



Come and See!

Week of November 23, 2025, 34 OT

The Word...

“Let us give thanks to the Father,
who has made you fit to share in the inheritance of the holy ones in light.
He delivered us from the power of darkness
and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,
in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.
He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.
For in him were created all things in heaven and on earth,
the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or
powers; all things were created through him and for him.
He is before all things, and in him all things hold together”
(Col 1:12-20).

Pondering the Word ...

Here we are in the last week of the liturgical year. Advent begins next Sunday, and we will transition to *Provisions for the Journey to Bethlehem* for the season. Each year, I ask the Spirit to inspire me with a theme for my prayer during Advent which I then try to share with you. Recently, two seemingly competing themes have been on my mind and heart: the first, simplicity. In this complex world, simplicity in prayer would be a welcome break for me. The other is a phrase I borrow from Fr. Richard Rohr, OFM: “Incarnational mysticism.”

When we hear the word “mysticism,” many of us imagine saints and deep profound scholars whose thinking transcends the physical world, and whose reflections on the Cosmic Christ, the Spirit alive in all things fly way over our heads. But as Fr. Richard says as he quotes Karl Rahner, SJ, “*The Christian of the future will be a mystic or will not exist at all*”—a prescient and all-too pressing message for us today.

I am delighted to read the passage from Colossians which brings these two themes together: “*He is the image of the invisible God.*” “He.” Fleshly, earthy, vulnerable, born of woman into a complex world to make the onus of the law and the warnings of the prophets simple, easy for all of us to understand.

He holds all things together with one word: Love.

Living the Word...

There is nothing so true in the realm of the Spirit as mystery. We in the West have done a fine job of trying to take mysticism out of religion, to explain the Divine in rational terms. A rational Divine? It is a contradiction in terms! Later in the letter to the Colossians, Paul warns: “*So, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, walk in him, rooted in him... See to it that no one captivate you with an empty, seductive philosophy according to human tradition, according to the elemental powers of the world and not according to Christ*” (2:4-7).

The elemental powers of today are hijacking Christianity and negating Christ’s message of love. This week, as you “prepare to prepare” for the birth of the Christ Child, spend time delighting in the mysticism of the real world. Look for opportunities to hold things together with love, not in despair or hate. Remember: our lives, the infinite universe...it is all a mystery...so, nothing is a mystery!

Personal Reflections and Ideas ...

Mon, Nov 24: *"Please give us vegetables to eat and water to drink...after ten days they looked healthier and better fed than any of the young men who ate from the royal table (Dn 1:1-6, 8-20).* Daniel is one of those Bible books that can fly over our heads with its mysticism and apocalyptic images. It's not clear whether Daniel was an actual historical figure in the sixth century BCE, or a creation of an author writing in the second century BCE. But the scene described in this verse is as incarnational as it gets! I know vegetarians who are delighted by this story! **Provision: Eat simply.** "Oh great," you say! "Right as we are going into the food fest that starts this Thursday (in the US) and goes through New Year's!" We look forward to this season, gathering with friends and family to enjoy our bounty over the holidays. That is, if we are fortunate to have enough. So, consider reserving the big feasts for a few special days. Those celebrations are important in community. But the rest of the season, think about preparing and sharing simple meals and donating to food banks and pantries. We know the cooks will appreciate it and hey, we might come through the holidays healthier and better fed!

Tue, Nov 25: *"The feet and toes you saw, partly of potter's tile and partly of iron, mean that it shall be a divided kingdom"* (Dn 2:31-45). There's an incarnational meaning in Daniel's dream analysis, similar to something Jesus says to the elders: *"If a kingdom is divided against itself, it cannot stand"* (Mk 3:24). No matter how strong the head is or seems to be, if the foundation is weak, the whole structure will collapse. **Provision: Focus on your foundation.** Is it "pure gold?" Not in a monetary sense, of course, which is how the world sees it, but based on the mercy and love of God. Is it truth, rooted in Christ? Spend time today, not on dogmas and doctrines and detailed explanations of theology. Focus on simply living the real-world foundation of unselfish love.

Wed, Nov 26: *"You will even be handed over...they will put some of you to death.... but not a hair on your head will be destroyed. By your perseverance you will secure your lives."* (Lk 21:12-19). I'd venture that at least some of the folks listening to Jesus are thinking to themselves, "Wait a minute! I may be put to death, but my hair will survive? I will secure my life by dying?" Incarnational mysticism at its best! **Provision: "Those who lose their life will gain it."** We are flesh and blood; in that, we are born, we live, we die, just like Jesus. We are part of the natural world, of God's ever-changing creation. And we carry within us, as does all creation, the spark of the Divine, the eternal that will rise to new life...just like Jesus. It's hard for mere mortals with our egos and drive towards self-preservation, to look upon our flesh and blood as temporary. Are there parts of this natural world that hold you captive, that keep you from, as the prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) instructs, *"dying before you die?"* What little piece of this earthly life can you let go of today in favor of eternal life?

Thu, Nov 27: *"Bless the God of all, who has done wondrous things on earth, who fosters people's growth from their mother's womb, and fashions them according to his will! May he grant you joy of heart and may peace abide among you"* (Sir 50:22-24). For those who do not celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday or use the Book of Sirach, this verse may not be in your lectionary today. But it is so lovely and meaningful, and a prayer I say for all of you! *"May God grant you joy of heart and may peace abide among you."* **Provision: Share joy and peace today!**

Fri, Nov 28: *"I saw the fourth beast, terrifying, horrible...I was considering the ten horns it had, when a little horn, sprang out of their midst...it had eyes like a man and a mouth that spoke arrogantly"* (Dn 7:2-14). The Hebrew scholar, Robert Alter writes, *"the small horn probably represents Antiochus IV Epiphanes who persecuted the Jews. It is proposed the adjective small [or little] is a gesture of contempt"* (The Hebrew Bible, Vol 3, p.777, abridged). The haughty, the arrogant, the small...they may rage and reign for a time, but their ilk will be defeated by the Son of Man! **Provision: Be gentle.** I don't know about you, but I can speak arrogantly at times! Let's try to be aware when arrogance rears its head, and to replace the vitriol with gentleness and lovingkindness.

Sat, Nov 29: *"I, Daniel, found my spirit anguished within its covering of flesh...[but] the kingship and dominion and majesty shall be given to the holy people of the Most High whose Kingdom shall be everlasting"* (Dn 7:15-27). What a perfect bookend for this week, and a springboard into Advent! The spirit within our incarnate bodies may be despairing right now. Perhaps it's the state of the world or something deeply personal. The anguish is real. Jesus experienced both global and personal anguish in his flesh as well. **Provision: "Marana tha! Come, Lord Jesus."** A simple prayer to start and mark the season. Call upon Jesus to come and be with you in your anguish and in your joy! Blessings as you begin your Advent journey to Bethlehem!