

Holy Mother, Hear Our Prayer...

“Think Mercy”

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

The Thunder Perfect Mind 3:1-19

December 13, 2020

Third Week of Advent

Theme: Holy Mother, Hear My Prayer

The spirit of Advent is one of deep longing...longing for more, for other...for we know deeply...there must be more.

Surely God is not done with creation...or us, yet.

Advent is a time when we step once again into the unknown...in pursuit of more life, a just life...

A life of peace, joy, love, and hope...

A time when we remind ourselves that “opting out” is not a way for a grown-up to live,
a maturing Christian to be! (On Being)

We are growing up in the Advent stories of “just” hope, peace, joy, and love!

In Advent, we give ourselves...perhaps hesitantly at first but then more fully...give ourselves to Holy possibility.

Drawn toward Holiness, Holiness comes...into humanity ...our humanity...

offering a new perspective on life’s struggles.

Holiness meets us wherever we are in our Advent journey...

in our pain, our loneliness, our hope,
our joy.

Listen:

In the birth of Christ, opposing forces and contradictions, doubt and faith, suffering and compassion, the past and the future, pain and healing are brought together.

God is our all...the alpha and the omega. So...

Holy Mother, hear our prayer. In You, we place our trust.

Help us let go of my usual ways of thinking. Release us from our pain. Safe within your love, hold each hand that we may respond in a new way to the life that surrounds us.

Holy Mother, hear my prayer.
Holy Father, hear my prayer.

Teaching moments about Thunder Perfect Mind:

One of the gospels found in the Nag Hammadi discovery in the 1940’s, “Thunder” was most likely written in the Coptic language giving a different tenor to its English translation.

Unusual is that this is not a story of the faith community or Jesus,
but the voice of Holiness speaking directly to us about God's self.

This voice is of the feminine divine whom also expresses as the masculine divine...embracing both aspects of being in one voice, in one singular presence. Is this not what we moderns call: queer? We reclaim this word as a positive, along with the LGBTQIA+ community.

But this same duality is similarly found in the Jesus we meet in the gospels of John and Matthew, and Paul's First Letter to Corinthians. In these, Jesus is actively associated with the feminine figure of Divine Wisdom while one with the Creator. In this way, Jesus embodies both the Holy Feminine and Holy Masculine. He is the male incarnation of feminine wisdom.

So, "Thunder" brings and holds opposites together in one reality, in a sense, opposites needing and completing each other.

Life is not either/or, but rather...both/and.

Speaking as "Herself" and as "Himself,"

Holiness also speaks to this duality in each of us.

We do not live in a binary world, rather on a "continuum of being" which is beyond role and gender and work and family stereotypes.

Her voice says: Watch Out...be alert to making faulty assumptions and judgements about God, yourself, others.

"Thunder" breaks down the many ways in which the ancient world stereotyped woman as glorious, shameful, corrupt, powerful, and opaque. "Thunder" associates women with the Divine in unexpected ways more real and relative to life's challenges, promises, and ironies, freeing women, and so, then also freeing men held in their own oppressive roles.

It does, along with several of the other recovered gospels, and with those of the traditional New Testament, invite a new look at patriarchal dominance and the understanding of the resurrection of Christ as a communal rather than individual resurrection.

God is within all things, all aspects of life, individual and communal. There is nowhere "Thunder" isn't...with the poor and the rich, the wise and the barbarian, the compassionate and the cruel. Grasping this is the way through...then, shall "all manner of thing be well."

We are invited to see opposites, opposing forces and assumptions, duality, within ourselves and approach our inner dialogue with a more compassionate understanding of our whole self and what may yet be possible.

And when tempted to see or set divides between peoples, be aware: none exists! We only move forward...together. This is our prayer and an affirmation of the love of God for each of us, all of us.

This is ADVENT's hope, peace, joy, love.

Prompting:

And don't you have to wonder...before they knew what we now know...what were they thinking so long ago when these words were first spoken? What were they thinking?

