

March 15, 2020

Led Into The Unknown: *Is YHWH Among Us or Not?*
Questions and Doubt

First Reading ~ Exodus 17:1-7

The Israelites left the desert of Syn to travel by stages, as YHWH commanded. They camped at Rephidim, found no drinking water. Again the people quarreled with Moses, saying, "Give us drinking water". Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test YHWH?" But the people were thirsty, and complained even more to Moses. "Why did you bring us out of Egypt only to make us and our children and our livestock die of thirst?" Moses appealed to YHWH, "What am I to do with these people? They are ready to stone me!" YHWH answered Moses, "Take some of the elders and move to the front of the people. Take with you the staff with which you struck the Nile. Go! I will wait for you there by the rock of Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink." And Moses did so in the sight of the elders. Moses named the place Massah, "Testing", and Meribah, "Quarreling", for the Israelites quarreled and tested YHWH when they said, "Is YHWH with us or not?"

Second Reading ~ adapted from Sister Joan Chittister in
"Between Dark and Daylight: Embracing Contradictions of Life"

Doubt is what shakes our arrogance and makes us look at again what we have not looked at before. Without doubt, there is little room for faith in anything. What we accept without question we will practice without morality. It is in populations like this that monarchs become dictators, and spiritual leaders become charlatans and knowledge becomes myth.

It is doubt not certitude that enables us to believe because it requires us to think deeply about the entire subject. Only when we can look beyond absolutes to look at every level of life can we possibly live life to the fullest, with the deepest insight, and the highest degree of compassion for others. The absurdity of certitude is life's most damaging narcotic. It accuses us of our shallowness and hollows out the soul.

Third Reading

~ adapted from Macrina Wiederkehr in *"A Tree Full of Angels: Seeing the Holy in the Ordinary"*

O God, you know I doubt. We've been through all the issues together. From earliest childhood I have been full of question marks and I am not ashamed of them. Yet somewhere alongside the question marks in my life... lives one giant exclamation mark, and it always wins out. I was made for the heights and I feel the urge for climbing. I was also made for the depths. I have a yen to go down into the deep waters where all things are born anew. The heights and the depths! My life seems one great paradox, but I've not turned from the unknown, I've not run from the mystery. I've tasted enough of heaven to believe in it.