

Trinity News

St. Michael and All Angels An Ancient and Present Heritage

There is an ancient tradition of messengers from God in the Hebrew Scriptures. We call those Scriptures the Old Testament, but to the Jews and for us they are still the living word of God. The Jews call them the Tanach, shorthand for Torah, Prophets and Writings in Hebrew. Angelic messengers came to the founder of the race Abraham, and to Moses the founder of the nation, to the prophets and to the wise in every age. Sometimes it was a visible presence, sometimes it was a threading of audible slices of words into the mind that carried the self-authentication of the divine imprimatur.

Sometimes these messengers were given names, such as Michael or Gabriel to denote the great Angel of the Lord. It was Gabriel who came to Mary of Nazareth and informed her of her destiny within the scope of all humanity. Zechariah was terrified to see an angel at the altar of incense prophesying that Elizabeth would bear a son.

There are no records of the great angel of the Lord appearing on earth since that time. The divine messengers come every day in the thoughts that God puts into our mind. The writer of the wisdom book called Ecclesiastes, Koheleth, The Preacher, says that God has put eternity into our minds.

The contemplatives practice of looking into our souls as well as seeking the face of God has brought the practice of Active Imagination. That is, dancing around in our mind with images on the surface of our unconscious until we meet a guide that can give us access. Sometimes it is more specifically biblical. When I want to meet up with the Christ in these reflections I see him rising out of the Jordan River with shining water falling over his shoulders from his hair, and the Dove winging its way from heaven to settle on him. When I think of his mother I see her face in the light of an oil lamp at night with luminous eyes in a face framed by a grey veil with white trim. Mary's only claim to the supernatural is that she carried the Christ within her, and that of course is a huge claim. We can talk to supernatural figures but we should be very wary of ever seeking to talk to the dead because we may screw up our heads up in the process. When I am practising Active Imagination in order to widen the net of reflections I meet up with someone in a red jester's outfit. Sometimes it is a male figure that I call Milagro but it can change into a female figure that I call Luminosity. The same outfit seems to serve both of them! The search is on in the 21st century to find the

roots of our being and the roots of our spirituality. Stopping still and reflecting leads us to an access to profound thoughts that may enhance our experience of life and our perceptions of its inner reality. If it does not have an inner reality then the search is in vain, but if it does then the search is everything or rather it leads to everything.

We remember today the messengers of God. As I have said they come in various forms and in some surprising attire. I remember Siegfried who worked in nursing homes comforting the dying. He wore clothes for the day that suited his mood. If his mood was sombre he wore sombre clothes. If his mood was joyful he wore all the colours he could find. I once walked with him down the main promenade of Latrobe University in Melbourne and he had on a full jester's outfit, replete with pointed toes and vivid colours. I am sure that his work was deeply appreciated and very effective. I have tried to find him to express my great respect for his capacity to be truly himself and to impart his sense of joy and his empathy with the dark side of human feelings so very well.

The unconscious is as deep as the ocean and as wide as the universe. We need guides to access it. Freud and Jung thought that we needed dreams to open up its vast resources. I don't recall dreams very well, but in Active Imagination I can see figures who see me better than I see myself. Besides, when I focus on them I cannot think about myself, and that is freedom indeed.

With thanks to all true messengers of God in every age.
Bishop Arthur Jones

THIS WEEK:

Oct. 2 (Wednesday). Bible Study, 10:00am.

Oct. 3 (Thursday). Midweek Eucharist, 10:00am, Chapel.

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS:

Habakkuk 1:1-6, 12-13; 2:1-4; Psalm 37

2 Timothy 2:8-15; Luke 17:11-19

COMING UP:

- **October 20.** Harvest Sunday.
- **November 10.** Remembrance Sunday (9:30 service)
- **November 17.** NCCP Sunday (9:30 service)
- **November 24. Christ the King.** Stewardship Sunday