
Heart and Soul ... A Weekly Meditation

September 21, 2014

Eyes of Faith

*They asked, "Isn't this Jesus, Joseph's son, whose mother and father we know?"
How can he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?"*
John 6:42 (Common English Bible)

It rarely occurs to us that the ordinary can be a door through which heaven opens to earth. If something comes from heaven it must come in an unusual way, through some mysterious and unfamiliar channel. Heaven and earth are not usually viewed as being in communication. Certainly the Old Testament does witness to God's use of prophets to speak. But ordinarily heaven and earth stand quite apart. God and humanity live two distinct and different lives.

This was the thinking that caused some to question the authority of Jesus, "Isn't this Jesus, Joseph's Son, whose mother and father we know?" How can He now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" This is "Bible-speak" for ordinary; Jesus was born to ordinary people just as we all were. Yet, Jesus declares He has come down from heaven. It simply doesn't follow that the familiar can be heavenly, the ordinary the activity of the divine. And it is this thinking today that diminishes our own expectation of the sacred in the midst of our ordinary lives. We do not expect a divine encounter in our ordinary existence.

Jesus believed that heaven and earth were in constant communication. God is always in touch and intervening in the lives of God's children. What is necessary for us are eyes of faith, eyes that see the portals of heaven open wide and that God is continually coming into our ordinary lives, transforming them into the extraordinary. Jesus says as much when He responds to Peter's declaration of Jesus' Lordship that this confession of faith was not Peter's only, but God's witness through him, "no human has shown this to you. Rather My Father who is in heaven has shown you." (Matthew 16:17)

Here, in this passage, we are invited to look once more for the possibility of the sacred in the ordinariness of life. Familiarity, if it doesn't breed contempt, at least removes the surprise. If we can account for something we at once conclude that God has nothing to do with it. God is kept as a last resort for events otherwise inexplicable. Yet, here in John's Gospel, we are reminded that through the common life of Joseph and Mary, God did break forth into the world.

Prayer: *Grant me the eyes of faith, O God, to see Your extraordinary work in the ordinary rhythms of today.
Amen.*

Doug Hood

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