

June 25, 2017

“Family Disunion: Too Close For Comfort”

First Reading ~ Genesis 21:8-21

Isaac grew, and on the day of weaning, Sarah and Abraham held a great feast. But Sarah noticed the child of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, playing with her child Isaac. She demanded of Abraham, “Cast out Hagar with her son! I will not have this child of my attendant share in Isaac’s inheritance!”

Abraham was greatly distressed by this because of his son Ishmael. But God said to Abraham, “Don’t be distressed about the child or about Hagar. Whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for it is through Isaac that descendants will bear your name. As for the child of Hagar the Egyptian, I will make a great nation of him as well, since he is also your offspring.”

So Abraham rose early the next morning, and took bread and a skin of water, and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, along with the child, and sent her away. She wandered off into the desert of Beersheba. When the skin of water was empty, she cast the child under a bush, and then went and sat down opposite him, about a bowshot away. She said to herself, “Don’t let me see the child die!”, and she began to wail and weep.

God heard the child crying, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven. “What troubles you, Hagar?” the angel asked. “Do not be afraid; for God has heard the child’s cry from where he is. Get up, lift up the child and hold his hand, for I will make of him a great nation.”

Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. She went, and filled the skin with water, and gave the boy a drink. God was with the boy as he grew up. He lived in the desert and became a fine archer, an expert with a bow. He made his home in the desert of Paran, and his mother found a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

Second Reading ~ Adapted From Kahlil Gibran in *The Prophet*

And a woman who held a babe against her bosom said,
"Speak to us of Children."

And he said: Your children are not your children.

They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.
They come through you but not from you,
And though they are with you, yet they belong not to you.

You may give them your love but not your thoughts.
For they have their own thoughts.

You may house their bodies but not their souls,
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow,
which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.

You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.
For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.

You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth.

The Archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite,
and bends you with might that the arrow may go swift and far.
Let your bending in the Archer's hand be a smile for gladness;

For even as the Archer loves the arrow that flies,
so the Archer loves the steady bow from which it flies.