

Reflection – Dec 20, 2020

Carol and Jeff:

As we journey towards the Bethlehem birth in this year 2020, perhaps we can journey with 20/20 vision - 20/20 vision to see this story through the story of a world tossed amongst the waves of COVID.

20/20 vision to discern the wonder of this story that invites us to larger vision of a larger story.

The travelers – call them magi – enter a house in Bethlehem and see the child with Mary, his mother. The child – an infant, unaware of King Herod, of Roman occupation, of the lame and the blind and the broken: a child who is aware of the love of his mother, of her caring, attentive presence, of his dependence upon her for food, warmth, a gentle smile, songs sung softly as he drifts off to sleep.

We are not told what Mary thought or felt when these travelers arrived and entered the house. Was she anxious? Was she curious? Had this child's life already been filled with so much wonder, so much blessing, so many angels, so many shepherds, so much God – that nothing could really surprise Mary anymore, nothing could make her fearful anymore?

Did Mary realize that whoever these travelers were, they had been brought her by God?

Whatever she thought, the travelers' actions revealed that they had come in awe – they knelt down in homage!

They knelt – an act of worship, respect, loyalty, honour, reverence and praise.

They knelt, and they offered gifts.

When you visit royalty, you bring gifts, gifts fit for a king, a royal court – gold, frankincense and myrrh.

The travelers offered the gifts they brought to this story God was reading into their world.

God was seeing something clear, something 20/20.

We each view the world from our own place, from our own lives, and all our experiences.

The Apostle Paul says that we see as if in a mirror – dimly, but one day we will see face to face.

It is as if, at that moment, the magi can see 20/20. They offer their gifts as an acknowledgement that this child is the herald of a new kingdom; that this child's birth and this child's life will change many people's perspective of life.

Jesus will see 20/20 – he will see – face to face - the people whom many refuse to see – the poor, the socially ostracized, the ones who limp through life.

He would 'see' them, touch them, speak with them, heal them, welcome them, eat with them.

Jesus would see a world that was God's world, not a world to be tamed or exploited by any empire.

And, Jesus would choose to walk in step with those whom others chose to step upon in their climb to power.

Jesus would offer forgiveness in place of retribution.

Jesus would offer healing in place of judgement.

Jesus would offer friendship in place of avoidance.

Jesus would offer love in every place.

Each Christmas time we return to the story of the birth of Jesus.

We return to this story that asks us to trust this story, to live by this story, to allow God to journey with us through this story.

There are many stories that can shape our lives, shape our world, direct our journey – stories that tell us we are defined by our wealth, our title, our success; stories that tell us that attaining power is the goal of life.

Christmas reminds us that our we are defined by God's story of love.

This story of the birth of Jesus is a story of God found, not in the most powerful, but in the most vulnerable, God who present in our places of suffering, brokenness and grief.

This story is about embracing and embodying compassion, forgiveness, love, healing and peace in all our relations.

This story is about travelers who choose to reject Herod's story of power by returning home without telling Herod how to find the child. This story is about the God of all creation, about the God whose story is a love story.

20/20 vision sees God in this story, sees God in our lives, and sees our lives in God's story of a larger Life and a larger Love.

Thanks be to God. AMEN