What are you thinking...coming here this morning?
What is God thinking...today...as we gather as a faithing community?

Of course, we know God is not a person, not a being...
more a mystery, a presence, a life-giving energy
that seeks for love and truth to meet so
peace and justice kiss! But, still...

I wonder, given these readings, if God is thinking:
"Oh Human Being, be glad you are here...
right there where you are. I am with you.
Please...don't rush ahead...in search of Christmas.
Don't rush! You'll miss it...the Advent of something
new coming into your world."

Advent isn't passive...

It is about living a transforming life even while waiting eagerly, expectantly...to be
even further transformed!

Advent is: Live what you already know to be Christmas while awaiting even more
Christmas!

In this sense, we do know what God is thinking, God's vision for us.

God's vision is that we live in the present, expecting...more while being other...than we
have been so far!

It's right there in that Isaiah passage...

what all people
returning from exile (to the land of their souls) are called to be and do
as they experience rebuilding the ruins of life.

The words of today's scripture capture our call and reflect the power and confidence
God has in us to be and do important works even as we are in process.

The images used assure us, while God calls us,
God holds us close. And extends to us: Mercy, mercy, mercy!

We are to live in grace...
to accept mercy and so, build up our lives...again.
And God will help!

Remember last week's comfort, God's strong arm holding you, Holy Mother holding your hand?

*Held close, surrounding myself with others aware of their own exile and ruin,
supporting me in my rebuilding project,*

*I find my power to begin...doing one new and important thing God now sets before
me as possible.*

You ask: So, what exactly am I to do with this grace?
We are...

*...to release, to proclaim, to provide, to comfort
...to be other able, comfort able, do able!*

Whether those I'm called to release...well...

whether "those" I'm called to release are imprisoned unjustly behind bars in Waupun
or imprisoned
around the table in my house,

whether those oppressed live in Yemen or in the abusive family next door,

whether the broken hearts are within those who live in the Ukraine or India or Iraq or
Afghanistan or 53206
or across our Covid riddled country...
or what's broken is within my own heart!

**And, I know I cannot begin to answer any one of these calls unless I
absolutely feel held by the
One Who Loves Me...and so be
able to see myself and situations more clearly, with more possibility, fewer
categories, labels...leaving the either/or world to live in the both/and
world.**

AND, enter the world of the Thunder Perfect Mind, till I see and leave what's really
going on in me.

I cannot comfort those who mourn till I see what is in deep grief in me...ruined in me,
in ruins in me, oh my!

Can't provide, if I'm not in touch with my own need and know the difference between
having needs and being needy.

Can't proclaim unless I hear God's voice for myself.
And start walking that talk!

Can't bring release to anyone until I release myself from the way things seem...the ways
I keep making them seem ...cause I'm afraid of...my own power!

I can't even release myself...until I am willing to resist my usual way of thinking about myself and the world!

Seeing myself more clearly, held within God's arms...
and yours...

frees me....I'm released from...

my own limiting thoughts and self-doubts!

If I had as much trust in me as you do...that would change everything.

It would mean...

I could stop taking things personally that aren't personal!

Stop projecting onto others my perceptions which are based on my feelings, not theirs.
Afterall, I've never even spoken to most others directly about their feelings and situations.

Seeing myself more clearly, with your help and God's,
I can see this life of mine strewn with possibility.

I can hear angels singing songs of freedom...from fears!

But really?

God thinks I can do all these things named in Isaiah...how?
How do I get to that place of grace and courage,
to live with a spirit of love and power and self-discipline
and see myself as able?

What on earth is God thinking...that I can do so much?

You're gonna need a lot more angels, Lord!

Isaiah's words and images lead us to the straight path full of mercy!

Listen:

~The Spirit is upon me...not in me...but upon me.
A gift, not another thing to figure out and do. Feel it!?
Being spiritual is not work to do...
but a freeing way to be.

