

*Whose laughter invites us, whose earth upholds us,
whose stars we wish upon,
whose symphony for birdsong awakens, oh awakens, us,
candle to a blinding sun.*

Whose, indeed...the poet Joe Gilmore asks.

We the candles ready to be lit each day by the blinding sun, ask, as well – as we sometimes do “of whose all this is”.

Today’s “blinding sun”, the one that brings us into focus begins with our journey, once again, holding hands with these days of Advent. Grasping the hope that touches one heart to another, as this candle does – a light in us the breaks the darkness, slowly a bit at a time – starting where we are.

The way ahead unfolds one day at a time, just as the sun rises one day at a time, and sets accordingly. Knowing the outcome is not a requirement and often an expectation better left in God’s hands.

And so it is, the greatest daily act of hope and trust are two each day – as we slumber into our dreams trusting in the morning to come, and when we awaken hoping for a new and brighter day.

It is the rhythm of our lives and – it seems – of the universe as we behold it.

“Whose laughter invites us to live in a such a way, each day part of an incomplete life and universe, somehow melded together – unfolding beyond sight and time, awakened by the symphony for birdsong.”

In a time of Advent – any time really – it takes a symphony of sorts to invite us “in to the true world” – the God world in which all these things into view.

During these days and weeks ahead we will create a symphony of our own together – the together part being the most important.

We will read passages about the Birth and early life of Jesus, a symphony in itself, and sing hymns to go with it, lighting candles to remind us of the promise, collect food and share resources with those in need – hoping to

increase the giving through the “Spirit of Christmas” – a crescendo of “remembering” that excites enough of what is needed to move the world along a bit more toward peace and an advance toward end of malevolence.

It is a time of “awakening” to the need for such constancy of awareness – to the needs of other and the presence of God in everything.

So, we stir it all up! We decorate our sanctuary, without forgetting that there are those just trying to stay warm;

we sing and pray our songs of peace and joy and love and hope; knowing there are others who shelter from the bombs and missiles overhead.

We laugh and enjoy meals, knowing too that for some it is an IV that maintains sustenance and carries healing medicines.

We remember without forgetting.

We gather, so important to gather, even knowing how too many will be idle in loneliness on this day – so we do our best to reach out as far as we can, with calls and broadcasts and cards and teas...

Whose indeed is a world that fills us with rapture and joy as much as it challenges us to hold the candle we light for one another?

The human spiritual story has always been one of seeking the light no matter where we may be in our lives.

Finding the “comfort” in the complexities of the world around us – a comfort which has yet to reach all of the shadows.

Yes, we remember without forgetting or all we will ever have – is forgetting.

It is why we light a candle – to “shine” even unto the darkness, and to be grateful for the light we have to bring. You say what that light is.

And so we read the scriptures and we hope, more than we believe?
Forgetting hope and belief are one?

We hope that one day plowshares will replace the weapons;

lions will lie down with the lambs;
peace will reign and all the world will know

whose song we sing, regardless of the language we use to sing it.

Each day the world is changed by the song sung that brings the birth of new life into our midst. Our lives are sustained by remembering the same birth of new life ... born long ago into the world.

A birth that helps us to understand our own: The Birth of Jesus, the Cosmic Event that still holds power and mystery and frustration, if only for how long it takes to catch up to all the goodness and possibilities we envision.

How long we ask, as the psalmist did? How long...

Until... it seems.

We live like all generations before us – in a time called “Until”, defined by us as “a time up until the event mentioned occurs” – a time, perhaps defined differently by the God to whom “until” belongs. As even Jesus noted.

It is fair to say, I think, that we don't know the event that finishes “until” and begins what is new on those mountains shining of God. We are called to the journey...eyes and hearts open; hands held and outreached:

To bring Good News to others
To do what we can to reduce strife and suffering
To see the wonder of God in each one of us, once born a child, too...
To ask for God's help learning from the example and teachings of Jesus
And to keep ourselves healthy and well-lit with the light of the Spirit to shine

All Through our gathering Good-News-Bearing togetherness.

When we no longer give power to what is wrong with the world around us,
when we gain strength and resolve and optimism from what we have have
been given and accomplished refusing to be diminished or discourages by
the work ahead;

We, too, bring light that causes the birds to sing...

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Ours, too, I think...

And the promise made to us long ago,

Yes.. That One. The One that says: "I care, I am with you"

We carry it from before time began, from the place of brilliance, light of the world together.

Remembering that seeing such things clearly doesn't require us to wait for everything to be alright. Just for us to be right with one another, our God and our neighbors.

By another name, that, I think is Christmas.

And Good News...

And so, we begin again anew.