



Grain

“God is not only all-powerful but all-vulnerable.”
Fr. Richard Rohr

Field

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people... ¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. John 1:1-3 & 14

Thoughts

January 1st inspires notions about new beginnings, as does the text from John 1. Our Gospel lesson precedes the start of Jesus' ministry. Something new will be happening, but what was new was also rooted in ancient beginnings. Even the message that the Gospel writer spoke during his day was both traditional and contemporary. When the author first uttered, "In the beginning," his listeners likely recalled Genesis and expected him to say, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth...". Instead they heard, "In the beginning was the Word." This new presence of love born into the world through Jesus had already been creating. The Hebrew, "dabar" for word means word and event as one, which carries over into the New Testament.

John's prologue is cosmic. People not very familiar with Christianity could delve into this text without the cultural attachments. The text is other-worldly but also earthy. He also says that the Word became flesh, bringing to mind the concrete birth stories told in the other three Gospels. God's immense love entered in a particular place through a village girl who said yes to God before she knew what was happening to her and a baby not invited by the world into the world. Richard Rohr says, God is not only all-powerful; being almighty is just a part of who God is. God is also all-vulnerable, born into our suffering.

God's love that responds to what is vulnerable in the world was attractive right from the beginning of Jesus' life. Ordinary people such as shepherds showed up at his birth to experience the love. This event and message about the event, the Word, were in the beginning, and is here now, still creating new options to being stuck in complexes, hatred, and messages about who fits and who doesn't.

Most of us have finished our Christmas celebrations with family and friends in person and on Zoom. Let St. John's Gospel remind us of how it is still the Christmas season in our worship communities, and also engage us during the secular New Year's holiday. May we begin the New Year with a sense of God as all-powerful and all-vulnerable. May the Word so full of truth and grace fill your lives. Happy Monday

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Many blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy