

TRINITY NEWS

Advent II Symbols of An Apocalyptic World in the 21st Century

Advent ushers us into the sometimes bizarre world of biblical apocalyptic. This is not just End Time predictions but rather word-paintings of what it might be like to live through such an experience, if one should survive at all. "The Apocalypse" is the title in Greek of the 27th book-end of the New Testament. It means a "disclosure" or an "uncovering" or "revelation". It is also a word associated with prophecies about such disclosures and manifestations of matters hidden from our usual world view. The prophets of Israel spoke at such depth into their present circumstance that at times their predictions resonated into the future. Around these "resonances" there clustered images of what it might be like in actual experience when this happened. These "clustered images" are the stuff of what we call "apocalyptic" or future "revelations." This strains both imagination and reason. The first base for imagination is our present circumstances. Creativity in the form of imagination comes with it. But it has to go beyond our present circumstances to project something that gives us hope and the dream of a better tomorrow. Our dreams often have colours and shapes of what has happened in the daylight hours merging with other images emerging from our unconscious both day and night. This is a model in part of what happens in apocalyptic.

It requires no perception to predict that the religious violence that has erupted in the barbarity of IS and other groups will produce a raft of fiery predictions from Christian fundamentalists. Christianity has "fundamentals" about God in Christ that undergird our reasons for existing at all, and not all Christian fundamentalism is wrong. But when our fundamentalists strip biblical prophecy of its original content to suit their own purposes, then we are not in step with them. Some of them routinely confine those of other religions to hell, which in itself is a violent act with eternal significance. IS has a similar intention with its physical violence when it beheads or shoots those who do not accept the "One God" named on their flags. I am glad that at least one TV station in Australia has refused to air any more of the video set-up ups of executions by IS. It only promotes their insanely contrived efforts at religious conformity. This has never worked eventually in history and it will not work now. Pope Francis has rightly told the Muslim world to denounce their extremists or risk the implication of being lumped with them. That is happening in my own country where those who fight with IS will no longer have a passport. The widespread feeling is that they should not return at all because of their flawed intentions and the disgrace they bring to people of all religions.

We are not against Islam or any of the great religions of the world. We are for Christ and his revolutionary way of Love. But we are against violence used in the name of God, including any of our own who do it. Advent reminds us of the colours and contours of the manifestation of God in **God's Time**. It also reminds us that only God can orchestrate it, not the bigotry, avarice, manipulations and violence of humanity. **WE ARE FOR CHRIST. WE ARE NOT AGAINST ANYONE OF CLEARLY EVIDENT GOOD WILL.**

Bishop Arthur Jones

THIS WEEK:

Wednesday, December 10.

- Group discussion, 7:30pm, Parish Office.

Thursday, December 11.

- Midweek Eucharist, 10:00am, Chapel

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS:

Isaiah 65:17-25; Psalm 126; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-28

John 1:6-8, 19-28 or John 3:23-30

UPCOMING EVENTS:

NEXT SUNDAY, December 14. Lessons and Carols, 7:30pm

FAMILY SERVICE/CHRISTMAS PAGEANT.

Performance on the 24th, 4pm. Open to all ages (adults/kids). A sign-up paper is posted on the board for those who wish to participate.

Rehearsal schedule: Dec. 14 & 21 after the service.