Letting that higher angel already within...out!
Living my faith! Getting out of my way!
Mercy...

~I am given a garland, instead of ashes...God is focusing on the good as Paul says and Thunder Perfect Mind encourages.

God sees what is good in me and doesn't focus on
what coulda, mighta, oughta been! Old news!

The Holy doesn't focus on how I've made an ash out of myself...or fixate on the ashes of life.

But rather on the new insights made visible right there in those supposed ...ashes, ruins! my true foundation exposed.
So, why then?

Why do I, do we keep doing that...
seeing what's wrong with us rather than what's right?

Building from the ruins means standing on that "right" foundation you've been building, maybe built long ago, and laying one new brick at a time!
Mercy!

And, Isaiah goes on to say I am given...

~An oil of gladness instead of mourning. God coats me with oil to hold the gladness in and keep it from evaporating...don't let joy escape you!

Keep the energy, spiritual energy, in and don't let it dissipate!

Encourage my self/your self to focus on what's still standing, what works in life vs. giving all my energy to what doesn't.
Mercy.

Isaiah goes on to say...

~Stay grounded, rooted in faithfulness, as oaks of justice showing God's glory...claim our power for we are very powerful.

~The devastations of all the generations are before you/us, yep what your mom and dad did and didn't do to you and for you...are before you...

AND

all that they ruined can be raised up and life built anew by YOU...**if you chose to do it.**

The past isn't binding us. ...isn't defining us.
We can stop maligning...us!
Mercy.

~You are clothed in a garment of salvation...you have what it takes to save you from yourself. Put on a new you!

~You are covered with a robe of justice...when acting in the name of justice, God's providence offers an ultimate protection as you go out into the world...
3 feet at a time!

~God bedecks you for life, new life,
like a bridegroom and bride bedeck themselves to begin a new life.

~Justice and praise grow daily...just as a seed
in a garden shoots up and grows...and shows what is true.

It's a process.

Which means....what you see is not all that you get.
Thank God!

What you seem to be...is not all of who you are.

**You CAN love more than you have been loved!
You CAN love more than you have been loved!**

You are holy "just the way" you are
and God makes you able...has already gifted you everything you need to live a life of well-come.

(You come well and you bring wellness to others.)

**Even if your cup seems only half full...
in that half is everything you need.
And, you have a glass!**

This is what God is thinking:

...the gift *you* most need this season is the very same gift the *universe* most needs!

So, God gave the universe: You!

God gives you...a new, Advent **YOU** able to build a new life on the ruins of the old one, able...*to release, to proclaim, to provide, to comfort...to be other able, comfort able, do able!*

Each one of us is on purpose and needed.

Life is a gift to be lived just the way it is and here's some clues how to do live the gift...from Paul:

~Pray without ceasing...ask God to hold your prayer even when you can't. Pray so that you see life's sorrow, arguing, hurting, confusion through prayerful eyes.

~Rejoice always and be thankful in all things...every thing on the way to heaven is heaven...trust...some good will come...
the foundation on which we build.

~Don't malign the local prophets among us or within yourself...for there is always a bit of truth in their words,
and yet don't swallow what "they" say whole,
think for yourself...test it out.

~Hold fast to what is good...what are you holding on to?

~And see the temptations all around you to do evil (schemes, biases, jealousies, gossip) in countless little ways.

**You are other able, comfort able, do able.
Because you are a gift enabled!
You are the coming of Christmas!**

Turn away from the world's expectations,
your own faulty expectations.

Appreciate what you bring to each situation.
You are exactly what is needed now.

You have a thunder perfect mind.

So...
What are you thinking? Think...Mercy!

Cry out to Holy Mother, Holy Father!

Holy One, You hear my prayer. I lift your name, You're always there.
I feel Your joy running through my soul. All I need is Your hand to hold.
You are here. You are here. You hear my constant call.
You are here. I am here. Holy Mother, You are all.