



Restoration Ministries

Advent 2014

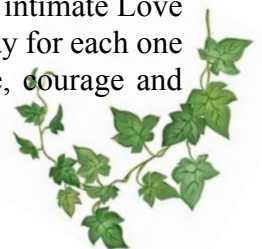
Dear Friends,

Earlier this year I was speaking at a meeting of Spiritual Directors Europe in Dublin. They were a very refreshing and diverse group – ordained and lay, female and male, of different cultures, languages, nationalities and religious persuasion. At Morning Prayer a Lutheran pastor was reading the very familiar account from John's Gospel of the death of Lazarus. I have heard it and read it hundreds of times, but this time one little sentence hit me like a bolt of lightning and I didn't hear anything else she said, so powerful were the impact of these words upon me. They were Martha's words to Mary, "The Master is here and wants to see you." For me the message was unmistakable, "The Master is here and wants to see you, Ruth!" I was forcefully made aware in the depths of my being that Jesus was totally present to me right at that moment. He was there and I was resting in the gaze of love – unconditional, limitless, intimate love. I realise that this was true for everyone whether they were aware or not, but for me it was an eternity moment where I was awakened – yet again – to the wonder of Presence and gifted with fresh courage, hope and affirmation for the journey.

I am struck by how often in both Testaments the look or the gaze of God is linked to new life, freedom and outrageous hope. In Genesis, God looks on all that he has created and sees that it is very good. Later in the same book, Hagar, the slave girl, fleeing from Sarah, full of despair, comes across a well in the desert and has an encounter with God. She says, "I have seen the living one who sees me." From that point her identity and her future are assured. In Exodus God sees the affliction of his people, and Moses is commissioned to lead them from slavery in Egypt to freedom and new life. The psalmist in a time of reflective insight declares that there is nowhere that he can hide from the gaze of God, that, even in his mother's womb, he was seen and known. In the gospels, it is not condemnation but the gaze of love that lingers on the rich young man who, exercising the freedom of choice, turns away from Jesus – but not, I believe, for ever. In the intense drama of the High Priest's courtyard after the arrest of his Master, it is not destructive remorse that has the last word but the gaze of love directed at Peter that is his eventual redemption.

We can never, ever dismiss ourselves if we have rested under the gaze of love and know that we have been seen. However much we try to, we cannot hide from the living one who sees us. Though others may point the accusing finger, God looks on what he has made – and sees us as good. In a world in turmoil, full of anguish, fear, despair, obsessive busyness and so much else of a negative nature that threatens to overwhelm us, there is also – always good news. In fact there are glad tidings of great joy! The Master is here and wants to see us – you and me. This is the outrageous hope of Advent, a truth that, in spite of us, turns all our negativity on its head. The heartbeat of the Incarnation is presence. Infinite, intimate Love is here and wants to see us! As we approach this most special of seasons I pray for each one a renewed awakening to such wonder and the resulting gifts of fresh hope, courage and affirmation. Peace to you all this Advent as you rest in the gaze of Love.

Ruth



Advent Reflection Day

At

St Brigid's Parish hall, Derryvolgie, Belfast

On

Saturday 29th November 2014,
2.00 pm - 5.00 pm.

Facilitator : Rev Ruth Patterson

Title: The Little Road to Bethlehem

Ruth will lead us in quiet reflections with scripture readings, music, short prayers and lots of quiet time and space for listening and private meditation.

Margaret Lester

We have fond memories of Margaret, a faithful friend of RM who died during the summer. She was one of our prayer intercessors and was very regular at Wednesday noon prayer up until 2 years ago when she moved into Kingsway's Nursing Home.

We thank God for her generosity, both before and after her death, towards our work in RM. We pray for her sister –in –law Lorna and her niece –Sylvia.

Many of us were glad to attend a service of licensing for Susan Moore at McCracken Presbyterian Church where Ruth preached.



Susan with Ruth and Michael Fitch – chairman of RM Board of Directors

CONTACT US

19 Harmony Drive

Lambeg

Lisburn,

BT27 4ED

E-mail:

office@restorationministries.co.uk

Tel: +44 2892 675783



Restoration
MINISTRIES