

Holy Christmas – Day 12 “Twelfth Night” Tuesday, January 5, 2021

The holy season of Christmas is coming to an end. (The nostalgic and commercial observance has long gone with replacement of Valentine’s Day items and a hint of Easter, oh my!) The seasons of Advent & Christmas have come and gone. The Church year continues to tell the story of God coming into human life - God’s Epiphany, and the life, ministry, teachings, suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ the Lord. Thank you to each of you for allowing the indulgence of a retired pastor/ church administrator to share a bit of my contemplative life in these postings of a Holy Christmas -The 12 Days – observing the Church’s celebration of a holy Christmas from December 24/25 to January 5/6.

As “Twelfth Night” arrives, I am thankful for the experiences of Christmas. And, I am aware that for some it has not been a good season – painful, sad, hectic, and “not like it used to be”; and for others memories of past gatherings and family. For many of us, it was not a Christmas like we ever thought – pandemic, struggles and some hope. And, for some, a contemplative time of “pondering in the heart, all these things” (Luke 2:19). In my prayers today I want to keep all of that close to the heart and in my soul, asking God to continue revealing God’s holy presence in moments of grace and peace. I pray for healing and strength wherever needed. I pray for God’s mercy in our lives and in the world.

Two writers that have inspired me the past few years are Ann Weems (Kneeling in Bethlehem), and Howard Thurman (The Mood of Christmas). As the 12 Days of Christmas pass today into the night hour of “Twelfth Night” I offer their words as Benediction on this holy season:

It is Not Over (Weems)

“It is not over, this birthing. There are always newer skies into which God can throw stars. When we begin to think that we can predict the Advent of God, that we can box the Christ in a stable in Bethlehem, that’s just the time that God will be born in a place we can’t imagine and won’t believe. Those who wait for God watch with their hearts and not their eyes, listening – always listening for angel words.”

Later (Weems)

“Later – after the angels, after the stable, after the Child – they went back. . .as we always must, back to the world that doesn’t understand our talk of angels and stars and especially not the Child. We go back complaining that it doesn’t last. They went back singing praises to God! We do have to go back, but we can still sing Alleluia!”

The Work of Christmas (Thurman)

“When the song of the angels is stilled, When the star in the sky is gone, When the kings and princes are home, When the shepherds are back with their flock, The work of Christmas begins: To find the lost, To heal the broken, To feed the hungry, To release the prisoner, To rebuild the nations, To bring peace among brothers (& sisters), To make music in the heart.”

William H. Wilson (Bill)+