



Blessed Be

December 2018

Greetings, readers, and may this season of Christmas bring you peace, happiness and hope for the coming year. I'd like to thank you all for the part you have all played in the publication of Blessed Be. Its existence is due to you – your contributions, your reading and your appreciation. If you have something you would like to share with us, please feel free to contact me at: helenmacauley@gmail.com

*We begin this edition with this piece by **Thomas Merton** sent to us by Margaret Quinn:*

Our task is to work and find Christ in our world as it is, and not as it might be. The fact that the world is other than it might be does not alter the truth that Christ is present in it and that his plan has been neither frustrated nor changed: indeed, all will be done according to his will.

Our Advent is a celebration of this hope. What is uncertain is not the 'coming' of Christ but our own reception of him, our own response to him, our readiness and capacity to 'go forth to meet him'. We must be willing to see him and acclaim him, even at the very moment when our whole life's work and all its meaning seem to collapse

*(From **Seasons of Celebration**)*

*Tricia Gemmel has sent in this. It's from **Enough is Enough** by **John V Taylor**.*

But the life of Jesus and his disciples was not only eucharistic but also defiant. He knew it was not enough to say these things; the world was waiting for concrete examples and realisations. So in our day it is not enough to point out the contrast between our idolatry of growth and the Bible's theology of enough; we have to opt out of the drift and help one another to live in cheerful protest against it. We have to discover what fun it can be to defy the blandishments and undermine the assumptions of the excessive consumer society.

I think this is quite a challenge for us in the Christmas season!

*From Sheila Hawthorn we have a quote from **Dom Helder Camara**:*

We must have no illusions. We must not be naïve. If we listen to the voice of God, we make our choice, get out of ourselves and fight non-violently for a better world. We must not expect to find it easy; we shall not walk on roses, people will not throng to hear us and applaud, and we shall not always be aware of divine protection. If we are to be pilgrims of justice and peace, we must expect the desert.

*...and one from **St Cyprian**:*

It is a barren prayer that does not go hand in hand with alms.

A Franciscan Blessing:

May God bless you with discomfort as easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships – so that you may live deep within your heart.

May God bless you with anger at injustice, oppression and exploitation of people – so that you may work for justice, freedom and peace.

May God bless you with tears shed for those who suffer pain, rejection, hunger and war – so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and turn their pain to joy.

May God bless you with enough foolishness to believe that you can make a difference to the world – so that you can do what others claim cannot be done, to bring justice and kindness to our children and to the poor.

Tecumseh (1768-1813) Shawnee Chief:

*Sell a country?! Why not sell the air, the great sea, as well as the earth? Did not the Great Spirit make them all for the use of his children?

*When you rise in the morning, give thanks for the light, for your life, for your strength. Give thanks for your food and for the joy of living. If you see no reason to give thanks, the fault lies in yourself.

Julian of Norwich:

Our good Lord once said: ‘Everything will be all right.’

At another time he said: ‘Everything will turn out well; you will see it for yourself’. And from these words my soul understood various things. The first is that God wants us to know that He notices not only the great and noble things, but also the small, the little, lowly and simple things we do for one another. This is what he means when he said: ‘Everything, whatever it might be, will be all right’. He wants us to know he does not forget the smallest thing.

Mechthild of Magdeburg:

O sweet and loving Spirit
when I stay asleep too long
and forget your many blessings
I ask you please to wake me up
and sing your joyful song to me.

You sing silently.

Your song reaches way beyond the reach of words.

Your song expresses more than any one of us could express.

It's in my soul that I hear it...
when you wake me up to your presence.

Seen on a noticeboard (no attribution sorry):

Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass
It's about learning to dance in the rain.

Gandhi:

To seek God, one need not go on a pilgrimage or light lamps fed with ghee and burn incense before the image of the deity or anoint it or paint it with vermilion. For He resides in our hearts. If we humbly obliterate in us the consciousness of our physical body, we would see Him face to face.

From Meditations of a Hermit by Charles de Foucauld:

It would be too much sweetness to always feel that we truly love Jesus, that he loves us and that we are happy in his joy. If we always could feel this, earth would be Heaven. Let us be content with desiring and knowing that it is so; in this we have greater merit if less sweetness.

I (Helen) found this poem amongst my mother's things. Does anyone recognise it? It is based on Ecclesiastes 3:1: 'There is a season for everything, a time for every occupation under heaven' .

Take time

Take time to think -

it is the source of power.

Take time to read -

it is the foundation of wisdom.

Take time to play -

it is the secret of staying young.

Take time to be quiet -

it is the opportunity to seek God.

Take time to be aware -

it is the opportunity to help others.

Take time to love and be loved -

it is God's greatest gift.

Take time to laugh -

it is the music of the soul.

Take time to be friendly -

it is the road to happiness.

Take time to dream -

it is what the future is made of.

Take time to pray -

it is the greatest power on earth.

The Dalai Lama:

*For a person who cherishes compassion and love, the practice of tolerance is essential, and for that, an enemy is indispensable. So we should be grateful to our enemies, for it they who can best help us develop a tranquil mind.

*At daybreak if the weather is fine, I go into the garden. This time of the day is very special to me. The sky is clear, I see the stars, and I have this special feeling – of my insignificance in the cosmos, the realisation of what we Buddhists call impermanence.

Guifeng Zongmi (780-841)

A wise man knows his fellow human; an enlightened man knows himself.

Hildegard of Bingen:

The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit, life-giving life,
is the moving force and immutable root of every creature.
Cleansing all from stain, wiping away sin, binding up wounds;
the Spirit is pulsating life and worthy of praise,
awakening and stirring all things.

*From Sheila Hawthorn, a prayer that seems appropriate for the New
Year by **Rabbi Harold Kushner:***

A Prayer for the World

Let the rain come and wash away
the ancient grudges, the bitter hatreds
held and nurtured over generations.
Let the rain wash away the memory
of the hurt, the neglect.
Then let the sun come out and
fill the sky with rainbows.
Let the warmth of the sun heal us
wherever we are broken.

(Cont'd)

Let it burn away the fog so that
we can see beyond labels,
beyond accents, gender, or skin colour.

Let the warmth and brightness
of the Sun melt our selfishness.
So that we can share the joys and
feel the sorrows of our neighbours.

And let the light of the Sun
be so strong that we will see all
people as our neighbours.

Let the earth, nourished by rain,
bring forth flowers
to surround us with beauty.

And let the mountains teach our hearts
to reach upward to heaven.



Spirit of life

Spirit of life come to me

Sing in my heart all the stirrings of compassion.

Blow in the wind, rise in the sea

Move in the hand giving life the shape of justice.

Roots hold me close. Wings set me free

Spirit of life come to me...come to me.

(Joanne Lamb from Grail Global Village Song Sheets)