

"This Advent: O Come!"

"O Come...Dream Away With Me To The Manger..."

Accompanied By Angels!"

Luke 1:26-38; Matthew 1:18-25

August 30, 2020

Summer Rerun of December 22, 2020

Fourth 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:

Joseph dreams and Mary sees angels.

I wonder how many women and men that angel had to come to...how many ears and hearts they whispered into...before the angel found that woman and that man who would listen...willing to believe...
in themselves...within God's care!

~What would need to happen in a dream for you to awake believing you had heard God's voice amidst the chaos? What would it take to convince you?

Dream...really? Who has time for dreaming?

Oh...there is still so much to do...presents to buy and wrap, meals to prepare, cookies to bake,

not to mention parties and performances to attend or host. The chaos that we face this time of year!

The external and the internal chaos we face this time of year!

This time of year, the chaos is palpable, you can see it! It's the one time of year people's anxiety often become visibly noticeable...

maybe we're just too tired, too frantic to be able to hide our anxieties even if we want to!

We are worried about getting the "right" present, concerned about money, and anxious about other's expectations...

add to this the horrors of global and national strife
on the nightly news
and the insistent summons of the shopping malls.

No wonder we find ourselves paralyzed and distracted.

Outside of Sunday mornings, we barely even think about Advent...let alone relax enough...to dream!

We don't take the time to remember what happened 2019 years ago...more importantly...

we don't remember why...why it happened!

We are caught up in the chaos, in the darkness!

And here's Joseph, a good man, faced with his own chaotic situation. He could have chosen to do the easiest thing to get himself out of the chaos he found himself in... send Mary away...**dump her!**

He thought about it. Don't you?

But God has a different way of holding chaos.

God's experience of chaos is that it can be a very "good" thing...it is out of the formless void that creation happens! There is light in the darkness!

And I wonder if it's only then...when life gives way to chaos...that it can happen...
that we'll allow anything new to happen!

Chaos?

We've got plenty of wonderful chaos right here!

Each night this month and for the next 3 months,
we here at Tippe not only allow it...we invite it!

...chaos to give birth to something we never could have, would have thought possible
on our own...

it was all sudden and like a dream...come true...
a Christmas dream! Now a recurring dream!

We are visited by the angels at DI nightly!

YES! God comes to Joseph in a dream and offers him a remarkable suggestion...

**O Come, stay...stay with
the love of your heart and your life.
Stay true to yourself and your faith
beyond worldly pressures and cultural norms.**

And Joseph...remarkable man...
hears God's voice in his dream and listens to it
and believes...in God, in Mary!, in himself!

You see,

God not only chose Mary, God chose Joseph!

~What would need to happen in a dream...at night or a daydream, for you to awaken
in the darkness, awake believing you had heard God's voice amidst the chaos?

~If that were to happen to you like it happened to Joseph, what do you think the voice
might say to you...about the chaos of your life?

Somehow, each of us has to resist getting
so caught up in the chaos, that we stop dreaming,
lose touch with the love in our hearts!

Dreams, visions.

You know, for all time and in most cultures and religions, people have believed God
communicates through our dreams.

As we sleep, with our conscious defenses down,

God whispers (or shouts!) in our ear to bring us information for our own good.
Dreams are an alternative resource for approaching life's dilemmas.

Information our psyche and God wants us to be aware of...for our own good.

We need not be afraid...live afraid.

As the angels say!

And realize...even in dreams, in visions...

Mary's, Joseph's, yours,

God honors free will...gives us the chance to respond or not, make meaning out of our lives as we can.

But Oh...if we'll only come to the manger of possibility within us! God's dream for us!

The Advent invitation is not to get so engrossed in your thoughts, your troubles, your assumptions, the spin you're putting on things, your life's chaos...

that you stop hearing God's voice calling you to do something different ...a new thing...

do you not perceive it?

God is calling you to a new response to your life that may be the exact opposite of your first reaction or thought...

opposed to the cultural norm.

Things are not always what they seem!

The darkest night is just before the dawn!

Today's Wisdom Teaching in Matthew is all about Joseph! And the choice he has to make.

Does he or doesn't he listen?

You know...other pressures on him don't really come into it at all.

His decision on how to handle the situation is really all about...

him!

**Cultural norms and community expectations aside,
ultimately, your choices are about...you!**

The beauty of the birth story is its assurance that even amid life's difficulties...life's chaos and cultural norms,
God's promise can be trusted...

Emmanuel...God is with us always! You are not alone.

When we feel...gee, I didn't sign up for this!
We are to look for another sign...

a sign of hope, peace, joy, love...
right in the middle of what's going on...

and get up off the "woe is me" couch of ours and walk
our lives toward that sign of hope, invitation to more!

When all around us is chaos and our minds are troubled and life seems to be going
wrong,
and you didn't bargain for this!...

...maybe instead of rushing to relieve the pressure, quick fixing the problem,
bailing or dumping
we are to take that patient pause...to sleep on it!

Thank heaven Joseph slept!

Chaos.
Can we stay in it long enough for anything new
to come from it
before we dump or bale and quick fix our lives?
Rather than rushing to judgment,
will we sleep on it, go slow, look for new life

...something we could never have conceived of on our own being born from the very
chaos in our lives?

Not sure you can believe like that...that good often comes through the "bad",
something from nothing?

The beauty of this birthing story,
shines brightest in the beauty of the resurrection story: God with us no matter what!

You see, we have two signs to guide us back to the promise of God. One is a cradle,
the other is a cross! Through the cradle to the cross and to new life!

But you won't see either one, either sign...

You won't feel anything in your heart...

You won't find your courage to do even one thing differently...

You won't trust in the goodness of God or people...

if you dismiss what's in your heart
or bale on the chaos, want a quick fix,
dump people who perplex,
or move too quickly through your life!

If this is how you choose to live,
the living of your outward life will be at great cost to your inward life and sense of well-being and...peace.

This Christmas, we're invited to **come!**

To live through the chaos of our real lives to a new way of being who we are...
in the midst of what's happening!

No blame, no shame...just like Mary and Joseph!

One more thing...I think when we become aware of our deepest longing, which is
the holy waiting to be born from within...

As we let ourselves become aware of our heart's deepest gratitude,

we find a deep wisdom that is not afraid!

Then....we know the difference between the things
we can change and the things we cannot.

Go with what you can change!

And when we awake from our dreams and respond to this longing in gratitude with
courage,
we find a serenity.

That's the peace associated with this season of giving birth to the impossible!

Isn't this what we most long for: Peace!

A Homeless couple found no room in the inn...but ultimately, for them...there is
room!

There is room for you, too! There is room **in** you!

And God is singing in your ear:

Dream a little dream...of me!

So Come...along the Holy Way...to the manger...
with us.

O Come!

O Come Away To The Manger...with us!