

Through the Eyes of Love

“All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.”

This coming Sunday we will hear more of what is called Jesus’ farewell discourse to his disciples. This long, sweeping monologue from Jesus points repeatedly to the fact that if we want to know God we have only to look at the life, love, and multiple acts of compassion and mercy that defined Jesus’ earthly life.

If we know Jesus, then we know God and we know that what is desired of us is that we love one another and the world the same way Jesus did; the same way God does.

As I reflect on the way that Christians have failed this simple commandment through time---time and time again---I am tempted to write a lament, a Psalm of deep sadness to our failure to know and love God and love one another as Jesus taught us.

But on this day, with images from Manchester swirling in my mind and heart, I am resisting such dark thoughts because once again, in the midst of a human or humans acting with evil intent, what surfaced more clearly than the evil was the goodness and courage of the human family.

This bomber meant to start a fire of rage, seeking to divide us along religious and political lines, but instead the citizens of Manchester came together across deep diversity and LOVE spoke much, much louder than hate.

As I said in last Sunday’s sermon, we learn to love best by accepting how God loves us first and asks us to spread that love like a wildfire that consumes the world with it’s joy and wholeness.

So this week I want to remember and reflect on God’s love for us, a limitless love that Jesus so beautifully demonstrated and was reflected fully in the outpouring of love in and for Manchester in the midst of this week’s horrible tragedy.

I want to leave you with the words of one of my favorite modern Irish bards and poets, John O’Donohue. What follows is called “The Eyes of Jesus” from his book, *To Bless the Space Between Us* and I simply find it wonderful to think on and I hope you will too...

The Eyes of Jesus

*I imagine the eyes of Jesus
were harvest brown,
The light of their gazing
suffused with the seasons:
A gaze that is perfect sister
to the kindness that dwells
in his beautiful hands.*

*The eyes of Jesus gaze on us,
stirring the heart’s clay
the confidence of seasons
that never lose their way to harvest.*

This gaze knows the signature

*Of our heartbeat, the first glimmer
From the dawn that dreamed our minds,*

*The crevices where thoughts grow
Long before the longing in the bone
Sends them toward the mind's eye,*

*The artistry of the emptiness
That knows to slow the hunger
Of outside things until they weave
Into the twilight side of the heart,*

*A gaze full of all that is still future
Looking out for us to glimpse
The jeweled light in winter stone,*

*Quickening the eyes that look at us
To see through to where words
Are blind to say what we would love,*

*Forever falling softly on our faces,
His gaze plies the soul with light,
Laying down a luminous layer*

*Beneath our brief and brittle days
Until the appointed dawn comes
Assured and harvest deft*

*To unravel the last black knot
And we are back home in the house
That we have never left.*

We are loved and made for loving in return. May we always see one another, in good times and in bad, through the eyes of Jesus.

Grace and Peace, Stephanie+