

## Homily Dec 17/17 – Communion

17Dec2017 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Advent

### Hope's Incarnation

Ron Flaming

“The light shines in the darkness and the darkness can never extinguish it”. (John 1:5)

#### Darkness

We live in a time when many look forward to a gloomy future. Darkness seems to pervade.

The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists has kept a doomsday clock since 1947 to indicate how likely it is that global disaster will occur, marked by midnight on the clock. On January 2017 the clock was moved ahead to 2 ½ minutes before midnight.

The rise of public racism and xenophobia and the increasing gulf between rich and poor leave us paralyzed in the face of such deep seated animosity and wilful ignorance or indifference to suffering.

Water is being sucked out of deep aquifers to be sold back to the public in plastic bottles that contribute to the millions of pounds of plastic that pollute our oceans and waterways. The last ice sheets are melting so that the ocean levels will rise and drown out coastal cities, shrinking the area of land available to the world's ballooning human population. We are now living through a mass extinction event that will see biodiversity on our planet minimized.

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#### Announcement of hope

Last week we heard the echos of John the Baptist's call to repentance from the darkness of our sin. At the same time the words of the prophet Isaiah echo hope down the centuries. Today we are called to these words of hope.

as the soil makes the sprout come up  
and a garden causes seeds to grow,  
so the Sovereign LORD will make righteousness  
and praise spring up before all nations.

I have seen garden seeds sprout from the dark soil. In recent time, we have heard words of reconciliation spoken to the First Nations of this land who struggle in the aftermath of colonialism's impact. May these words be seeds of hope that *truly* sprout into right relationships and justice.

#### Hope's incarnation

In Luke we hear Mary's words responding to the angel announcement of hope's incarnation.

“My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour”

In the Gospel of John we hear that the incarnation of hope has come to pass. Hope has been born, hope is not only about things unseen, it is happening!

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God ...  
and the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory.

Hope is future oriented, but grounded in having our eyes of faith open to see bright spots now, where God is at work, where the power of the gospel is already experienced where hope is incarnate today.

### **Communion**

In our communion celebration today we remember that incarnation 2000 years ago when the Word became flesh, putting hands and feet to the promise that God is with us and we can be with God.

In our communion today we participate in a fellowship that is also a contemporary incarnation of God's love. In our fragmented and divided world, communion is an act of defiant incarnation of hope. Our fellowship in the face of the trend towards the primacy of the individual is an incarnation of hope. Christian love in the face of the personal loneliness and community marginalization is an incarnation of hope. This incarnate hope is the light of God's presence among us, shining in our darkness.

Several months ago Ron Mathies pointed me to a prayer written by Bishop Desmond Tutu that proclaims the truth that light is stronger.

Goodness is stronger than evil.  
Love is stronger than hate.  
Light is stronger than darkness.  
Life is stronger than death.  
Victory is ours through Jesus who loved us!

This is a day of hope because we know the love of God is and is coming into our world! We have experienced it! Come, join in the welcome feast that Christians have been celebrating for 2000 years. Amen.