

Christmas 2012

“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness...on them light has shined.”

In the beginning was the big bang, some 13.75 billion years ago scientists tell us...a great cosmic burst of energy and matter, which now physicists tell us, are one and the same...matter and energy the same substance, as it were...I'm quite sure that the light generated in such a burst caught the void of the dark by utter surprise...piercing its opaque insidious anonymity...scientists tells us that in the time space continuum, we still see evidence of the light born in the beginning. I would say we see it all around us.

Everything that is...galaxies, suns, planets, novae, nebulae, life forms, you and I, were present at this beginning, big bang, star material in our DNA, our bodies and souls made of the same substance of God's creative imagination, God's very self bursting forth as well...we are made of the stuff of the beginning...we are made of the same matter and energy that birthed the stars...we are children of light, the same light that stands steadfastly to this day against the unruly dark.

The Greeks in antiquity called this essence of the beginning, the Word, the Logos, the divine connection between heaven and earth, between God and God's creation...and we claim this night that this Word which is the source of light and life, became human flesh...Jesus the archetype for all of us...all of us Word become flesh, because we all were there, Word, in the beginning, set loose by God to create and justly order and love.

We celebrate this birth of the Christ child so that we might remember that it is the light from the very beginning which will forever overcome the oppression, and violence of the dark. That is our great hope. I mean to say that incarnation is not a one time in history event, even though we have to tell of it in story (because stories stir our imaginations, and the imagination knows of this light, has always known of it, of its truth and of its power)... This birth is testimony to God's very essence enlightening the universe entire with a great light, the same light that burst forth from the womb of God in the very beginning...and this bursting forth is still occurring...the creation still becoming, and we, friends of God, intimately implied in the process.

In the gospel of John from which we will read tomorrow, he tells us that the Word became flesh and lived among us full of life...and that that life was the light of humankind...Our scientists are on to this now, this

business of same substance...we are all of this one great light, this one great bursting forth of love...Jesus the archetype of who we truly are....Jesus, and the way of Jesus, the lens through which God sees us, and the lens through which God sees us living our lives....lives of light for the world.

Isaiah calls this selfsame light great, but indeed its greatness lies in its vulnerability, its utter openness to the world....like a candle guttering against the wind, but unquenchable...this light dares to enlighten the dark that still stalks the universe....and this light shows up not in the great seats of power in our world...but on the margins, out on the lost corners of our world still suffering the rude dark...this light comes from the periphery.... from the backwoods of the hill country of Judea no less, among abased shepherds, a lost corner of the empire of the day.....we celebrate this night this unquenchable light, and its gentleness, its vulnerability that would forever yield to the good of the other, those who walk in the dark...a light whose substance is love...a light that will go to all lengths to enlighten and warm the cold dark of indignity and injustice and violence in our world.

Love, the light, has come again to us, brothers and sisters, just as love came in the very beginning....let us bear the light of which we are made to our world so desperate for it...Let us recognize this light that lives in all of humanity....the light from the beginning...the light of Christ, the very same light we bear...the light of love that binds us all together, binds us together as responsible, compassionate, imaginative, self giving, empathetic citizens of God's gracious and mutual commonweal.... We, please believe it, We the very body of Christ, the very light that brings love and salvation...dare we believe such an audacious prophecy, such an audacious truth?....for the world's sake... dare we must.