

The image at the left is one of the panels of what is known as the Bayeux tapestry. It is a 70 meter tapestry created to tell the story of the conquering of England in 1066 by William the Conqueror (formerly the Bastard). (If you're interested, the following [link](#) will allow you to view the whole tapestry with a refreshingly interesting commentary.) While the tapestry clearly enshrines William's victory over Harold at the Battle of Hastings, there is so much more that the tapestry possesses. Created in a time when the majority of people were illiterate, it told in picture form a larger narrative. And the story-telling that is a part of the Bayeux tapestry, while unique to this form and time, expresses so much that is a part of all of our story-telling. There is humor and tragedy, whimsy and solemnity, hope and despair, and so much more.

The tapestry was a recent reminder of the deep urge that we have to express our stories and to communicate meaning, purpose, and value using the narrative form. Indeed, some would say that we only know ourselves when we tell our story. It should come as no surprise, then, that the Christian tradition is rooted in story, and, the very heart of the story--Jesus the Christ--is referred to as "the Word". This activity of the divine confirms the power of language to create reality. Thus, God creates by speaking the world into being. "Let there be light," and all that. There is a further connection to language and story, however, in referring to Jesus as Logos/Word. Clearly, there is a connection to the aforementioned verbal creative tendency of the divine. This moniker also roots Jesus deeply into the human narrative. God's story is our story. Our story is God's story in the eternal Logos that embodies our story.

Author Frederick Beuchner has a wonderful book entitled *Telling the Truth: The Gospel as Tragedy, Comedy, and Fairy Tale*. It is an insightful and poignant survey of the way that the Gospel functions in these three particular narrative ways to move us more closely to the truth of God and to the truth of ourselves. Perhaps, part of the truth that we cannot avoid is that all three forms will certainly play out in our lives. We know the whimsy and serendipity of the fairy tale. Those magical moments where life is gift and the glimmer of the happy ending is very much a part of our experience.

It goes without saying that the comedy is also central to our narratives. This truth has been happily confirmed yet again for me on this trip. So many moments of the absurdity of our humanity and the humor inherent in our being and being together. There are laugh out loud moments of silliness. And then there are those more subtle instances where the corner of our mouth turns up and our eyes twinkle as we witness something that welcomes us into the humor of the moment.

The final reality is, I would venture, the hardest for us to acknowledge. We know that history is strewn with the best of intentions as well as the preponderance of tragedy. While we may understandably desire to avoid this narrative, it is baked into all of our stories. Yet, far from

rejecting this or running away from the reality of tragedy, the power of the Christian story is that God is present even there with us. The image of this form is nothing more or less than a cross. A stark reminder that there is nowhere that God is not. Even in our tragedy.

While I love the Bayeux tapestry for its beauty and the narrative it expresses, I have also been playing around with the following song from Patty Griffin. It is entitled Coming Home to Me. It also is a form of storytelling. And while one can read this as a story of relationship between two people, I like to think that it possesses a bit of the divine/human connection that is a part of our story in Christ. The kicker is found in the penultimate lyrics:

*When you get there you'll know
That's as far as you go
When you get there you'll see
You were already free*

Which really is the promise of the divine narrative in Christ. We are coming home, and, as we do, we are already free. Here's Griffin's song:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-NhcjOmngRk>