



Simple Gifts

Words to Inspire the Spirit

IMMANUEL CHURCH-ON-THE-HILL

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We'll Know All the Answers

By The Rev. J. Randolph Alexander, Jr.

I was talking recently with our talented seminarian, Janettarose Green, when she made a comment that sent my mind spinning. We were in a deep theological discussion when she said, “You know, a hundred years from now we’ll know all the answers.”

It was a statement packing such faith, such belief, and such confidence. Clearly we will not be alive in a hundred years, but the God we worship tells us we are made for eternity, and this life is not all there is. In fact, viewed in light of eternity, it’s hard to think of this life as anything more than a prelude.

Janettarose’s comment prompted me to ask myself whether I am living *as if I believe in eternity*. Is anyone of us? How much of our time is spent worrying, fretting, planning for things that will not be important in ten years, let alone a hundred, or a thousand years. None of us likes to think of not being around in a hundred years. If Our Lord has not yet returned by the year 2123, and if humanity has not destroyed itself, life will go on. But God, who is outside all time and space, is there already, and well beyond, and well before. The Jesus whom we worship and strive to follow is the “same yesterday, today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8). And this same Lord has gone on to prepare a place for us, “so that, where he is, we may also be” (John 14:3).

I'm afraid that, even in the Church, we live too much of the time as if this life is all there is. Sure, this life is what we know and, indeed, our brains begin to hurt as we try to imagine eternity. Yet science tells us that time is bendable, that even time-travel is theoretically possible, and it makes sense that God would be the author and director of time itself.

One of the things I often say in a funeral homily is that I hope the person who has died is now getting answers to the hardest questions. Why do good people suffer? Why do we have to age and die? Why is humanity always at war with itself? What would it be like to live beyond aging and death, beyond sickness, beyond prejudice and hatred and war? Why does it seem some prayers go unanswered?

The Eucharist is often called a foretaste of the banquet of Heaven. People of all ages, races, and ethnicities, and of all socio-economic status, approach the Eucharist together. They are welcomed based not upon how much money they have or how accomplished they are, or even upon how much faith they have, but upon the fact that they are beloved children of God, redeemed forever by Jesus Christ on the Cross, and destined for an eternal Home.

The truth of Janettarose's comment can help inspire me and each of us to savor and live fully our moments on earth, while also remembering that this life is not all there is and there is so much more in store for us. It is through our faith in our Lord and Savior and his words of promise to us that we can peer beyond the blinders of our present experience:

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:1-3).

May it be so.
