

November 2, 2020 All Souls Day

When we baptize babies, the idea is at some level usually unacknowledged that even though they will die they will live, that the love of God will carry them through death to a wholly complete Presence always present but beyond ordinary sight and sound and being.

As a part of the ritual of Catholic baptism, you might remember, early in the ceremony, the minister signs the baby's forehead with a little cross, sometimes using a thumb and other times using the forefinger and then invites parents and godparents to do the same.

The spiritual symbolic meaning is that we want to help the little one and remind ourselves that it is the cross that helps us see as God "sees" a world of wholeness, undivided, unified, healed and complete.

The single eye associated with what we call "God" can have many diverse and, even, contradictory meanings, entirely relevant to specific peoples, times, and places but in Catholic baptism it is contrasted with the eyes of the flesh, two eyes, specifically, and with two eyes symbolically we "see" a divided world of good and bad, rich and poor, sick and well, alive and dead whereas it is our belief that "God" "sees" only love, even when love appears to be absent, "God" "sees" love because as the Letter Writer, John, tells us, God is love and he who abodes in God abides in love.

You have to follow the texts of the Gospels to learn of this and the texts of the Gospels have become largely irrelevant in our country because they are messy, complicated, at times contradictory, and they have been coopted by mostly men who have a hard time believing that the God they preach might actually love them with all of their messiness, incompletions, contradictions, and foibles and follies.

Many industrial strength, heavy duty Christians and Catholics in this country have become like beetles on their backs flailing at their small painful little worlds because they have the great burden of doubt as to their worth and their ability to believe that they are worthy of the love of another.

All that is to say that “God” will not be voting tomorrow, God does not vote or win football games or intervene in our illnesses or cause us to suffer, God only loves, and God always loves.

There is no real national God, just idols of our own making.

Our faith teaches us that in ways known to God alone, the Holy Spirit is working to turn all of creation into an unfractured, totally serene, wholeness, something that we cannot even imagine for very long no matter how hard we try, the eyes of our head call us to “see” dualistically almost always.

But we can get glimpses, all of us, can get glimpses of that Spirit at work. Those little vignettes at the end of the television network news programs, cheesy as they can be, are often a bit sacramental, when someone takes it upon themselves to bring a tiny bit of joy or meaning or life into this world, that, I believe is God’s Love at work.

You know what I mean.

Last night on ABC, for example, there was the story in pictures of an ordinary regular UPS delivery man delivering a package to an autistic adolescent boy. He brought him a UPS vest and stocking cap and gloves, the images of love were awesome, just awesome. That is Love at work undoing isolation and division.

So much of contemporary life is dualistic, framed as winners or losers, with no complexity, no unresolved issues, simplistic and superficial thinking have replaced curiosity, investigation, seeking, any kind of pilgrimage of the mind or the heart to uncharted “destinations.” change is anathema to this civil religion of maintained division.

In general legions of people in the name of their God reject any notion of evolution because they have little desire to change, they are resistant to any kind of collective relationships or connections that are beyond their personal control and that is one reason why sexism and racism and other systems that maintain inequality thrive, we are addicted to dualistic thinking, we have to have two separate and unequal factors in just about everything.

That dualistic thinking first of all makes it very difficult, impossible for many, to have any working relationship with loving themselves, so despite it being God who is doing the loving many, many people have no skill in accepting love nor the capacity to allow love to transform and deepen one's heart and soul.

This is a profound sadness, a deeply regrettable condition but it is the perennial condition of the human until the human is converted and changed by Love and Love keeps at it, I believe.

So, as this week unfolds stay with the love, the present and past love that has touched you and that you have touched. It will be hard, it always is to accept love and to give love, that is.