

Isaiah 40:1-7, 9c-11

Ps 7 Sung Response: Listen with your heart to the voice of God. Listen with your heart to God's voice.

Philippians 2:6-11

Luke 13:31-33; 34-35; 19:28-41; 42

The Stones Will Cry Out!

March 28, 2010 Palm Sunday

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The poet-prophet we call “2nd Isaiah” wrote in the aftermath of the 1st destruction of Jerusalem in 587 BCE. Jesus was crucified about 40 years the 2nd destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE. Through 2nd Isaiah, God speaks “... tenderly to Jerusalem”; cries to the city that “has suffered enough”. Jesus, as prophet, also cried out to Jerusalem. Jesus cried over Jerusalem. (Luke 13.34-35; Luke 19:41-44)

Luke’s Jesus, warned of death threats against him, understood the inevitability of his death. He interpreted his impending death in light of Israelite and Judean history: He was a prophet; political and religious leaders don’t tolerate prophets; they kill them; and prophets die in Jerusalem. Luke portrays Jesus as a person of integrity, who journeyed toward Jerusalem knowing he would die there, who remained faithful to himself and his prophetic role as he understood it, fully accepting the consequences. (Luke 13:31-33) Luke’s Jesus grasped that, even if his disciples were silent as he entered Jerusalem, the truth could not be silenced. The stones themselves would cry out. (Luke 19:39-40).

Luke alone among the synoptic writers credits Jesus’ disciples with the joyful clamor as he arrived in Jerusalem. Luke describes no palms or branches, no crowd, no explicit Hosannas; the whole city is not thrown into turmoil. (Matthew 21:8-11; Mark 11:8-10) Rather, it’s the disciples who joyfully proclaim their experience of Jesus as one “who came in the name of God”, one connected to divine peace and the manifestation of God’s glory. (Luke 19:38)

They were disciples who understood, but didn’t understand. Disciples who misinterpreted the significance of Jesus’ visit to Jerusalem! Disciples who misgauged what the future held. Disciples who didn’t understand Jesus’ lament over Jerusalem, his tears over Jerusalem’s inability to recognize “...the things that make for peace”, and Jerusalem’s inability to recognize its impending destruction. (Luke 19:41-42) Disciples who didn’t grasp that, if they were silent, the stones themselves would cry out.

We come to this story with hindsight. We know what is coming. We wonder why the disciples, those closest to Jesus, those who traveled with him, those he taught, those who ate with him, didn’t understand. They, of all people, should have understood. Shouldn’t they?

Although controversial, eco-feminist theologians would say that the contemporary disciples of Jesus also misunderstand his significance and message. They'd argue we have been indoctrinated to think in dualisms and hierarchies, such as "the head rules over the body". They would say we misgauge what the future holds. They might say that, if Jesus were here today, he would cry again, not only for Jerusalem but for the planet. They would suggest that we live in sometime joyful ignorance of how our culture and lifestyle threatens the survival of our planet. They might argue we have justified an economy based on consumption as Christians even as the culture of consumption drives us to the brink of planetary disaster. They might suggest that the earth itself is crying out, saying "Listen to me! Tend to me! or I - and you - will be left desolate." Rosemary Ruether writes that that the church has become, not the guardian of the gospel, but the "guardian of domination and subjugation", "...the final sanctuary" which perpetuates the bases of patriarchal culture.

Ecofeminism is both a philosophy and a movement. It believes the social mentality that leads to the domination and oppression of women is the same social mentality that leads to the abuse of nature. It correlates male ownership of land with dominator or hierarchical culture, culture in which those who dominate believe themselves entitled to use anyone and anything for their benefit. Deforestation, overgrazing, valuing land and animals solely as economic resources, the exploitation of people who are not dominators, - all are justified by the dominator's self-interest. In dominator culture, the earth is "she", "mother", and "she" exists in submission to, service of, and for the pleasure of the dominators, most of whom are men. Women are subordinated to the role of supporting the dominators; the earth, likewise, is subordinated to their needs and desires. "Rape" of the earth is acceptable because the earth, like women and other subjugated people and species, is here for the use and abuse of the dominators, who often justify their culture as divinely established. (Genesis 1:26)¹ Notice the intimate linguistic connection between the words, dominate, dominator, dominion and Dominus. In this mentality, God is the ultimate dominator and domination is the essence of divine order.

For ecofeminist theologians, both the liberation of women and the salvation of our planet are impossible in a society whose fundamental model of relationships is domination.² In order to liberate women and save our planet, all social structures of domination must be transformed by an alternative, non-hierarchical value systems.

Rosemary Ruether writes, "We seem to be awaiting a planetary rebirth which can only come about when massive catastrophe decisively discredits the present systems of power."³ If so, wherein lies the hope?

The disciples suffered a massive catastrophe when Jesus was killed, one that decisively discredited *their* concept of Jesus' Messiahship. The infant church suffered a

¹ Ecofeminist Analysis, Wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecofeminism.

² Ruether, Rosemary. *New Women, New Earth*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: The Seabury Press, 1975, pp. 204-205.

³ Ruether, *New Woman, New Earth*, p. 205.

massive catastrophe when Jerusalem was destroyed, one that decisively changed its identity. From both catastrophes, new life emerged.

We may be facing a planetary catastrophe; but, like Jesus, we choose to journey forward in integrity. Though our efforts are small, miniscule in the cosmic scheme of things, we work to change the value system that underlies our church, from one based on dualisms and hierarchy to one based on collaboration and cosmic vision. We work to transform roles in our church which are based on sexist dualism. We work to educate ourselves, to close the gap between clergy and non-clergy. We embrace a “psychological revolution”, working to transform the way we relate to God, to leaders, and each other.⁴ We work to transform the way we relate to nature and our planet.

As we enter Holy Week, we work to transcend the meaning of the unjust death of one man to the unjust deaths of subjugated peoples, nature and our planet. We work “to rediscover the meaning of the Gospel”⁵ in a cosmic context.

⁴ Id., p.79.

⁵ Ibid.