

Advent Prayer

Richard A. Rhem

Advent, 2004

Let us become fully conscious in these moments of prayer –
with eyes wide open
taking in the beauty of this setting,
or with eyes gently closed,
the better to bring focus to our consciousness, –
in awareness of that Holy Presence
that surrounds us, pervades our consciousness,
provides the ground of our existence.

In the presence of the Face of Mystery,
we contemplate our world.
It is so difficult to carve out a space simply to be;
caught up in culture's grip,
we are brainwashed –
saturated with statistics of retail sales,
as though our salvation lie in conspicuous consumption;
saddened, indeed horrified, at evidences of alienation and brokenness
that are called daily to our attention,
that rage and hate explode in violence and death.
Expectant, not of the coming of the Prince of Peace,
but of further evidence of the folly of war
and the tragedy it brings.

Advent – Coming –
What is coming?
Who is coming?
Where is it all leading? Where are we going?
What in the world is happening?

O God, we feel with the poet –
Nothing can save us that is possible,
We who must die demand a miracle.

A miracle –
not halting the planet in its orbit,
not casting a mountain into the sea.
No, a miracle of love and grace,

a miracle of human transformation,
a miracle of faith and hope and love, enabling us to believe,
to believe the darkness will never overcome the light,
to believe blind power cannot finally prevail,
to believe truth and goodness and beauty will never be finally defeated.

A miracle–
a miracle of transformation of consciousness,
not waiting for some divine intervention to make things right
as we stand passively by.

O God,
let the miracle be our recognition that
we are the Body of Christ,
we are the embodiment of love,
we are the agency of Grace.
It is in our face that another way of being must be mirrored –
our flesh must reflect the Divine Intention.

Once upon a time it happened –
the Word became flesh,
the Word became human.
Encountering that one, the people cried, O God!

We come now to this table – bread and cup.
body and blood – separated,
for it came to pass that that one was killed.
But, what he embodied could not be killed.
Tonight we remember –
we remember him and we take bread and cup in order,
in solidarity with him, to be as he was,
to be God in our human being,
to be Your presence to one another,
to all we meet,
to this world,
so perilous, so fascinating, so wonderful, so frightening, so beautiful.

Ah, dear God, Mystery beyond our fathoming –
feed us that our touch may be the touch of your love,
our visage, the mirror of your grace,
our presence your presence here and now.

Oh God, hear our prayer, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Page two