

Looking for the Light

a devotional from
ST. CHARLES AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Wednesday, May 6, 2020

by Miriam Hollar

Read:

Psalm 100

A Psalm of thanksgiving.

1 Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.

*2 Worship the Lord with gladness;
come into his presence with singing.*

3 Know that the Lord is God.

It is he that made us, and we are his;^[a]

we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

*4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
and his courts with praise.*

Give thanks to him, bless his name.

*5 For the Lord is good;
his steadfast love endures forever,
and his faithfulness to all generations.*

Reflect:

Thomas, my son who is non-verbal, is the most gregarious person I know. Zoom meetings have become his favorite part of any day. He and I have been hosting a weekly Zoom gathering for some young adults with various abilities. The first time, I was nervous about moderating the expected cacophony. Asking for the group to use the ubiquitous mute button seemed a poor choice, both because of physical challenges and the readiness of the larger community to “silence” these individuals because of their disabilities.

What occurred can only be described as joyful and engaging chaos. The compassion that these ten to fifteen friends showed each other was enormous and encompassing. Everyone who was verbal was talking over each other in excited tones. Somehow, in the midst of the tumult, every one was heard and included. Those who were non-verbal were asked the same questions as those who were verbal with answers offered through head movements or nearby aides. One gentleman frequently turned off his video in response to unwanted questions. His name was called from time to time until

he returned. Some disappeared from view as they attend different needs. The others offered conjectures as to where that person had gone and raised hope they would return – until the missing person resumed their place in front of the screen. No one goes unnoticed in these unrestrained exuberant gatherings.

Each week I learn more compassionate ways to include people as I listen and watch this group of young adults check in with each other. Shyness, crankiness, and all other behaviors are folded into the group dynamic with loving care. No one is forced to join in but those who are on the periphery are constantly reminded that they are wanted. The tolerance shown each individual is awesome. Love and peace pervade the joyful noise.

Questions to Ponder:

What peace have you brought to another today? Have you gently reached out to another to include them when they have sidelined themselves? What joyful noise have you made? Has everyone around you felt your love today?

Pray:

All Compassionate God,
Thank you for your constant assurance of our inclusion in your loving presence. You reach out for us in our crankiest moments and in our moments of great timidity. Help us to see and hear others who feel detached. Give us understanding to show our love to everyone around us, as we have learned from you. Amen.

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