

061817 Pentecost 2

PRIDETIDE FATHER'S DAY

Reflection ~ The Second Half of Life

Rev Emma Chattin, Preaching

First Reading *Genesis 18:1-15*

YHWH appeared to Abraham by the oak grove of Mamre, while Abraham sat at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day. Looking up, Abraham saw three travelers standing nearby. When he saw them, Abraham ran from the entrance of the tent to greet them; and bowing to the ground, said, “If I have found favor in your eyes, please do not pass by our tent. Let some water be brought, that you may bathe your feet, and then rest yourselves beneath this tree. As you have come to your faithful one, let me bring you a little food, that you may refresh yourselves. Afterward, you may go on your way.”

“Very well,” they replied, “do as you have said.”

Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, “Quick — take a bushel of fine flour and knead it into loaves of bread.” Abraham then ran to the herd, selected a choice and tender calf, and sent a worker hurrying to prepare it. Then Abraham took cheese and milk and the calf which had been prepared and placed it before the travelers; and he waited on them under the tree while they ate.

“Where is Sarah?” they asked.

“There in the tent,” Abraham replied.

One of them said, “I will surely return to you this time next year, and Sarah will then have a child.” Sarah was listening at the entrance of the tent, just behind him. Now Sarah and Abraham were old, well on in years, and Sarah had ceased to have her periods. So Sarah laughed to herself and said, “Now that I am so old and my husband even older, is pleasure to come my way again?”

YHWH said to Abraham, “Why does Sarah laugh and say, ‘Will I really deliver a child, at my age?’ Is anything too extraordinary for God to do? At the appointed time, at this time next year, I will return to you and Sarah will have a child.”

Sarah was afraid and said, “I didn’t laugh.”

God said, “Oh, but you did indeed laugh!”

**Second Reading ~ adapted from Sister Joan Chittister in
“Between the Dark and the Daylight: Embracing the Contradictions of Life”**

Confusion happens when the frames of our lives, the certainties on which we have come to depend, begin to break down. Nature does not act the way we think it should. What used to be clear to us—the rationales that had kept our lives in place for years—become gray and murky. The ways we have been taught to view the world, to make things happen, to put life together, to accept as the norms of human existence become, for whatever reasons, fallible to the point of mere mist on our old selves. Then, it is necessary to rethink everything. As Erich Fromm says, “Creativity requires the courage to let go of certainties.” Then we begin, in confusion, to seek a new order of the heart and the mind and the soul. Purple and yellow are no longer a forbidden color scheme, same sex marriage is no longer unthinkable, man and woman are no longer static concepts, and no longer the only categories.

Confusion stirs the habitual order of things. It throws the 'deck of life' cards into the air and puts them back together again. Newly. The chaos of thought rankles the soul in the middle of the night, forcing us to face the upheaval around us. It forces us finally to ask ourselves, How can we possibly survive this latest assault on the past? with a heart pried open by virtue of the fact, if nothing else, that we can no longer escape it. When the structures of the past no longer satisfy, no long serve to make life lively, we must now begin to ask new questions and to create new answers to old questions. We have been given cosmic permission to think differently. In fact, we are required to rethink everything once we have begun to rethink anything.