Mindfulness Meditation
Third Sunday in Advent
December 13, 2020

Bell *(a call to mindfulness)*

Reflections on Isaiah 61

Twilight takes her place
as sun yields to moon.
The barren field and the mighty oak
are stripped and naked;
bowing to the chilling winds -
sweeping, pruning, and scattering.
The earth lies in silent Advent wait.
for the day of recompense
when captives are free
and the veil of lament is torn asunder.
Ancient ruins given new life.
Seeds of justice scattered far and wide
welcomed in fertile soil.
Divinity incarnate, the beloved community,
giving birth to Christ
within us, among us.

Bell *(a little silence, about 2 minutes)*

The spiritual life includes periods often referenced as a time of darkness. St. John of the Cross names this as the "dark night of the soul." A spiritual path turned dark is not something we aspire to or desire. It's a time of emptiness and loneliness; when things we were once sure of seem distant or even absent. It's as if our prayers tumble from our lips with nowhere to go.

During each liturgical year, as the winter winds drop the temperatures and the days shorten into night, we await the coming of our Lord, the birth of Divinity into our world and into our lives. And this year the waiting seems particularly difficult. The soil is excessively dry and dusty as we wearily trudge through the pandemic with all the pain, suffering and restrictions it imposes on life.

Richard Rohr quotes spiritual writer, Beverly Lanzetta, who uses the analogy of pregnancy and the womb when referencing these times in our life. She calls it a "theology of gestation" where the darkness and uncertainty of the womb becomes a fertile source for new life.[1] It is a necessary passage through the darkness where we are required to let go of our careful

planning, our need for control, our ego gratification and our judging. In letting go we become able to receive what is freely given. Our attachments to our separate selves gradually diminish giving room for conception and new birth. As Richard Rohr states, "There must be some displacement before there can be any new replacement!"

As we practice the discipline of silence and contemplative prayer this evening, during this Advent season of waiting, we give our hearts the opportunity to be softened and broken open so new growth can take place. There is no room for our intellectual achievements, our moral worthiness or our preparation. Using Mary as our example, we simply and humbly open our hearts and allow what is and what will be.

Bell (*18 minutes of silence)*

1st Awakening Bell

2nd Bell of Gentle Reflections

Reflections of the Community: Hearing from One Another

Closing Prayer *(unison)*

We move forth from this sacred time together
With hearts of gratitude and joy.
Having experienced your presence within us and among us,
Activate our capacity to continuously give birth to Christ within
In the days and weeks to come.
May we become the Beloved Community of radical love and compassionate justice
To the world around us and to all peoples.
Through Christ we pray, AMEN.

[1]Richard Rohr. Daily Medications. "Fruit of our Labor" December 10, 2020.