

Flourishing as Friends of Jesus (who really like jazz!)

Some Notes for the Reflection on March 15, 2017



Lent is a time of wandering in the wilderness wondering:

- where do we find clarity in the chaos?
- why are we so alone in our confusion?
- what can be done to ease our pain?
- who keeps oppressing us with these problems?
- when will this depressing situation end?

We are tempted, especially in wilderness times:

- to settle for simplistic answers
- to seek comfort in superficial relationships
- to simply get rid of the symptoms
- to blame the tyranny of others
- to lose hope

Even in the midst of the wilderness, those who find their chord charts of meaning in the Christian tradition hear, however faintly, God's words of clarity, friendship, healing, freedom, and hope.

They are spoken with a persistence and an allure that breaks through our rebellious demands for getting what we want.

They are spoken with a tireless love that breaks through the superficiality of so much that we accept as enough, a love that transforms and transfigures us into God's beloved friends.

I trust and pray you experience that love in the service this evening.

The Brentwood Manifesto of the Christian Faith

How We See God, the World, Humanity, and the Future

*In the beginning, God created the world
and delighted in its diversity and development.
God created humanity, male and female,
and nourished them to flourish in blessing all of creation.*

*But humanity rebelled, rejecting the limits of their power.
Their rebellion against God's vision of justice, peace, and joy
brought tyranny, suffering, and death.*

*God never tired of calling humanity home
to work in common to cultivate the well-being of the world.
Through the law and the prophets,
God's Spirit invited love of God, love of others, and love of self
as the empowering energy for engaging in this mission.*

*In one final act of reconciliation
to overcome our alienation and loneliness,
God took flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.
In the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus of Nazareth,
God restored the whole of creation to flourishing as divine friends
in a commonwealth enjoyed on earth as in heaven.
God continues to work out the completion of that act.*

*Through the church universal, visible and invisible,
the Holy Spirit empowers people
to flourish in their reconciliation with their Creator
through worship, learning, fellowship, and service.*

*By God's grace in Jesus Christ through the work of the Spirit,
we know what it is to be loved and to love
amidst all the problems of the world.
We are equipped and sent to sow seeds of God's vision of SHALOM
in all of our circles of influence.*

*In the end, God's love will transform heaven and earth
and bring justice, peace, and joy to full realization.*