

OVER THE RAINBOW
Matins Homily, written in oral form

Psalm 148; Acts 11:1-18; Rev. 21:1-6; John 13:31-35
Easter 5, Year C

May 19, 2019
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Today's passages contain visions,... and vision is the clarity and the supercharger for hope.

A vision is like a focussed, formatted dream, and they are way beyond wishes.

Wishes are like fairy tales. They are often beyond reality and reach.
They are pondering "over the rainbow."

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When life is uncomfortable, even painful, we tend to wish and dream of a better time / a better way.  
We wistfully speculate whenever discontent and pain outweighs joy and peace.

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Many of us are feeling a collective anxiety and torment about the state of world affairs and the environment.
I dare say that it is like persecution. Not in the traditional way, but our values, principles and ideals **are** being threatened and assaulted.

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I am extremely concerned about the climate crisis. It is caused by human greed and violence against creation. Recently, the UN reported that one million species of animals face extinction. Even the oceans are in peril. The poor and weak will suffer the most, and many politicians still encourage the use of fossil fuels.  
God has shown us a better way.

We have become more polarized. White supremacy and bigotry are a threat. New draconian laws have been passed in the States, and America again,... **again** seems to be moving to war.  
God has shown us a better way.

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Of course, we could sedate ourselves. We could watch some ball games or an old wishful movie about a yellow brick road and ruby red shoes.
However, God has shown us a better way.

We can no longer afford to be passive, and wishful thoughts will not help, either.

We must recapture a vision. A vision / a way of hope that saves the world and all of us.
We must recapture the vision.
We must recapture Christ.

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The Bible presents, forms and clarifies God's hope for us.  
The Bible presents visions for people to live for and to become.  
The universal grandeur in Psalm 148 is one example, and the prophets presented many others.

In the Acts text, Peter shared his vision. It was a vision from the Holy Spirit, and the vision was about welcoming everyone.

We could translate this to mean that Christians are not the sole keepers of God's way. All are invited to join in. All are welcome.

Peter's vision showed a New Way. A new way that welcomed outsiders and women to participate. His vision echoed Jesus' message in John 13 about a "New Commandment". Jesus implored us to love everyone,..... to love everyone as Jesus did.

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To love,to be loved...and accepted... pretty much describes the concept of home.

I think this is the essence of the vision which is the condition of being loved, safe, content and at peace. We could call it the sense of home.

However, this home is Not just for us. All are invited, all are loved, and this is a God thing.

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Hear again the vision presented in Revelation 21:

See, the Home of God is among mortals..... among all of us.  
God will dwell with them as their God;  
They will be God's peoples (plural!), and God will be with them!

There will be tears, but God will wipe every tear away.  
There is comfort.

Death will not be feared. There is safety.

See, I am making all things new. Recall Jesus' "new thing".

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This is a wonderful message / a wonderful vision for us....and everyone; nevertheless, we must realize that home does not happen by accident.

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Hospitality is a key part in making a good home, and so are justice and righteousness.  
Think about that--hospitality, justice and righteousness.

Moreover, we have been given the model to follow / on how to do this, and that model is Jesus. When we are truly following the way of Christ, then we are creating home for all,.....just as God does.

Therefore, our vision..and ...hope for the world resides in being proactive homemakers for each person we encounter.  
We must strongly point out injustices and the ways of destruction, as Jesus did. We must speak and act out.  
And, we must be gracious, welcoming, accepting and loving to all.

Berating those who disagree with us / with those who are making the climate crisis worse,.....does not help.

We need to point out the problem, and share our vision of God in the world with us.....and invite them in, with love. .... always with love.

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In a few moments, **when** we do communion, let us take in the life and passion of Christ, really take it in.

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This vision is not about somewhere off in a life after death. It is not way beyond. Somewhere over the rainbow is now.... because we are resurrection people. We can see the other side, ....thanks be to God.

This our vision of hope is NOW. God is with us mortals, NOW.

May we clearly see the vision.....and be the love given to us.