

Luke 1:29-56 Pastor Bill Uetricht 4 Advent 12.16.21

(The video a “Singing Revolution—a Trailer” from You Tube was played.)

Notes from a flute or a Medieval recorder. Madrigals sing bringing calm to disorder.

Notes, songs, harmonies—the silence in-between—create spaces in the human heart, open to new scenes.

Deep yearnings cry in new songs while tyrants silence the arts.
Yet, deep, deep, deep in the underground, a new sound is being born.

So sing, Oh, blessed Mary, radical zealot, gentle mother; sing of the Time of Jubilee, coming in our newborn brother.

Sing blessed Mother. Magnify the Lord. Sing of longed-for justice.
Embody God’s new Word.

“The haughty rich now brought low; the humble poor lifted high;
no more vast inequities!” Your cry up to the skies.

Sing, blessed Mary, become a new song; birth earth’s longed-for Messiah, who rights our every wrong.

Teach us, Oh Mary, the song of new birth, so all of us can embody God’s peace here on earth.

(@A Poem a Sunday – December 14, 2015 – Kenn Storck)

It’s no doubt that this last week in Advent belongs, as this piece of poetry by Kenn Storck reveals, to the poets, the artists, the singers, to a couple of women—an old woman named Elizabeth and a young woman named Mary. Elizabeth was relatively famous, being from a long line of priests and being married to Zechariah, a priest. Yet still she lacked the honor of being a mom. There was shame that surrounded her life.

There was shame that surrounded Mary's life. This very *young* woman of little renown was pregnant. And the man she had been with was not the father. For her, the shame was huge. Yet she and her situation were a part of the work of God. God had paid attention to her, an insignificant one. This is not only what she says, but what she sings. This day belongs to Mary, the singer, the singer who has experienced and who anticipates a whole new world. God her Savior has looked with favor on her insignificance. From now on, she sings, people will speak well of her, will call her blessed. The Mighty One has done great things for her, a young who didn't matter much in her time.

And then Mary says, or she sings, that the One who has looked with favor on her is actually turning the whole world upside down. Frankly, Mary gets very political, not in terms of advocating for a political party or political ideology; that is so foreign to her. But she sings of the world being governed in an entirely different way. She boldly takes on the rich and powerful and lifts up the lowly and the hungry. Listen to her song:

He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich empty away.

Mary has experienced empowerment in her own personal life, and now she sees empowerment for the lowly and poor throughout the whole world. In song, she anticipates what we would call a revolution.

We cannot underestimate the power of poetry, the power of music, the power of song. Evidently, in 1989, before the fall of the Berlin Wall, the citizens of Leipzig gathered on Monday nights by candlelight around St. Nikolai Church, the church where Bach composed many of his cantatas, to sing. Thousands of them would assemble and would simply sing. The East German police at the time

were asked why they didn't squelch this protest. One of the leaders of the police responded by saying that they had developed contingency plans for protests of all kinds, but not for a protest of song. Obviously, as the video we watched revealed, the leaders of Estonia weren't quite ready for a protest of song either. The protest of music transformed that country.

Music is powerful. Music can change the world. Music can create a whole new world. The music of the blues is a protest against easy answers and inauthentic smiles. Sociologist Tex Sample argues that country music in its origins was a protest against the dominant aesthetic, against the notion that only the rich and the in-charge and the proper and the musically well-educated can make music. Rock and roll obviously was a protest against a perceived uptight and bodily rigid world view. Music has always been turning the world upside down.

Today belongs to the poets and the musicians. As we are on the cusp of the birth of Jesus, the one whose life, teaching, death and resurrection will turn the world upside down, I urge you to listen to them. Protest with them. Be uncomfortable with the world as it is, and anticipate a world where justice and peace reign, and these days especially, where despair does not rule.

I don't know about you, but sometimes when I sing, the despair that I have been experiencing starts to recede. These are despairing days. These are days of great darkness. It's time to sing. On Christmas Eve, we will light candles. And for me, that act is a protest against the darkness. Without the darkness, there is no need for light. But we, the people of faith, light the candles. We, the people of faith, sing the songs, the songs that hold back the data of despair. "My soul magnifies the Lord; my Spirit rejoices in God my Savior. Trusting against all of the data that suggests otherwise, God has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant."

A whole new world has arrived. A whole new world is on its way.
“Hear the angels *sing*: Christ is coming! Hear them tell of the Savior’s birth. Hear the angels sing: Christ is coming! Glory to God and peace to the earth. Alleluia! Angels sing! Alleluia! A Savior is born. Alleluia! Christ is coming. All of heaven and earth adore.” (This was sung)

Join the angels. Join the shepherds. Join the wise men. Join the protest. Sing! Make music! Lighten the darkness.