



When I was asked to write a short article for the newsletter I asked for some guidance about the topic. It was suggested that I might say something about this time of division in our nation and around the world. More specifically, the idea was put forward that the choices we make about how we look at each other can make a difference in how we live together, especially during challenging and stressful moments. How do we do the work of forming opinions about others? I would like to emphasize three points for your consideration.

As difficult as it can be at times, it is good to remember that we are each a creation of God, made intentionally and with a purpose. Two passages from scripture make this point. In Psalm 139 we hear:

“You formed my inmost being;

You knit me in my mother’s womb.

I praise you because I am wonderfully made.

Wonderful are your works!

My very self you know.

My bones were not hidden from you,

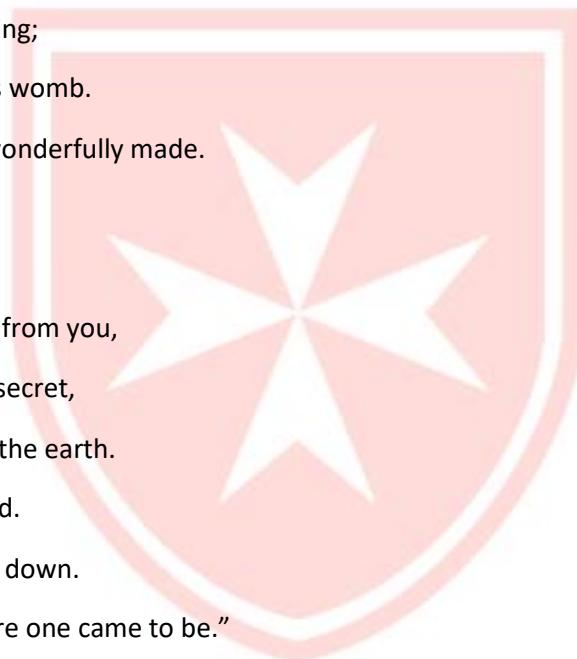
When I was being made in secret,

Fashioned in the depths of the earth.

Your eyes saw me unformed.

In your book all are written down.

My days were shaped before one came to be.”



And, in the opening chapter of Jeremiah we hear this:

“You formed my inmost being,

You knit me in my mother’s womb.”

In a world populated by 7.8 billion people it is possible to feel small and insignificant. Paul had some to say about those feelings in the reading we heard from Ephesians on the 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time:



"He chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blemish before him. In love he destined us for adoption to himself through Jesus Christ.

We were chosen ... so that we might exist for the praise of his glory."

Of course, we don't always behave that way. We act in ways that separate us from God and create conflict and division among us. Fortunately, God doesn't abandon us and chooses to send us his Son. The critical importance of Christ comes through in this passage from Matthew:

"When John heard in prison of the works of the Messiah, he sent his disciples to him with this question: Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another? Jesus said to them in reply "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the good news proclaimed to them."

We are each made by the Lord for a purpose, we each stray from the Lord, and we are each offered forgiveness. It seems to me that a good start to our relationships with others is to take a moment and say "This person is important to the Lord in ways I might not understand." A good second step is to remember that we are each lepers and that we all stray from the Lord, for we are all blind, deaf and lame in our own way. The third, and critical step, is to remember that God loved us so much that the Son was sent into the world to bring forgiveness, healing, and eternal life to all of us. We can demonstrate that love to others when we have opened ourselves to receiving it. The best healers are those who have been healed.

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