

## Carol's Reflection – Jan 16. 2022

I wonder when the last time was that someone read to you?

You know, that kind of reading when you might sink deeply into a chair, or the couch. You might pull a blanket up around you on a chilly night. You might sit up attentively so not to miss a detail.

In our family it is not unusual to be read too – not just because we –on occasion – have little ones around and out might come 'Never Touch a T. Rex', 'Bug Bear', or 'The Grinny Granny Donkey' – Hee Haw!

We read pieces of the news to one another often accompanied by –“Have you seen/heard...’

And, I think that we have told you that in Advent we read poetry aloud each evening – it is quite wondrous, really.

Reading to someone is a kind of love. It can be sharing words that have meaning, or finding something new together. Reading to someone is an invitation to a common moment of imagination or reflection. It takes us on a journey together. Reading to someone is a gift of presence for both the reader and the one who is listening.

It was a year ago that the Book Group read *Ragged Company* by Richard Wagamese. When we gathered on ZOOM we discovered that there were passages that we so poignant, so true, that we had to read them aloud to one another.

So please, for a moment today, let me read to you from *Ragged Company* before we turn our attention to the Gospel.

It comes in a discussion on love:

What was love like? He asked.

She smiled wistfully and looked off down the street. Then she crossed over to the railing, leaned on it, and looked up into the sky. “It was like blue,” she said finally. “Like that blue you see when the light changes from day into night. A deep, eternal blue that gets put in your heart and then, when it’s gone, for whatever reasons, you discover that it lives in the sky, right there where you can see it every night. An eternal, haunting blue. That’s what it was like.

...it goes on...

Hmm. Like light, I suppose.

What kind of light?

Like the light that comes first thing in the morning. You know, on those nights when sleep eludes you and you find yourself sitting alone watching the sky, waiting, the hours

slipping by unnoticed, and suddenly there's a change to it all. Nothing you could ever pin down with language, no name for it, just a subtle shift in the colour and the nature of the sky.

Yes. I've had nights like that.

That's how I remember love. Arriving without fanfare. Just a subtle shift in the sky and when it happens it's like watching morning light arrive – everything around you takes on different shape and form and texture, the world becomes new.

Yes. That's the magic isn't it?

Magic? Maybe. I like to think that we attract it, that somehow we are the creators of it, that our lives allow us to build a little chamber inside of us that calls to it, beckons, lures it like a lightning rod calls the bolt from the sky. We create love with longing. Longing is the lightning rod and it sits within us all. I know longing. And you're right, it makes us ready, eager, anxious.

You've learned a lot.

I suppose. Strange how that happens too.

What do you mean?

I think I mean that becoming, changing, evolving is like the light you describe as love. You move around the world and suddenly there's a shift and you realize that you understand, comprehend, know, and it changes everything. Changes you. You've changed.

Can't help it.

No, I suppose you can't.

I wanted to read that passage because I think it speaks to the Gospel today.

We are reading the story of the wedding at Cana in the Gospel of John. This is the first 'miracle' in the Gospel. John begins writing the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus with beautiful poetry – 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God.'

John crafts the Gospel in such a way that we are invited to faith from the very first moment – we are connected to Creation and we are connected to God. As Jesus is introduced to us, it is through John the Baptist. John tells us that he has seen the Spirit descend on Jesus like a dove, and it remained on him.

From there, Jesus calls disciples, on the next day. And the day after that, Jesus goes to Galilee where he calls more disciples. And on the third day there is a wedding at Cana in Galilee.

The Gospel tells the story – Jesus is at the wedding with his friends and his mother. In Jesus' day a wedding celebration would go on for days. And, at some point, the party runs out of wine.

Jesus' mother asks him to help, and when he hesitates, she says to the servants. 'Do whatever he tells you'. And, before we know it, Jesus has turned the water into wine.

It is like, for Jesus, the light in the sky has changed. It is like he has been touched by love, that eternal blue that lives in the sky where you can see it.

It is like everything has changed for him. Baptism, calling disciples, opening his own heart to this amazing love of God has meant that things cannot be contained. Love cannot be held, it has to be shared.

And, this is also where the Gospel starts with another message – as disciples follow, as Jesus brings new life to the wedding feast – it is a message that we are not helplessly defined by what is happening around us. Our experiences are not the only things that matter. We are shaped by how we respond to them. The disciples are shaped by the call to follow. Even Jesus is shaped by this – Jesus responds with generosity – with care about a celebration. Jesus is shaped by this goodness of life and abundance.

The wedding and all those at it might be shaped by the gift of wine that declares that abundance – this is the best – saved for last. Perhaps this is a moment of hope that abundance will launch more abundance – that goodness will bring out goodness. And, the Gospel will tell us again and again that God's generous love will be like the blue of the sky and always with us.

And, that love, that light, will call from us a blessing. It will be with us as we live – as we gain wisdom, as we learn more and more about ourselves and about our world.

Remember those words:

We create love with longing. Longing is the lightning rod and it sits within us all...it makes us ready, eager, anxious.

...

I think I mean that becoming, changing, evolving is like the light you describe as love. You move around the world and suddenly there's a shift and you realize that you understand, comprehend, know, and it changes everything. Changes you.

I believe we are ready right now. We are eager, and we are anxious. We are ready for a world filled with love – something so overflowing with grace and life that not even a pandemic can steal it from us.

We are ready to love others. We are ready to be loved.

And love, love changes everything.

May love bring forth the best in each of us, as we learn, again and again, that we are beloved of God.