself in ways that really don't reflect how you feel or comes at great cost to your person? Being better than you really are...*or worse, less capable than you really are...*for affect?

~Is it your body...diet, binge, diet...exercise not at all or to the point of excess...are you taken with this?

Sexism, materialism, racism, addiction, depression....  
O come...away!

What are you taken with?

O Come! And revisit your choices  
and ask for the support you need to do so!

One was taken and one wasn't...one was taken with the notion of God and life as it can be...one wasn't.

One was just getting through the day, in the field doing the work.

One was taken with untold possibility for what life can be in God....chosen even as she continues to work the field.

This one...held her work, her play, her choices differently.

Chose to tell her story...newly, to herself...going forward...  
to and beyond Bethlehem!!!

She is taken with God!

She centers her life in ways that are life giving...

She goes into the unknown...she comes to Advent.  
Comes toward the crèche of possibility  
where the light shines on each and every choice.

For her, everyday has a "Christmas" quality of new life to it  
which can take you to places  
far beyond where think you can go!

For one such as her, every day is Christmas!  
It doesn't even matter which day Christmas comes because  
she's always ready for it!

The people of Noah's time did not know what was at risk  
and weren't prepared. And the thief Jesus speaks us wasn't  
paying attention. But we know! Are we paying attention?  
We can prepare? Will you? Will you come away to the  
manger?

O Come!

Every day God comes to us...a daily dose of Christmas!  
Are you ready for it!

Will you risk that Christmas only comes on December 25<sup>th</sup>?

What if it comes later today, tomorrow, or the day after  
tomorrow, or next week, or....?

Are you ready...to be taken with Holiness?



O Come on...now!

Christmas comes each time you open your heart and center on the truth and the hope, that trust and faith bring.

Christmas comes each time you let something be born in you that you never could have conceived of on your own.

O Come with away with us to the manger of the moment!

We're smitten with possibility, too! And together offer a  
suave for what is ailing you.

Together, we nurture that newness.

For here we offer peace...a peace within.

**Christmas comes each time you remain passionate about  
your life's possibilities for justice, joy, deep freedom.**

Each time you are smitten with holy possibility  
and come away.

Truth be told, Christmas comes everyday...for those who are taken with God!

God says, "Hello...it's Christmas again *today!*"

Put your Christmas energies into what it is life giving,  
not life stopping...life giving!

O Come!

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

Holiness is about to put on a human face.

**If we will be taken...if we will come away to the manger!**  
**O Come away to the manger with me!**