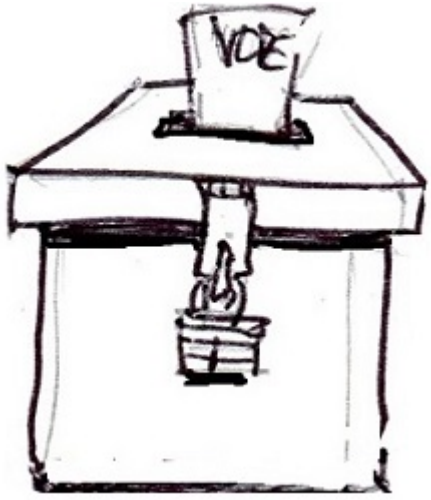
Spirituality
Pencil Preaching





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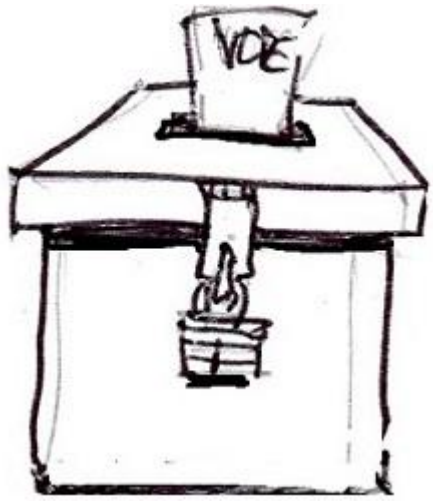

“Come, everything is now ready” (Luke 14:16).

Phil 2:5-11; Luke 14:15-24

“What if they gave a war and nobody came” is a line from a 1936 poem by Carl Sandburg, “The People, Yes,” in which a little girl watching a parade imagines a world in which patriotism is about something other than military victory. It became a popular antiwar slogan during the Vietnam War protests in the 1960s.

In today’s Gospel, Jesus asks his audience to imagine a sumptuous banquet skipped by all its invited guests. God’s Kingdom is at hand, but they have more important things to do than come to the feast. The host is not deterred and opens wide the doors to the poor, cripples, the blind and lame. Then, to fill the hall, servants are sent out to the highways and hedgerows to bring in anyone they can find.

The poem and the parable describe a world in which terrible conflicts are celebrated and joyful opportunities are rejected. The world is turned upside down by suspicion, selfishness, indifference and moral blindness. Right becomes wrong, good becomes evil, truth becomes lies. On the other hand, God’s offer of love and justice meets our every need, but we act like the man who would not take “Yes” for an answer. Jesus wept over Jerusalem for its failure to know the hour of its visitation.

The ultimate sign of God’s love is that, in order to reach us, Jesus entered our topsy turvy world by surrendering all divine power and privilege to become one of us. The majestic hymn quoted in Philippians 2:5-11 says that Jesus,

though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human

likeness; and, found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross.

This *kenosis*, self-emptying love, becomes the means by which God reclaims the world from sin and death, turning our misery and estrangement into the joy of reuniting with God's original purpose for creating the world, to share his life. Not only does God fill us with life, this gift has no limits but reaches out to include everyone. Those invited to the feast include all the outcast and rejected of Jesus' time. He goes further. Even strangers and outsiders, pagans and foreigners, those thought to be beyond God's favor, are gathered into the banquet. Humanity itself is destined to be the Beloved Community. Imagine such a vision, the whole human family together and at peace at the table of God's love.

The inescapable question for us on this November 3, 2020, is "What if they held an election and everyone voted?" Another impossibility, yet if imagined, perhaps the beginning of a different kind of world. "Everything is ready, come to the feast."

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