

MESSAGE/MEDITATION ON THE MYSTERY OF THE INCARNATION

By Heather Cowie

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Introduction

Today we are going to do something a bit different – mostly we are going to listen to Scripture - the living word. As we do so the Spirit in us as individuals and the Spirit in us as a community will bring different things to our attention. We will also have several times to be silent.

Silence – won't be too long, though for some it may seem like forever – learning to enter into silence – (name lack of silence in the environment)

(Ignatian Workout, Tim Muldoon)

The beginning of Christmas and the incarnation isn't the birth of Jesus or even the annunciation to Mary; the beginning is the creation, so that is where we will start today.

PART 1: CREATION

Gen. 1:1-4

“First this, God created the Heavens and Earth – all you see, all you don't see.

Earth was a soup of nothingness, a bottomless emptiness,
an inky blackness.

God's Spirit brooded like a bird above the watery abyss.

God spoke: “Light!”

And light appeared.

God saw that light was good and separated light from dark.”

“[Imagine] that you are with God; the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit during the creation of the world. Imagine that you can see God actually forming all that is around us. Imagine God creating this world and creating people out of love.”

Read Gen. 1:1-4 again.

SILENCE – (1-2 min)

SONG: God of Wonders

PART 2: THE FALL

But you also see that in this beautiful creation, something has gone wrong. There is brokenness everywhere. Something has corrupted this perfect creation. We feel this in our physical health, in our environment, in our relationships; globally and personally.

Think about the violence against the innocent that we have been hearing about since Friday. Selfishness, greed and violence are present not only where there is blatant war and oppression, where there is poverty and sickness but in our own communities, workplaces and families - even in our own hearts.

This brokenness has come through the fall, through humanity deciding to take things into their own hands, and this brokenness continues to affect every one of us.

(Pause)

Romans 7:18-24 (NIV)

For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. What a wretched [person] I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?

SILENCE

This world is suffering, we are suffering and we need help.

SONG: O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL

PART 3: THE PLAN FOR REDEMPTION

Where do we turn when we need help beyond our capacity to find or give? When our world seems to turn upside down and we are forced to confront the reality of sin in our world and in ourselves.

The only thing I know to do is to turn to God and ask for His help. God has responded to our plea.

Imagine the Trinity being moved with compassion – this devastation is not what God intended when He created the world. So the Trinity; the Father, Son and Spirit make a plan to save humanity – to rescue them from the mess that they are in. To rescue us from the mess we are in.

I am going to read a poem by R.S. Thomas. As with the last scripture texts I am going to read it twice and leave some silence after the second reading.

The Coming

And God held in his hand
A small globe.
Look, he said.
The son looked.
Far off,
As through water,
he saw a scorched land of fierce Colour.
The light burned There;
crusted buildings Cast their shadows;
a bright Serpent, a river
Uncoiled itself,
Radiant With slime.
On a bare Hill
a bare tree saddened
The sky.
Many people Held out their thin arms To it,
as though waiting
For a vanished April
To return to its crossed Boughs.
The son watched Them.
Let me go there, he said.

(R.S. Thomas)

SILENCE

**SONG – GABRIEL'S MESSAGE (Jars of Clay
– slide show with lyrics)**

PART 4: THE INCARNATION

The plan is the incarnation – God becoming a person, becoming human to live with us and to bring salvation to us.

God’s plan for redemption seems backward to us. God takes on all the limitations of being a human and not even an influential and powerful human at that, but a poor and humble one. This is part of the mystery of the incarnation.

“The Word was first, the Word was present
to God,
God was present to the Word.
The Word was God, in readiness for God
from day one.
Everything was created through him;
nothing – not one thing! - came into being
without him.
What came into existence was Life,
and the Life was Light to live by.
The Life-Light blazed out of the darkness;
the darkness couldn’t put it out.”

(Read twice) John 1:1-5

SHORT SILENCE

**SONGS: JOY TO THE WORLD
I SAW THREE SHIPS**

CLOSING PRAYER

Benediction