

Reflection

Monroe, December 14, 2022

Betty Leon, IHM

The readings since the beginning of Advent challenge us, in the midst of ALL that is happening in our world, to remember *who* is our God and *to what* we are called.

I have been struck this year by an undercurrent of joy, and by a *consistent* message from Isaiah. Here are some quotes from the first readings of these past weeks. What do you hear?

26: Trust in the Lord forever! ...for the Holy One is an eternal rock.

30: No more will you weep... when you cry out, God will answer you.

35 ...say to those whose hearts are frightened: Be strong, Fear not!

Here is your God...who comes to save you

40: Comfort, give comfort to my people says your God.

Then from the Gospel of the Immaculate Conception:

Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God....

And the Isaiah reading today recalls a hymn we sang years ago:

"Turn to me...says the Lord, for I am God. ...I call your name...

I am the one who comforts you. Who are you to be afraid....

Given what we just heard, how do we answer that?

What happens when we give in to fear?

- in our body-our muscles constrict.
- in our spirit- our graciousness, our kindness, our courage contracts.

What then of our response to the One who calls our name?

An essential *fact* in our *relationship* to the faithful Holy One may be dimmed.

Are we ever truly all alone without resources? Is the Spirit ever so busy or so far away that we cannot call on that flame of Power?

Of course, we are puny in our faith at times, and may not feel ready for what we think is being asked of us. Yet we *know* what to do in such times of darkness. That's when we need to go to the Holy One who gave these very assurances.

In quiet, we humbly listen and let the promises flow over us until we more fully accept and believe them. Then we can once again, let go of fear and step out in trust.

How necessary this is since our call is to continue the incarnation of the Word.

It was promised through the prophets, brought to life in flesh through Mary, and now enlivened in our times through the Spirit in us and within communities where

we offer one another encouragement and support. Yes, we *can* be alert and notice those moments for bringing the *hope* this season offers. We *can* eagerly proclaim what we have seen and heard.

Someone said, "...Just one step separates *fear from wonder* and ... the secret to moving toward wonder is staying positive through change, *expecting* something good to happen. "

In this Advent season of expectation, perhaps "wonder" is another name for a *trusting faith* in our ever-present Divine Consoler and Empowering Spirit.

May the gospel blessing of Christ Jesus be yours- blessed are you who believe and so proclaim.