

Thin Places
Saturday, February 11, 2006
6:30pm

WORDS FOR REFLECTION

What kind of God would He be if He did not hear the bangles ring on an ant's wrist as they move the earth in their sweet dance? And what kind of God would He be if a leaf's prayer was not as precious to creation as the prayer His own son sang from the glorious depth of his soul—for us. And what kind of God would She be if the vote of millions in this world could sway Her to change the divine law of love that speaks so clearly with compassion's elegant tongue, saying, eternally saying: all are forgiven—moreover, dears, no one has ever been guilty. What kind of God would She be if She did not count the blinks of your eyes—and is in absolute awe of their movements? What a God—what a God we have.

(What Kind of God? by the Indian mystical poet, Kabir [c. 1440-1518] translated by Daniel Ladinsky)

MUSIC—Tim Mayer

REMEMBERING THE SAINTS: February 11—Caedmon of Whitby

LITANY: Becoming a Voice for Those Who Have No Voice

Voice 1: I cannot speak, unless You loose my tongue; I only stammer, and I speak uncertainly; but if You touch my mouth, God, then I will sing the story of Your wonders!

Voice 2: Teach me to hear that story, through each person, to cradle a sense of wonder in their life, to honor the hard-earned wisdom of their sufferings, to waken their joy that Jesus stoops down to wash their feet, and looking up into their face says, "I know. I understand."

Voice 1: This world has become a world of broken dreams where dreamers are hard to find and friends are few.

All: God, be the gatherer of our dreams. You set the countless stars in place and found room for each of them to shine. You listen for us in Your heaven-bright hall. Open our mouths to tell our stories of wonder.

Voice 2: Teach us again the greatest story ever: the One who made the worlds became a little, helpless child, then grew to be a carpenter with deep, far-seeing eyes.

Voice 1: In time, the Carpenter began to travel, in every village challenging the people to leave behind their selfish ways, to be washed in living water, and let their God be God.

All: The ordinary people crowded round Jesus, frightened to miss a word that He was speaking, bringing their friends, their children, all the sick and tired, so everyone could meet Him, everyone be touched and given life.

Voice 2: Some religious people were embarrassed. They did not like the company Jesus kept, and never knew just what He would do next.

Voice 1: Jesus said, "How dare you wrap God up in good behavior and tell the poor that they should be like you? How can you live at ease with riches and success, while those I love go hungry and are oppressed? It really is for such a time as this that I was given breath."

All: His words were dangerous—not safe or tidy.

Voice 2: In secret, Jesus' opponents said: "It surely would be better that one person die. I think that would be better, if he could." Expediency would be the very death of Jesus. He died because they thought it might be good.

All: You died, Jesus, because of your passion and commitment to bring healing and

wholeness to all the earth. We have a dream that all the world will meet You and know You, Jesus, that someday soon all people everywhere will hear Your story and hear it in a way they understand. Loose our tongues to tell Your story. When we are uncertain with our stammering and stuttering, touch our mouths and help us to sing the story of Your wonders! May the world meet and know Jesus through us. Amen.

SACRED READING: 1 John 3:1-3

REFLECTION: A Reading from *Conversations with God*

MUSIC—Tim Mayer

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

The gospel writer, Mark, tells of God's personal words of love to Jesus after his baptism: "This is my beloved Son." John's first letter tells of the marvelous love that God has given us and that we are children of God.

All: We long to hear God's words addressed to us, but too often we are so overwhelmed by uncertainty about the future, or feelings of powerlessness in the present, that we fail to recognize God speaking to us personally, through others, or through the forces of nature.

We long to hear God's words addressed to us as people beloved by God.

All: Forgive us for listening to—and believing—voices that call us worthless and unlovable. Hear God's words speak louder: "You are my beloved sons and daughters."

(silent reflection)

ALL: Loving and merciful God, forgive us when we allow our fears and our worries to stifle your voice of love. As you spoke so clearly to Jesus, speak to us also so that your words of love resonate in every corner of our being and we know that we too are your beloved, on whom your favor rests. This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

These are God's words—spoken to us now and each and every day of our lives: "You are my beloved, with whom I am well pleased." Know therefore that in Jesus Christ we are healed and made whole.

