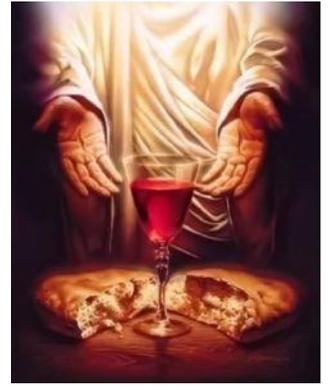


Grace Notes in Miniature,

Wednesday June 17th, 2020

Dear Friends:

As I turned to today's readings in my missalette, a couple of things jumped out at me. The first was the Entrance Antiphon: "O sing a new song to the Lord; sing to the Lord all the earth. In his presence are majesty and splendour, strength and honour in his holy place." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MBn4xF-wzWA> The setting is one I hadn't heard before but I was just enthralled with the pictures of the birds pouring forth their song which accompany it.



Then, the Reading is from the Second Book of Kings (2 Kings 2:1, 6-14), describing the ascent of Elijah into heaven. The second paragraph of the Reading begins: "Fifty men of the company of prophets also went and stood at some distance from them" and I could not help but laugh as I thought of the "social distancing" guidelines of numbers and spacing.

Then the antiphon for the Responsorial Psalm: Let your heart take comfort, all who hope in the Lord. It strikes me that there are little nuggets of reassurance like this throughout all our readings, even when much of the other content is grim or stern. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZN-GG8RgviQ>

Gospel Reading, Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18, is a very familiar one speaking to us about being charitable, prayerful people who fast, but not to be outwardly demonstrative of our piety. It struck me that quite a few of the very demonstratively pious people I have met have not appeared to be very happy; in contrast; whereas, other very faith-filled people radiate light and joy in their love for God and other people. I think that theme is picked up by the Communion Antiphon which is either: "Look toward the Lord and be radiant; let your faces not be abashed." Or "I am the light of the world, says the Lord; whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RKqfHfCyMno>

We have to be sure that we are keeping that light alive by sharing it!



Light is a theme which occurs in many religious traditions. It signifies the triumph of good over the darkness of bad, of divine consciousness, enlightenment, peace, inner light (such a having the light of Christ in one's heart) and may draw on the primitive fear of darkness which can immobilize people of all ages. We all know the admonition from the Sermon on the Mount to let your light shine: I imagine that many of us learned to sing "This little light of mine" as children. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKkblZtghyQ> and that it may be a song we've taught to children and grandchildren or sung enthusiastically at youth group bonfires. We understand light to be a sign of life; I've often heard people describe that witnessing death is like seeing a light go out – and have felt the same.

Manichaeism, apparently the largest Western religious group prior to Christianity, which at one time included St Augustine in its numbers, "believed in warring kingdoms of Light and Darkness, in "beings of light," and in a Father of Light who would conquer the demons of darkness and remake the earth through shards of light found in human souls."ⁱ We refer to Jesus as the Light of the World, and the Paschal candle is one of the strongest symbols at the Easter Vigil.

John's Gospel tells us: **1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was in the beginning with God. **3** All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being **4** in him was life,^[a] and the life was the light of all people. (John 1:1-4)

I remember the beautiful song by Robert Lebel from World Youth Days 2002 in Toronto and the strong message of call to share that light. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b-zz3XISRdW>

At this time of year, we may rise after the sun does and go to sleep before it sets. Many of us recognise that we respond to the light and find it harder to function in the winter when there are fewer hours of daylight. Those are the times when we really need to pray, "Christ, be our light", and believe it! And because we appreciate light – and beauty, today I end with: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cYtsus6ekE4> Soak up the light!

With every blessing,
Gillian



ⁱ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Divine_light