

January 12, 2021

The eschatology that Jesus talked about really was not focused on only the gathering and fulfillment or completion of love, but on the fulfillment of justice, the righteousness that we hear him talk about in the Sermon on the Mount.

Righteousness refers to not just human fulfillment, but the fulfillment and completion of all creation, everything being in right relationship to everything else. Most of you would have no trouble with this in regard to your pets, as I know many of you keep their cremated remains close at hand.

Well, extend that mentality of care and respect for the remains of a pet to a Creator God. All that God made, we hear in the Genesis poems, was good; everything was good.

If you read the Gospels, honestly, you will see that Jesus was not enamored or necessarily supportive of the so called family and family values that are expounded and embraced by many who claim to be Christian today. Jesus rejected family and blood ties several times, and while he did pay special attention to children, it was not the romanticized Hallmark Channel kind of sentimentality.

I think that Jesus tried to undermine any system that sought to profit at the expense of anyone or anything, and children were in his time essentially chattel that could be bought and sold by parents, as is still the case today.

In the time of Jesus a child had value only in so far as they might contribute in the future to the economic life of a family or community and in the aspect of being a kind of social security for parents when they aged or got sick.

No one other than priests and rabbis and governors and military leaders had any real individual worth, so when Jesus touches the little children or tells his disciples to let them come to him, he challenging with the lowest and the least the exclusion of anyone.

Jesus was concerned with upending conventional religious and political and economic thinking and the systems that such thinking gave rise to.

I think he saw the thirst for excessive riches, the ambition for recognition and prominence, and the need and desire to dominate others as what needed to be undone, and he did this in teaching and preaching.

What we so often call or hear called miracles are rather very subtle and direct assaults on societal systems that exclude, exploit, and rule over anyone or anything.

His death and crucifixion is often turned into dramas by us, when we try and visualize or reenact what we read happened to him, rather than try to understand what it means in the context of his entire Gospel teaching. His death as God's son is not the will of the Father, but if you read the texts carefully, his death is his choice from beginning to end.

He dies by his choice, exploited, dominated, and as a scapegoat, just like so many, perhaps the majority of humans, and surely like the animal life and plant life and geologic life that is a part of that original goodness in relationship that the poems of Genesis foretell.

I would love to be able to sit with you and talk about this because I believe that, when we say in the Creed at Mass, or when we renew our baptismal promises and maintain that we believe in the "resurrection of the body and life everlasting", we are talking about what I have said above.

I have been reading a good deal about the paintings of Camille Pissarro and Paul Cezanne, and like most people I have just looked at them and walked on, but in my reading I am learning that in their use of color and the manner of their brushstrokes, particularly in what we call their landscapes, they were talking about the fulfillment and completion of creation much in the way that Jesus talks about it.

Google them and look for some of their work, really look and ponder a painting or two.

Jesus, I believe, believed in a future time very much hinted at in every moment of our life if we can “see and hear,” a future time when all be one and all will be fulfilled.

I didn't sleep at all well last night because in the evening I found photos on my computer that I thought had been lost forever, photos of times and places but especially people that stirred my conscious and unconscious mind with sadness, but with hope that what we love and lose is no longer where it was but is now wherever we are.

My eschatological hope is that someone, Adam White maybe, or Nick Shamel may be able to get them out of my old computer and into my new computer.