

Good Friday Meditation: Behold your mother

There is so much darkness today. So much gloom. So much sorrow and despair. Yet here in this sanctuary there are dim glistenings of light: candles, colors, and of course, incredible music to remind us of the everlasting illuminating power of the Holy Spirit.

In this among Jesus' last words: Son, Behold your mother! Woman, behold your son! I believe there is also a glimmer of something.

In it Jesus is not only pointing Mary and the beloved disciple to new love and relationship but also pointing us to the hope which does not disappoint, to the beloved community now forming, to a world of new relationships transformed in the power of Christ's death and resurrection. Jesus is pointing to the mother church and all the blessed and beloved disciples baptised into His Body.

Behold is an often used Biblical word, usually a command from God, more than a mere request. It is defined as to see or observe not just anything but a remarkable or impressive thing! It is more than just noticing and more like gazing upon or into, more like surveying as we do the wondrous cross. God usually commands our attention to something sacred and life changing when he uses the word Behold.

As the poet Mary Oliver says: Attention is the beginning of devotion.

I sometimes think of behold and transpose it in my mind with be holy! After all only one letter separates them. With rapt attention God calls us, summons us, to something new and sacred.

Even at the darkest hour just before death God is making all things new. Jesus' words to behold are forming and transforming normally expected relationships. His mother and the disciple journey home to dwell with one another, to take care of one another.

Is this not the beginning of church? And is not church the word for the beloved community which is relationships transformed by the Power of God's love and grace for all creation which we are meant to behold and to cherish.

God is always making all things new even on the cross. God who is relationship and relational, calls us to participate and to engage in this newness. God offers us Resurrection which is nothing if not God's ultimate power to create a new reality for all. This new reality, this resurrection life, is marked by the reconfiguration of relationships. Space and time are also reconfigured.

The beloved disciple and the Mother of Christ mutually behold and thus belong in a sacred way to each other. So do we.

We not only have biological family members and sacramentally bound partners, we also share a cosmic sacred bond as members of the Body of Christ.

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So imagine Jesus gazing down from the cross at you at the foot. Imagine you gazing up with devotion at Him.

What might his word to you beloveds be?

Behold your sisters and brothers, beloved disciples

Behold your mother the church

Behold the embodiment of forgiveness and mercy

As we go forth into Holy Saturday and inhabit that liminal inbetween space at the threshold of life and death, of despair and hope, of enslavement and freedom

May we know this last word of Jesus, may it be written on our hearts, and so when we stumble may we support and gather each other with something like: Behold our Christ!
Behold our Church!