All: Thanks be to God!

SONG: Love, Love, Love

Love, love, love,

That's what it's all about.

Cuz' God loves us,

We love each other.

Mother, father, sister, brother,

Everybody sing and shout!

Cuz' that's what it's all about.

It's about love, love, love.

It's about love, love, love.

SACRED READING: 1 John 3:14-20; 4:7-12

REFLECTION: Loved by God to Love Others

SONG: The Love Round

Love, love, love, love,
We are in a word love.
Love your neighbor as your brother.
Love, love, love.

PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY

JESUS PRAYER

All: Eternal Spirit, Father and Mother of us all, Holy is your name. Let justice and mercy fill all Creation and let us recognize that every thought and thing belongs to you. Feed us with the bread we need for today. Forgive our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Stand with us in trial and temptation. Free us from the grip of all that is evil. For you alone are creating our universe, now and forever. Amen.

OFFERING

We respond to God's love for us by sharing what God has first given us—our time, our talents, and our treasures. Thank you for sharing your time with us tonight. All treasures support God's mission for Soul Café of exploring and participating in the margins, uncovering the questions, being bold, and being present.

MUSIC—Tim Mayer

WORDS FOR REFLECTION

When we are truly there, dwelling deeply in the present moment, we can see that the bread and the wine are really the Body and Blood of Christ and the priest's words are truly the words of the Lord. The body of Christ is the body of God, the body of ultimate reality, the ground of all existence. We do not have to look anywhere else for it. It resides deep in our own being. The Eucharistic rite encourages us to be fully aware so that we can touch the body of reality in us. Bread and wine are not symbols. They contain the reality, just as we do.

(Thich Nhat Hanh. *Living Buddha, Living Christ*, pp 31-32.)

PREPARATION

Voice 1: We gather now as one body, joined around the table.

Voice 2: Here we celebrate God's presence among us,
united in Christ's spirit, broken and whole all at once;

All: Nourished and hungry, loved and loving, sinner and forgiven; we make one circle of knowing, believing, rejoicing, being, as God lights and rests among us.

INVITATION

Voice 1: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

Voice 2: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift our hearts to God.

Voice 1: Let us give thanks to God.

All: We give God thanks and praise.

Voice 2: Through God, all things came to be: the vast expanse of interstellar space, galaxies, suns, the planets in their courses, and this fragile earth, our island home.

All: From the primal elements, God brought forth the human race and blessed us with memory, reason, and skill. God made us stewards of creation.

Voice 1: In the fullness of time, God sent God's son, Jesus, to open the way of freedom, peace, healing, and wholeness.

Voice 2: On the night Jesus was betrayed, he took bread, blessed it, broke the bread, and gave it to his friends, saying:

All: "Take, eat. This is my Body given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

Voice 1: After supper, Jesus took the cup, gave thanks, and said:

All: "Drink this, all of you. This is my Blood which is shed for you and all people for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Voice 2: God of our fathers and mothers, God of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob, Rachel, and Leah:

All: Open our eyes to see your hand at work in the world about us, and deliver us from the presumption of sharing this meal for solace only, and not for strength; for forgiveness only, and not for renewal. Let the grace of this Holy Communion make us one body, one spirit in Christ that is sent into the world to participate in God's work.

Voice 1: Christ invites everyone to eat the bread of life, to drink the cup of salvation and healing.

All: Jesus said, "I am the bread of life. She who comes to me shall never hunger; he who believes in me shall never thirst."

SHARING THE MEAL

SACRED READING: 1 John 4:17-21

CLOSING PRAYER

Grandfather, Great Mysterious One, You have been always. You are older than all need, older than all pain and prayer. Look upon your children with children in their arms that they may face the winds and walk the Good Road to the Day of Quiet. Teach us to walk on the soft earth, a relative to all that live. Help us, for without You, we are nothing. Amen.

MUSIC—Tim Mayer



We will gather for Thin Places again on Saturday, March 4 at 6:30pm. If you're interested in participating in planning this, talk with Jill Dant.