

Reflections on Faith and Life for Advent 3, December 13, 2020

One of the charities I support on a regular basis is *Outreach for World Hope*, a Wisconsin-based organization that ministers in Guatemala and surrounding areas. They began as a feeding program, sending groups of people and truckloads of food to literally stave off starvation. Now they provide aid in farming, clean water supplies, and most recently a Maternity Home for dangerous or difficult pregnancies. Their Christmas newsletter contained the following paragraph:

Despite contrasting opinions within our country, and even among close friends, there are some things we all agree on. . . children should not die of hunger, mothers and infants should not die in childbirth, little bodies should not be infested with parasites, human beings should have clean water to drink and clean air to breathe, and families should have roofs over their heads. So we set our differences aside and unite behind our cause, sharing our resources and praying to the same God for those who need our help. Our common values matter more than the things that divide us. . . . So regardless of ever-changing circumstances, together we find peace, and even joy in the knowledge that we have done what we could to make the world a better place through our love and generosity (Kim and Randy Tews, founders of OWH).

What would happen if Democrats and Republicans were to sit down at a table together and list their priorities, what should be and what should not be, and then work together to make them happen? Start with the basics needed by every person—food, clean water, shelter, medical care—and eventually work upwards towards the biblical ideals of human dignity, respect, equality, justice.

These next words are from our Bishop, Laurie Skow-Anderson: ***In the beginning was the Word... and the Word was God... and the Word became flesh and lived among us. Jesus is God, divine and human. God moved into our neighborhood and took up residence. God goes where God's people go and is who the people are. This is the promise of John's gospel. God is present with us in our times of crisis and suffering. This is the foundation of Luther's theology of the cross.***

Let's pray: *Jesus, you have called us to follow, watch, and learn from you, to act as you do, to share your life with others, and to participate with you in creating your kingdom here on earth, as it is in heaven. We get impatient with wars, and greed, and selfishness all over the world. Help us not to give up hope. Help us at every moment to love as you do. Transform our lives into your life so that together we may love, serve, help, and heal the world with you. Let all those whose lives we touch feel your loving presence reaching out to them through us. Be in our lives until we see you face to face. Amen (Disciplines, 2020, p. 402).*