

August 26, 2020

Linda Gregg is an American poet born in 1942, died March 19, 2020, who was very much influenced by the Catholic priest poet, Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1899), in the sensitivity that Hopkins demonstrated for finding the sacramental depth in the ordinary daily stuff of any life and being able to find language to express that depth in a way that helped others see the sacramental depth in their own lives.

I know that I have just given you a mouthful of words and I am aware that most of us do not go through our days looking for the sacramental depth but in these times it might not be. Bad idea to try it out.

I had some lovely comments and images, I guess, inspired by the “puddles of beauty” term that I used in last weekends homily at 4 PM Mass and in my Words for the Wind. I referenced a wedding that I had some time ago that had 4 or 5 little girls as flower bearers that were dressed in identical satiny blue/green longer dresses with pink sashes and a pink bow with garlands of little flowers in their hair and how I referred to them in the homily as “puddles of beauty.”

Linda Gregg taught poetry in the creative writing programs of several colleges and she would give her students the task of keeping a log or journal in which they were to do a daily entry of just 6 things that they noticed each day, 6 things.

Undoubtedly this was not what these students wanted to do when the semester began, more than likely, they wanted to get on with the poetry writing or the creative writing and they rebelled against such a simplistic assignment.

I have been unable to do that on a single day in the last week either because my mind is racing with other thoughts and I forget to notice or I get to the end of the day and try and go back and remember what I noticed and end up writing down things that I really did not notice but remember seeing along my way.

Noticing means that you stop and take note of something, someone, some idea, feeling, emotion, thought at the time and believe worthwhile enough to

you to journal it and write it down so you can, perhaps, savor it, taste it, remember it and make it present again to your self..

I tell you of this for two reasons.

The first is that I and I suspect you, too, rarely stop and take note of whatever it is that we are calling our faith or our beliefs about God, Christ, Church, Grace. If we pray, I would bet that we just get through the words either reading them or saying them mentally or out loud.

We have gotten into thinking that the words are the important thing not what the words mean or where they come from or where they go. In thinking of the Gospel texts, I suspect most people and. Surely, most preachers, just try and figure out how to say what they think they mean without actually taking note of what they say.

Being taught the Catholic faith or having experienced the Catholic faith in the catechismal manner that most of us have, we have no real ability to take note of the Biblical texts and so we essentially operate with ideas and not and sacramental depth, we do not experience the personal dimension of the Trinity, we just skim the surface mostly of what we have been told by others when we pray or encounter the Word of "God."

The second reason I tell you this is that in this pandemic if you are like me, you spend a lot of time fretting about what you cannot do and lamenting what you have done and may never do again.

Some, of course, at the risk of peril to themselves and others, deny anything has happened and defiantly do whatever they want to do and all I can say to that is that I hope they pass by the house of their own grief and do not leave too much grief and chaos in their wake.

To the rest of us, might we not undervalue the present moment and instead stop and smell the roses and find puddles of beauty all around us in spite of what we cannot do or where we cannot go.

## **Elegance**

BY Linda Gregg

All that is uncared for.  
Left alone in the stillness  
in that pure silence married  
to the stillness of nature.  
A door off its hinges,  
shade and shadows in an empty room.  
Leaks for light. Raw where  
the tin roof rusted through.  
The rustle of weeds in their  
different kinds of air in the mornings,  
year after year.  
A pecan tree, and the house  
made out of mud bricks. Accurate  
and unexpected beauty, rattling  
and singing. If not to the sun,  
then to nothing and to no one.