

The Hill We Climb

They waited breathlessly for what he would say. “In the power of the Spirit” Jesus had been teaching around the Galilee region, so powerfully that everyone praised him. Now he was back to his hometown. And, wow! He reads from Isaiah and declares that these words have been fulfilled! The people are impressed. Everyone is raving about Jesus.

We know that this popularity does not last. But there was that moment, that hearing of those words of Isaiah ringing down through the ages, in which their longing and hope is satisfied.

During Advent and Christmas, we often read from Isaiah and see promises fulfilled. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. For unto us a child is born. A young woman will bear a child and call him Emmanuel—God with us. We, too, are satisfied and see for a moment the presence of God in the candle flames against the dark night of winter.

The people of Corinth had been created new—baptized and given the Spirit to drink, as Paul says. In those heady early days of shining beginnings, they were no longer Jew or Greek or slave or free. Yet Paul must fill his letters to them with ways for them to be one in love.

There is a reason why we remember our baptism, read Isaiah, share in communion, repeat the words of Paul: to return to the well of the Spirit poured out on you, me, the many, for forgiving and giving and changing the world. The heady moments do not last, but the task and the power does.

This Sunday we will hear the words of Jesus and Paul again. Today, this 20th of January, I invite you to hear again words first heard one year ago today, that satisfied our hearts and thrilled us with hope.

*If we're to live up to our own time, then victory
Won't lie in the blade, but in all the bridges we've made.
That is the promised glade,
The hill we climb . . .
For there is always light,
If only we're brave enough to see it,
If only we're brave enough to be it.*

Amanda Gorman, The Hill We Climb

by Rev Karen Oehl

*He unrolled the scroll
and found the place
where it was written:
“The Spirit of the Lord is
upon me, because the
Lord has anointed me.*

*He has sent me to
preach good news to
the poor, to proclaim
release to the prisoners
and recovery of sight to
the blind, to liberate
the oppressed and to
proclaim the year of the
Lord's favor.”*

Luke 4:17b-19

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